

Guidance on the handling and disposal of foetal tissue up to 24 weeks gestation



NHSGGC has a policy which provides guidance on the handling and disposal of tissue which contains, or potentially contains fetal tissue of up to 24 weeks gestation. The aim is to ensure that all fetal tissue is handled appropriately and disposed of respectfully.

Samples may include:

Medical Termination of Pregnancy tissue

Surgical Termination of Pregnancy tissue

Ectopic Pregnancy tissue

Any tissue from an Early Pregnancy Loss

Retained Products of Conception specimens

Fetuses of less than 24 weeks gestation where there has been a Post-Mortem examination

In the Emergency Department, medical and nursing staff may be required to send samples of fetal tissue for histopathological examination or arrange for sensitive disposal of such samples. The majority of these samples will come from patients with an early pregnancy loss.

An early pregnancy loss tissue sample includes spontaneously passed tissue and surgically removed tissue. The sender must decide whether histopathological examination is desirable. Indications for examination include confirmation of products of conception, exclusion of gestational trophoblastic disease or investigation of the cause of recurrent miscarriage.

If histopathological examination is required, then the specimen should be sent to Pathology with a Pathology request form AND an 'Authorisation for sensitive disposal following pregnancy loss' **FORM SD7***. After reporting, any residual tissue is transferred to the mortuary for sensitive disposal by cremation. If the patient opts to take the specimen home after reporting, then a 'Release of Tissue' **FORM SD8**** should be submitted with the original sample.

If no histopathological examination is required and the patient wishes the hospital to sensitively dispose of the tissue, then the specimen is transferred directly to the mortuary for cremation along with **FORM SD7**.

If no histopathological examination is required and the patient wishes to take the tissue home from the hospital, then a 'Release of Tissue' **FORM SD8** should be completed. **FORM SD7** should also be completed to provide an audit trail for the tissue. Both forms are to be sent to the mortuary for registration.

FORM SD7* 'Authorisation for sensitive disposal following pregnancy loss'

FORM SD8** 'Release of tissue'