

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

SOP Title	Pregnancy loss (less than 16/40)– Sensitive disposal of non-viable fetus (fetal remains) NVF		
SOP Number	049		
Care Group	Women and Children's		
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1	15.3.19	Alex Keene	Live	Full review 15.3.24
2	22.04.24	Reviewed by Kerry Redge, Lead EPAS Clinical Nurse Specialist	Live	Ratified in Gynae and Fertility Governance

SOP Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a clear pathway for the sensitive disposal of fetal remains (NVF) • To ensure that medical and nursing staff are appropriately trained in dealing with pregnancy loss and consent for sensitive disposal of a non-viable fetus
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the correct process for sensitive disposal is adhered to, to comply with patient's wishes and relevant legislation. • SaTH has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate counselling is provided for patients and partners, this will ensure that their choice of disposal method is an informed choice and meets with local agreed procedures • To ensure correct consent process is adhered to re: cremation or patients own arrangements.
Performance Measures	Audit, Datix

Number	Brief	Responsibility
1.	The primary requirements for the handling and sensitive disposal of fetal remains/tissue are to comply with the patient's wishes and legal requirements	Nursing and medical teams. pathology
2.	The term non-viable fetus NVF refers to any fetal tissue/remains obtained through natural miscarriage or through any surgical or medical intervention including ectopic pregnancy.	
3.	If the patient has had previous scan and a fetus has been identified and documented on Maternity Information System (MIS), any fetal remains or tissue that is passed is treated as NVF	
4.	If the patient presents with a miscarriage and passes an identifiable fetus this will be handled as a NVF	
5.	Where a fetus has not been identified as below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No previous scan • Fetus not identified on scan • Patient presents with heavy bleeding • Following surgical or medical intervention Tissue will be sent to histology for analysis, if fetal tissue remains are identified then this will be handled as a NVF	
6.	SATH offers Shared Cremation of NVF undertaken at Emstrey Crematorium. Parents are not able to attend any service and it is not possible to recover any individual remains. Any collective ashes are scattered in the garden of remembrance where patients and their families are able to attend.	crematorium
7.	Parents may decide to make their own private arrangements either burial or private cremation. The hospital does not contribute to any costs incurred. The patient will need to contact an undertaker who will liaise with the hospital mortuary.	Parents Medical and Nursing staff
8.	Parents have a legal right to take fetal tissue or remains home. Within HTA guidance, to bury any fetal tissue at home legal requirements need to be adhered to (see sop)	Parents Medical and Nursing staff
9.	Parents need to be counselled re options and sensitive disposal of fetal remains or tissue (NVF). When counselling patients, the integrated disposal form must be completed and signed by both patient and Dr/Nurse trained in obtaining sensitive consent.	Parents Medical and Nursing staff
10.	Where a fetus has not been identified (see point 5) and tissue is going to be sent to histology to confirm presence of fetal tissue patient should be counselled re sensitive disposal of fetal remains and sensitive disposal of products of conception (see POC sop). When counselling patients the integrated disposal form MUST be completed.	Nursing and Medical teams
11.	The gathering of remembrance must be discussed with patient and the integrated disposal form completed. A copy of the integrated disposal form needs to be sent to EPAS bereavement team. Patients are invited to a bi-annual gathering of remembrance by post.	Nursing and Medical teams
12.	Completed integrated disposal form sent with NVF to the mortuary for sensitive storage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital cremation – NVF sent to Emstrey Crematorium • Private burial/cremation- patients undertaker to collect NVF • If parent wishes to take remains home, parents to liaise with EPAS Specialist nurse to accompany parents to the mortuary to collect NVF 	Nursing and Medical teams