Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Historical maternity hospitals, units and cemeteries Berkshire (1920–1990)

Information to help families seeking answers following stillbirth or pregnancy loss

Sensitive content warning

This information sheet contains references to stillbirth, pregnancy loss and historical practices relating to the burial and cremation of babies. Some of the information may be upsetting or bring back painful memories.

Please take care when reading and consider whether you would like someone to be with you. Support is available if you need it, and details of organisations that can help are included at the end of this document.

Why have we produced this information?

We recognise that some parents and families have lived for many years with unanswered questions about what happened to their baby following a stillbirth or pregnancy loss.

Until the mid-1980s, bereavement care, communication and the involvement of parents in arrangements following the death of a baby were very different from today. In some circumstances, babies were buried or cremated without their parents being involved in, or fully informed about, the arrangements. As a result, some families have been left uncertain about where their baby was laid to rest or what happened following their death.

On 13 October 2026, the Government issued an apology for the distress caused by these historical practices and the additional pain experienced by families who have been unable to find clear information about their baby. It also set out practical actions to support families seeking answers.

We understand how important it can be for parents and other family members to find information, however long ago their loss happened.

We have produced this information to help families identify hospitals and maternity units that provided services in and around Berkshire, as well as local cemeteries and crematoria that may hold historical records.

We hope it provides a useful starting point for anyone wishing to find out more.

Maternity hospitals and units

The following information has been compiled by Berkshire Healthcare's Library and Knowledge Services team. It identifies maternity hospitals and units serving Berkshire communities between 1920 and 1990.

If you are trying to find information about your baby's birth, burial or cremation, knowing the name and location of the hospital or maternity unit may help you identify where historical records could be held.

We understand that looking for this information may be an emotional experience. Please take your time and seek support if you need it.

1. Hospitals currently providing maternity services:

- Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading
- Wexham Park Hospital, Slough
- Frimley Park Hospital, Surrey
- Great Western Hospital, Swindon
- Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, Basingstoke

2. Former maternity hospitals and units: these sites were identified as having previously provided maternity services but no longer do so.

- **Heatherwood Hospital**

A specialist maternity unit was built in 1972. In 1995, the service was downgraded to midwife deliveries only, with specialist care transferred to Wexham Park Hospital.

- **St Mark's Hospital, Maidenhead**

Founded in 1948. Maternity services are recorded in the 1950s.

- **Upton Hospital, Slough**

Records indicate that maternity patients were cared for at the hospital after 1948. The closure date of the maternity service is unclear.

- **King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor**

The Old Windsor Unit.

3. Closed maternity hospitals and units: the following sites were also identified in the historical research:

- Battle Hospital, Reading – Early to late 1900's
- Didcot and District Maternity Hospital – Referenced in National Archives records
- Dellwood Maternity Home, Tilehurst – Historical maternity home
- Binfield Nursing Association's Infant Welfare Centre – 1929 – 1934
- Maternity Home, 70-72 Alma Road, Windsor, 1936
- Wokingham Hospital Maternity Unit – Approximately 1950's – 1990
- Sandleford Hospital Maternity Unit – 1960

4. Emergency maternity homes: during the Second World War, a number of emergency maternity homes operated in the area. The following locations were identified in the historical research:

- **Frilford St Peter, Frilford Health 1919 – 1946**
- **Folly Farm, Sulhampstead 1940 – 1948**
- **Upton Lodge, Didcot 1940 – 1947**
- **Rashleighs, Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead 1940 – 1946**
- **Eboracum, Murdock Road, Wokingham 1941 – 1945**
- **Fieldside, Blewbury 1941**
- **Inglenook and White House, Maidenhead 1941**
- **Oakley House, Frilford Health 1942 – 1944**
- **Purley Hall, Purley 1944 – 1946**

Berkshire cemeteries and crematoriums

If you are trying to establish where your baby was buried or cremated, the cemetery or crematorium where arrangements were made may hold historical records that could help.

The following information may help you identify the relevant organisation to contact.

Reading and Caversham:
Hemdean Road Cemetery - originally opened as Caversham Cemetery in 1885 and managed by Caversham Burial Board.
Henley Road Cemetery, Caversham - opened in 1927 and managed by Reading Borough Council.
Reading Crematorium - built at Henley Road Cemetery in 1932.

Slough:
Slough Cemetery - established in 1932.
Slough Crematorium - opened in 1963.

Windsor and Maidenhead:
All Saints Cemetery, Maidenhead
Braywick Cemetery, Maidenhead
Spittal Cemetery, Windsor
Oakley Green Cemetery, Windsor

Historical records are held by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council.
There is no crematorium in Windsor or Maidenhead. Slough Crematorium was used by many local residents.

Newbury:
Newton Road Cemetery - opened in 1847. Some historical records are held by Friends of the Newton Road Cemetery.
Shaw Cemetery - opened in 1891 and managed by Newbury Town Council.
Newbury did not have a crematorium during this period, so residents would have travelled to Reading for cremation services.

Other historical records

Royal Berkshire Archives:
The Royal Berkshire Archives holds records for the Berkshire Coroner covering 1918–1942. These may be relevant to some historical enquiries.

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM):
The ICCM website provides information about cemeteries and crematoria across the UK and may help you identify the appropriate organisation to contact.

Website: www.iccm-uk.com

You may also find it helpful to contact the local authority responsible for the area where the hospital or maternity unit was located.

How can Berkshire Healthcare help?

We do not currently provide maternity services and did not historically manage maternity services. However, some of our hospital sites have previously been used for maternity care.

Over the years, NHS organisations and services have undergone significant changes. Hospitals have closed, services have transferred and organisations have merged or changed their responsibilities. This can make it difficult to establish which organisation may hold historical information.

If you are unsure where to direct an enquiry after reading this information, you can contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Berkshire Healthcare PALS
Email: PALS@berkshire.nhs.uk

Our PALS team can provide the same published information and signposting contained in this document and on our website but may not be able to offer additional historical information or trace individual burial or cremation records.

Please be aware that we do not hold a central collection of historical maternity, burial or cremation records. Where information is held by another organisation, you may need to contact that organisation directly.

Emotional support and further guidance

We recognise that looking for information about your baby may bring back painful memories, feelings or questions. You may find the process difficult, and you do not have to go through it alone.

Sands – supporting anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby

Sands provides information and emotional support to parents, families and anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby, no matter how long ago it happened.

Sands has produced a helpful guide for people who are trying to trace their baby's grave, burial or cremation record. Although Sands cannot search for records on your behalf, its guidance explains where you might be able to find information and how to approach the relevant organisations.

Read the Sands guide: Tracing a baby's grave or cremation record
https://www.sands.org.uk/sites/default/files/Tracing_a_babys_grave.pdf

You can also contact Sands for support:

Telephone: 0808 164 3332 (Sands Helpline)
Email: helpline@sands.org.uk
Local support: Find a local Sands support group.
Online support: Visit www.sands.org.uk for information and other support resources.

Important information about this historical research

The information in this document has been compiled by Berkshire Healthcare Library and Knowledge Services:

It is intended as a guide to possible locations of historical maternity services and places where records may be held. It is not a definitive list, and inclusion of a hospital, maternity unit, cemetery or crematorium does not confirm that historical records still exist or that they are held by Berkshire Healthcare.

NHS organisations and hospital services have changed considerably over the years. Records may have been transferred to another organisation, local authority or archive. Some records may be incomplete or may no longer be available.

We cannot guarantee that information or records will be found, but hope that this document provides a helpful starting point for families seeking answers.