

# Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

HWLG(3)-12-10-p6: 24 June 2010

Dear Miss Marshall

## Re- Pennington Inquiry into S.Wales 2005 E.coli Outbreak.

It's been 4yrs since my 5yr old son Mason fell victim to E.coli 0157. Every single day i still recall every detail of his passing with agonising clarity. To see my son suffer so much and not be able to do anything to take away his pain will remain with me always. My Family and i miss him so much and the love i feel for my son makes me all the more determined not to let his death be in vain.

Mason paid the ultimate price for eating a school dinner, food which we all take for granted to be safe and that we all assume to be fit for human consumption once it reaches our plates. I am still to this day not confident that the Public Bodies that are in their positions to protect us ensuring that what we eat now can be deemed any safer than what it was in the lead up to the 2005 outbreak.

I believe that the Assembly Government should be doing all it can to ensure the Local Authorities prioritise food hygiene sufficiently.

Following the Wishaw Outbreak in Scotland in 1997 that is exactly what the Scottish Executive did. Local Authorities there received 2.6 million every year for 5yrs to enable them to put the recommendations into action. This amount was ring fenced especially for this area.

The Welsh Assembly Government as given no additional funding dedicated to applying Professor Penningtons recommendations. They spent 2.3 million on holding it but after the Inquiry ended they did not seem to have put together an action plan or taking a leading role on implementation. They have basically left it all up to Local Authorities to decide how to implement changes and to somehow finance the work themselves.

This is to great a risk and does not guarantee an effective and consistant plan for the benefit of Wales. There is the argument from the Welsh Assembly Government that we are in tough economic times and there are a lot of competing priorities for money but i believe there is an urgent need to protect funding for food hygiene especially in tough economic times.

I truly believe that the Welsh Assembly Governments negative attitude towards the funding of Professor Penningtons recommendations could possibly result in a Pennington 3.

The Welsh Assembly Government is not doing all it can to protect it's people.

My 5yr old son lost his life needlessly and a number of other young children are still suffering greatly from the aftermath of this outbreak. Some will need ongoing treatment and care for the foreseeable future.

The E.coli Inquiry left no stone unturned and vast amounts of evidence arose from it. We are extremely grateful to Professor Pennington for all his hard work in compiling his report and introducing extremely good recommendations.

The Consumer Focus Wales report as also given us much needed transparency which is what we called for after the recommendations were announced.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Assembly for voting to hold the Public Inquiry. Without this we possibly would never have known the full extent of the failings that led to our sons death. The challenge now is to make sure that those recommendations are put into action as fully as possible and that the Welsh Assembly Government takes charge of this process.

I will be attending the Senydd on the 24th June 2010 along with Masons Dad and other members of my family.

Kind regards,

Sharon Mills.