

P-05-912 Supporting Families with Sudden and Unexpected Death in Children and Young Adults

This petition was submitted by Rhian Mannings having collected a total of 5,682 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide support for a service here in Wales to ensure families who unexpectedly lose their child or young adult aged 25 years and under get the support they require.

In February 2012 my son George died suddenly in an Emergency Unit in Wales. We walked out into the night with nothing, alone and frightened. Nobody came, nobody reached out to support us and it was left to devastated friends and family to support my husband Paul and I. Five days after we lost our son my surviving two young children and I faced more heartache when Paul took his own life. Once again nobody came.

Families require support immediately after such loss. They need to have a point of contact if they have questions and a friendly ear to listen. You never get over the loss of your child and families need to know there is long term support in place for to help them through the grieving process.

There is no planning or preparation prior to a sudden death and the effect of traumatic loss can have a huge impact on the mental health of parents, siblings and other family members. We believe this support is essential and will prevent families walking out into the night with no hope, no support and most importantly without their child.

Additional Information

Since 2012 I have been determined to ensure families get the same support when they say goodbye to their child as they do when they welcome it into the world at birth. 2 Wish Upon A Star was established to support families and staff through the unexpected loss of a child or young adult aged 25 years and under. This support includes memory boxes, counselling and an immediate support pathway working with health boards and police forces here in Wales. We have had more than 465 referrals since we started

supporting families in 2015. The causes of death include SIDS, accidents, illness and more recently many young suicides. The feedback we get from both families and staff has been extremely positive, but we know many families are not being referred to us and many still need our support.

2 Wish Upon A Star already works with every health board in Wales and are supported by every police force. We have immediate support pathways in place in every Emergency Unit and Critical Care Unit and our pathway is clearly outlined in the Public Health Wales PRUDiC document. We also work with every Coroner, Mortuary, Organ Donation Team and Wales Air Ambulance to make sure no family is missed. However, many families still go without support. Staff have been known to 'forget' to give memory boxes, decided that the family of a 18 year old does not require support as 'he had stubble' and that the offer of support at time of death is 'not appropriate'. It is not for the professional involved to decide if a family require support.

We know by speaking to staff and families that our service is changing lives for everyone involved in the sudden death of a child or young adult and we want the Welsh Government to ensure all families get the offer of support when needed most.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central