

# Cuddle Pockets

**For use when conveying stillborn premature babies (under 24 weeks).** (Blankets to be used for babies over 24 weeks)

Cuddle Pockets are being implemented, as a learning from a serious incident, to convey a premature, stillborn baby to hospital, in a dignified and compassionate manner.

Healthcare professionals can have a positive influence on how parents and families experience their care, when their baby dies. Good communication can reduce the impact of trauma in the short and long term.

For any maternity complications please refer to the EEAST Maternity Action Card or JRCALC pocket booklet 'Emergency Birth in the Community'.

## Where to store

Cuddle Pockets to be stored with the maternity packs on DSA's.

## How to Use

Cuddle Pockets are individually handmade items and may vary in size and colour.

Place the baby in the cuddle pocket.



Use the ribbon to secure them inside. Dependant on the style of Cuddle pocket, either tie the ribbon from side to side or use the drawstring to pull, and then tie in the middle.

If required, fold the top over the baby, to make an envelope.

Encourage one of the parents to hold the baby in the Cuddle Pocket whilst secured in the Ambulance, for conveying to the hospital.

**For shared decision making, please contact the Clinical Advice line on 01234 779203 or local maternity services (see MiDOS)**

## Supplies

Contact your LOM with your CAD number, for a replacement Cuddle Pocket. LOM cars have spare supplies. LOM's can re-order supplies (Catalogue number U999 – Cuddle Pocket) but require a CAD number to re-order.

Parents often replay every detail of what happened around their baby's death and in the following weeks. Good communication cannot take away the pain parents and families feel, but it can reduce the impact of the trauma. Consider the setting before talking to the parents.

## What to say

### Sensitivity:

- Use the baby's name
- Ask how the parents wish to be addressed (mum/dad or by name)
- Speak gently, clearly, honestly, kindly and conveying compassion
- Sit down, use eye contact, do not rush
- Express understanding, sympathy and regret – say "I'm sorry".

### Communicate Clearly:

- Take your time to gather your thoughts and be well informed
- Avoid too much medical terminology
- Consider your language – make sure the parents understand what is being presented to them
- Be clear about your next steps
- Listen carefully – answer questions clearly and honestly.

### Support services:

- SANDS helpline 0808 164 3332 (Mon-Fri) or [helpline@sands.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk) or GP

## Seek support

The death of a baby can have a profound and stressful impact on the staff who cared for the baby and family.

It is important to remember your own well-being and consider that of the team. You and your team members may need support, be kind to yourself and remember self-care.

**We understand that these incidents can be challenging - please look after yourselves, if you or your colleagues have been affected in attending this call please contact The Wellbeing Hub via [wellbeing@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:wellbeing@eastamb.nhs.uk) and/or speak to your LOM.**

The SANDS helpline is for anyone affected by the death of a baby, including health care professionals.

Telephone: 0808 164 3332 or e-mail: [helpline@sands.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk) or download the app.