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Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 1 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

## **GUIDANCE ON THE ADMISSION OF PERINATAL/PAEDIATRIC CASES TO THE BELFAST TRUST MORTUARY FOR CONSENTED HOSPITAL POST MORTEM**

### **CONTEXT**

This guidance applies to babies over 12 weeks gestation and children less than 16 years of age.

***All Paediatric PM examinations directed by the Coroner will take place in the Northern Ireland Regional Forensic Mortuary based on the Royal Hospitals site and are not included within the scope of this document.***

Hospital consented paediatric Post Mortem (PM) examinations are carried out in Alder Hey Children's Foundation Trust (Alder Hey) in Liverpool. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Mortuary (BTM) will arrange the cases and manage the safe and expedient transfer to Alder Hey, therefore all babies and children must be transported to BTM for onward transfer. Following hospital PM examination, babies and children will be brought back to the BTM, and from there will be released to the family or the designated family funeral director, or transported back to the referring HSC Trust as agreed. Any organs retained at hospital PM examination will be returned from Alder Hey to the BTM upon completion of the hospital PM report so that the decisions of the family, recorded on the hospital PM consent form, can be actioned.

### **1. Responsibilities of Consent Taker/Referring Clinician**

#### **1.1 Contacting BTM to request hospital PM examination**

It is **imperative** that the BTM is informed of all cases for consented Post Mortem examination upon completion of the PM consent form and other documentation

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 2 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

required for travel and PM. This will ensure that cases can be scheduled accordingly with the Alder Hey team. The Alder Hey team can only accommodate two cases for PM examination on each operational day (Mon –Fri). If the family or consenting clinician would like to know the timeframe for travel and Post Mortem examination before the consent form is completed, an initial phone call should be made to the BTM in order that realistic timeframes for the journey to Alder Hey, Post Mortem examination and return of the baby/child can be provided to the family.

During periods of high post mortem referral numbers to Alder Hey, it may not be possible for the Belfast Trust Mortuary to issue a provisional date for travel and Post Mortem examination. A timeframe for Post Mortem will be given and subsequently confirmed by the BTM team once a date for travel & Post Mortem has been confirmed by the Alder Hey team.

**BTM Telephone Number: 02896 150149**  
**Mon-Fri 08.30-16.15 and Saturdays 09.00-12.00.**  
**Out of Hours Telephone Number for the MTO on call: 07979 366041**

The BTM will require the following details in order to schedule the case:

- Patients (baby or child's) full name
- Gestational age of the baby or age of the child
- Ward and Hospital or location of the baby or child
- Name and contact details of the referring individual

The BTM will require cases to be admitted into the Mortuary by **10.30** on the designated day of travel to ensure the documentation required for travel and Post Mortem is in order, and to co-ordinate the necessary travel arrangements.

Cases scheduled to travel on Sunday evenings will be required to be admitted into the BTM by 14.00 on the Friday to allow sufficient time for the Mortuary team to arrange and prepare the baby to travel.

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 3 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

Upon receipt of the baby or child into the BTM, the Mortuary team will liaise with the team in Alder Hey and make the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the baby/child for PM examination. The BTM will update the referring unit of any delay in the transfer of the case to Alder Hey.

The BTM will liaise closely with the referring Trust's Mortuary, and make contact when the baby/child or child arrives back in Belfast upon completion of the PM.

## 1.2 Neonatal cases

Clinicians can consent neonatal cases on a consent for hospital Post Mortem examination of a baby form, irrespective of the age of the baby. Confirmation of this can be found on the title page of the consent form and this has been confirmed by the Paediatric Pathology department in Alder Hey.

The Alder Hey team may require a copy of the obstetric and neonatal notes for neonatal referrals for Post Mortem. The referring clinical team should discuss the case and any requirement for clinical notes directly with the Alder Hey team by contacting them on 0151 252 5219.

These cases may require a CT scan and subsequent CT scan report before the PM examination can be undertaken. The request for CT scan will be directed by the Alder Hey consultant pathologist upon review of the clinical history. The CT scan may delay the Post Mortem examination and subsequent return of the baby to Belfast. This must be communicated to the parents by the referring Trust team.

Upon admission of the case into Alder Hey Mortuary, the requirement for CT scan on these cases will be communicated by Alder Hey to the BTM team. The BTM will notify the referring team or trust bereavement midwife of the requirement for CT scan and any subsequent delays in the return of the baby to Belfast.

