



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1255  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00500/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

1 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your email of 27 January concerning Petition P-06-1255 Ensure fathers/birth partners are involved in all assessments & care throughout the perinatal period.

I recognise from the very start of a child's life, the relationship with both parents is crucial to their well-being and development. At the heart of all our children and early years policies, is the support and promotion of the positive involvement of all parents in a child's upbringing.

During the pandemic, attendance restrictions were put in place in health care settings, to ensure the safety and well-being of the birthing parent, their babies, and the staff who supported them and indeed to safeguard everyone who needed access to maternity services at the time. I recognise that these restrictions will have had an adverse impact on the amount of time some fathers and parents were able to spend with their babies in their earliest days. Attendance of partners in maternity services has been based on a local, risk assessment approach by each health board. Maternity services facilities and accommodation differs widely between health boards, so risk assessments needed to be undertaken on an independent, local basis.

As we enter a new phase of the Pandemic, officials are looking at the guidance issued to health boards to ensure visiting policies including attendance at maternity services by fathers and partners will be sustainable and appropriate and will look to reduce variation in policy across Wales. I will be looking for this advice to balance the safety of people attending and working in our healthcare settings with their well-being and access to support and care from family and friends.

In January I announced £1.15million to launch a Maternity and Neonatal Safety Support Programme.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

As part of this Programme we are funding a Service User Engagement Manager who will look at how we can better engage with parents and families at both a national and local level. I would like to ensure the experiences of all parents and families, including fathers helps to shape future policy and the safety of our maternity, perinatal and neonatal services and they are improved through fair and inclusive treatment.

To support the initial discovery work it would be very helpful if the newly appointed official, when in post, could meet with the petitioner to discuss his experiences and discuss the changes he would like to see in the future, in terms of engagement and inclusion of fathers and partners. If you think this would be a good course of action, I would be grateful if you would ask the petitioner if he would be happy to share his contact details with my office. Alternatively he is welcome to contact Karen Jewell Senior Midwifery Officer for Maternity and Early Years directly ( [Karen.jewell@gov.wales](mailto:Karen.jewell@gov.wales) ) to set up a meeting.

Thank you for bringing this important matter to my attention

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services