

## Still birth post mortem guidance launched

New information and guidance is now available for health professionals seeking consent regarding post mortems on babies.

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, has launched the Sands Post mortem consent package, which is designed to help bereaved parents whose baby has died before, during or shortly after birth.

Developed in consultation with the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) over a two-year period, the package covers a wide range of information that aims to make it easier for clinical staff and parents to discuss a post mortem.

In addition, it hopes to ensure that parents can make an informed choice as to whether to have a post mortem examination of their baby.

Sands was in close consultation with health professionals and bereaved parents across the United Kingdom throughout the development of the package, which contains a new Post mortem consent form, a Guide for consent takers, and a support booklet for parents: Deciding about a post mortem: Information for parents.

“When you have a baby who dies it seems that there’s nothing positive, and you just have to try to find something that might be positive,” said a bereaved Mum.

“For us, it was that we got an answer about why, but also, knowing that somebody else may gain from that.”

Post mortem rates for stillbirths in the UK have fallen considerably in the last decade, as have post mortem rates for neonatal deaths, meaning many parents are left with unanswered questions.

Why their baby died, and what might be done in subsequent pregnancies to avoid further deaths, are just a couple of the questions that bereaved parents have, and Alix Henley, Sands Advisor and co-author of the Sands post mortem package, hopes the new guidance can provide answers to such queries.

He said: “The main aim of any post mortem is to help parents understand why their baby died and to try to ensure the best care in a subsequent pregnancy.

“By using this package health professionals can ensure that parents are in a position to make a fully informed decision as to whether to have a post mortem examination of their baby.”