## 1.3 Category 3 Cases

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 4 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

The proposed consented hospital Post Mortem of any baby or child carrying or suspected to be carrying a category 3 pathogen must be discussed directly with the Alder Hey team. The Alder Hey can be contacted on 0151 252 5219. The Alder Hey team will inform the referring clinician if the case has been accepted for consented hospital Post Mortem. The case once accepted by the Alder Hey team can be referred to the Belfast Trust Mortuary team as per procedure above.

All CAT 3 cases accepted by Alder Hey for consented hospital Post Mortem must be appropriately body bagged and labelled with CAT 3 pathogen labels at source, in line with last offices procedures for the management of CAT 3 patients. Further advice on handling the baby / child can be sought by contacting the BTM on 02896 150149.

### **Important**

***To ensure the baby or child can be expediently transferred to Alder Hey for Post Mortem, the BTM must be informed of all referrals for consented Post Mortem. Failure to inform the BTM of cases may result in significant delays in the transfer and Post Mortem examination of the case in Alder Hey Mortuary.***

### **1.4 Documentation Required**

**All required documentation must be completed, quality assured and forwarded with the baby/child on transfer to BTM. Any documents with omissions or discrepancies cannot be accepted and this is likely to delay the transfer of the baby/child to Alder Hey and cause additional distress to parent/s.**

Documentation must include:

- A Coroners Authorisation Proforma completed by the consenting doctor:
  - A Coroners Authorisation Proforma A 'Bilateral transfer of a baby/child /child up to the age of 16 **OR**

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 5 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

- A Coroners Authorisation Proforma B 'Bilateral transfer for pregnancy loss or miscarriage less than 24 weeks.'
- Body Transfer Form 1A or 1B (white and blue copies).
- A copy of the MCCD or Stillbirth Certificate.
- Appropriate Post Mortem Consent Form with parents contact details recorded if they have agreed to contact from Alder Hey Bereavement Team).
- DHSSP 'Consent for Hospital Post Mortem Examination of a Baby form – white / top copy only **OR**
- DHSSP 'Consent for Hospital Post Mortem Examination of Children over 28 days and Adults' – white/top copy only.
- A fully completed Alder Hey Post Mortem request form.
- A copy of the obstetric or clinical notes as appropriate to the case.
- If parent/s wish to travel to Alder Hey, a copy of the Form A: Outbound Travel Form for Paediatric Hospital Consented Post-Mortem Examination to Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
- \* **Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trusts only** - Cremation documentation if parents have requested hospital cremation.

All documentation must be placed into a sealed envelope with the name and date of birth of the baby/child or child written clearly on the front, and given to the funeral director transferring the baby or child to BTM. To avoid contamination, documentation **should not** be sent in the casket with the baby or child.

### **Important**

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 6 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	Laboratory Instruction
Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem			

***It is essential that all clinical documentation, in particular the Consent for PM Examination Form, has been quality assured and is accurate and complete before the case is transferred to the Belfast Trust Mortuary, in order that the transfer to Alder Hey and subsequent hospital PM examination is not delayed.***

## **2. Responsibilities of those Preparing Baby/Child for Transfer**

### **2.1 Identification**

**Babies (inc fetuses) and children:** In line with Human Tissue Authority codes of practice, 3 patient identifiers must be evident on **both** the casket and body. This must include the baby's full name, date of birth and H&C numbers (or hospital number). In cases where no H&C or hospital number is available for the baby, the mother numbers must be used as an identifier. Patient ID bracelets **must** be used denoting the 3 identifiers as above and attached to the baby in all cases. Patient ID bracelets can be hand written or in printed format. The mother addressograph labels **must not** be used to identify the baby. A hand written sticky label denoting the baby's details as per above must be attached to both the inside and outside of the casket. Any concerns with the identification of the baby or child must be discussed with the BTM before the case is transferred to the Belfast Trust Mortuary.

### **Important**

***It is essential that all babies and children are appropriately identified to ensure that the transfer to Alder Hey and subsequent hospital PM examination is not delayed.***

***If the identity of a baby or child is not specified or is unclear, the remains will be returned to the referring mortuary/hospital to be formally identified before any arrangements can be made to transfer the remains to Alder Hey, or a member of the referring ward team will be required to attend the BTM to formally identify the baby or child and attach a completed ID bracelet. This is***

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 7 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	Laboratory Instruction
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

***likely to delay the transfer of the baby/child to Alder Hey and cause additional distress to parents.***

***Any discrepancies with the identification of a baby/child or admission/clinical documentation, will be recorded on the Tissue Pathology minor error log (TP-536) or a BHSCT Datix form as appropriate.***

## **2.2 Preparation of Body**


The body should be laid out as flat as possible. Larger infants and children should have the head elevated in order to prevent post mortem hypostasis affecting the face. The body should be placed face-up, using cotton wool or similar to ensure that the face does not fall to one side as this can cause disfiguring post-mortem skin discolouration. Care should be taken not to wrap the baby or child too tightly or to over wrap.

