

# Allow Welsh families who have experienced baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain a baby loss certificate

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Tachwedd 2024  
Petitions Committee | 4 November 2024

Reference: SR24/9547/8

**Petition Number:** P-06-1464

**Petition title:** Allow Welsh families who have experienced Baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain a baby loss certificate

**Text of petition:** The UK government have introduced baby loss certificates for families in England who have lost babies prior to 24 weeks. This doesn't apply to Welsh families. Let's get this changed!!

## 1. Background

The UK Government launched a scheme on 22 February 2024 to enable parents whose baby died before 24 weeks of pregnancy to apply for a free certificate to provide recognition of their loss. Applicants must be at least 16 years of age and live in England. The certificate is an official but not legal document.



The certificate was originally available to any parent who has experienced a loss since 1 September 2018, but the UK Government has now removed this cut-off date.

Campaigners are calling for a similar scheme in Wales.

In Scotland, parents who have experienced pregnancy and baby loss prior to 24 weeks can already apply to have their baby recorded in the Memorial Book of pregnancy and baby loss, and will receive a commemorative certificate of their entry.

## 2. Welsh Parliament action

Members of the Senedd have questioned the Welsh Government on this issue on a number of occasions.

On 23 April 2024 in response to a written question, the then Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care said:

On 22 February, the UK Government launched a voluntary scheme to allow parents whose baby died before 24 weeks of pregnancy to apply for a free certificate to provide recognition of their loss. This is currently available to any parent who has experienced a loss before 24 weeks in England since 1 September 2018. The UK Government plans to extend the eligibility criteria and remove the existing time limit when it is able to do so. My officials are working closely with their UK counterparts to explore how the scheme could be extended to Wales.

Currently, all families who experience pregnancy loss at maternity units in Wales are supported by bereavement midwives and, in conjunction with the Sands charity, are offered memory boxes, which include a commemorative “birth certificate”. We are also collaborating with parent organisations, including Sands and experts in this area, to implement the National Bereavement Care Pathways across Wales specifically for miscarriage, stillbirth and pregnancy loss.

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### 3. Welsh Government response

In response to the petition the Welsh Government repeats that officials are working closely with their UK Government counterparts to explore how the scheme operating in England could be extended to Wales. It goes on to say:

We recognise there are improvements to be made to the bereavement care and support available across Wales, including for early pregnancy loss. We have provided funding to the NHS Executive to work with organisations, including Sands and experts in this area to implement the national bereavement care pathways across Wales specifically for miscarriage, stillbirth and baby loss.

Earlier this year, we commissioned Sands to undertake a series of listening events across Wales with bereaved families and staff who have supported and cared for them. The information gathered will support the development of a Wales-specific national bereavement care pathway. We expect phase two – the development and rollout of the pathways for pregnancy and baby loss – will start in the coming months.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.