



PRESS RELEASE

No: 591/2017

Date: 4th October 2017

The Garden Of Serenity: In Memory of All Pregnancy Losses and Stillborn Infants

The GHA has announced a series of improvements to the care of women using Maternity services. After a consultation with the community and staff, it was identified that there was a greater need for a service for women who suffered miscarriage and pregnancy loss. As a result, the GHA enacted a programme of works, which has culminated in the development of a new service.

A designated private area within the maternity unit has been refurbished to allow women to receive appropriate investigation and care and holistic support during these difficult emotional times. GHA's midwives have received additional training in the management of miscarriage and pregnancy loss. New guidelines, including those for the Accident and Emergency Department, have been developed to improve care. In addition, specialist neonatal pathologists from St Georges Hospital London will support the service.

Comprehensive local information has been developed for women and their partners, after consultation with women who have experienced such loss. This will be available in written form and is accessible on the GHA website. Further, there is a dedicated book of remembrance for all early pregnancy losses before 20 weeks in the early pregnancy unit. Women and their partners will be able, if they wish, to acknowledge their loss in this special book of remembrance.

The GHA has invested in the development of a memorial garden within the grounds of the hospital. In the garden, there are marble plinths where small plaques can be attached with the details of those babies lost after 20 weeks gestation.

The Ministry of Health and GHA would also like to thank the Zammit Group of Companies for kindly donating the furniture in the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, said: "Losing a baby can only but be a deeply personal experience that affects everyone in different ways. Sadly, miscarriages are not uncommon. This service has been developed to provide the best standard of care for women and their partners at this most difficult time in their lives, by ensuring the care they require is provided in the most efficient, empathic and compassionate way possible.



“Services to further enhance the routine care of pregnant women have commenced. A new role, called the liaison midwife, has been created to provide early information and support to women after they have completed registration at the Primary Care Centre. The liaison midwife will be present at the PCC three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9am and 1pm, which will coincide with the opening times of the pregnancy registration department. The liaison midwife will also be able to advise, and if required, make urgent referrals to the consultants at St Bernard’s Hospital. These arrangements will reduce the need for women to contact the maternity unit by telephone prior to booking an appointment, as the liaison midwife will provide them with comprehensive information about their pregnancy. The designation of a liaison midwife within the Primary Care Centre is an important public health step in supporting women to ensure they have a healthy pregnancy.

“My Ministry, the GHA & Midwives recognise that during this very emotional time in a family’s life, it is very important that there is a private area where acknowledgment is given to all those infants who have passed. The midwives hope that the Garden of Serenity will, in some small way, help parents through an emotional and overwhelming time in their lives”.