If there is evidence of maceration or the baby or child is hydropic, it is advisable not to send the baby or child in clothes, as these may become stained by fluid or discharges from the body. Any accompanying items including clothes, should be wrapped separately or bagged. The baby or child will be dressed by BTM upon the return from Alder Hey.

Babies must be transferred in a suitable casket or corrugated plastic or cardboard box. If no suitable box or casket is available at the referring unit, advice should be sought from the BTM team. Larger infants or children may be transferred wrapped in a sheet or blanket where no suitable casket is available.

The placenta should be sent to the BTM with all babies for PM. The placenta must be placed into a dry, sealable container, and labeled with the mothers PID sticky label on both the lid and side of the container. No formaldehyde should be placed into the container.

## **2.3 Personal Items**

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Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 8 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

Any personal items accompanying the remains should be carefully placed into the casket or forwarded with the remains separately. Any personal items being sent to the BTM **must** be recorded on the body transfer form 1B by the referring unit. It is not possible to forward all personal effects with the baby/child or child for the onward journey to Alder Hey for Post Mortem. A blanket, small teddy bear and/or holy medal/symbol is acceptable to be sent with the baby/child or child to Alder Hey. All personal effects will be documented and any additional property removed in the Belfast Trust Mortuary prior to transfer. All personal effects will be returned to the body/casket upon their arrival back into the Belfast Trust Mortuary.

### **3. Responsibilities of Referring Trust Mortuary Staff**

#### **3.1 Transfer from Referring Hospital to BTM**

It is the responsibility of the referring Mortuary or ward to arrange transport of the baby/child to BTM.

**It is imperative that the baby/child arrives at BTM within the agreed timeframe to allow for the required preparations before onward transfer to Alder Hey. Any delay must be immediately discussed with BTM as an alternative transfer to Alder Hey may need to be arranged. Referring Mortuary teams must ensure the baby or child is appropriately identified as per point 2.1 above, and all paperwork is present and MUST be quality checked by the team prior to arranging the transfer to Belfast.**

The transfer of babies and children from Trusts outside of Belfast should take place during normal BTM operational hours. BTM operational hours can be found in section 1.1 of this guidance. Out of hours, the BTM on-call MTO can be contacted for advice on 07979 366041. The on-call MTO will advise on the timeframe for the baby or child to be admitted into the BTM for the timeliest transfer to Alder Hey. In exceptional cases, this may require an Out of Hours admission which will be facilitated.



Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 9 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	<b>Laboratory Instruction</b>
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

The referring Trust Mortuary and contracted funeral director must check and confirm ID as recorded on the patient armbands to confirm 3 patient identifiers before the case is transferred to the BTM. Any case where the ID is not evident or no patient armbands are present, **must** be retained at the referring Mortuary where the remains can be appropriately identified and labelled by ward staff. The referring Mortuary staff and contracted Funeral Director must sign section C2 of the Body Transfer Form confirming that patient ID has been checked and confirmed prior to the transfer to BTM. Any personal items accompanying the baby/child or child **must** be recorded on this form to ensure their safe return. A copy of the body transfer form must be sent with the baby or child along with the other necessary documentation as above.

### **3.2 Receiving a Baby/Child or Child back from BTM following Hospital PM Examination**

Upon completion of the hospital PM examination the baby or child will be brought back to the BTM by the Belfast Trust contracted Funeral Director. The BTM will contact the referring Trust Mortuary to inform them of the date for the return of the baby or child from the BTM to the referring Trust Mortuary. It is the responsibility of the staff there to organize the transfer of the baby or child back from the BTM.

To ensure the expedient return of the baby or child to the family it may be appropriate for the designated family Funeral Director to collect the baby or child directly from the BTM. The designated family Funeral Director must liaise with the referring Trust Mortuary and BTM in this case.

Any delay in Post Mortem examination or the return of the baby to Belfast from Alder Hey will be communicated to the referring unit and/or Trust bereavement support midwife by the BTM team. The referring Trust team must inform the parents of any delay to ensure they are informed of the current status of the referral.

Revision Number	3.0	Document Number	TP-1612
Author/Reviewer	D Orrell	Authoriser	R Wilson
Active Date	05/09/2024	Page Number	Page 10 of 10
Effective Date	05/09/2024	Document Type	Laboratory Instruction
<b>Guidance on the admission of Paediatric cases to the Belfast Trust Mortuary for consented hospital Post Mortem</b>			

