

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Health and Social Care Committee**

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



William Powell AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

27 May 2015

Dear William,

Petition P-04-603 Helping babies born at 22 weeks to survive

Thank you for your letter relating to the above subject, received on 23 April 2015.

The Health and Social Care Committee (“the Committee”) is grateful to you for drawing this matter to its attention, and to Emma Jones for submitting a petition on this important subject. The Committee notes the correspondence that you have had on this issue, particularly the most recent letter you have received from the Minister.

In his letter, the Minister notes that decisions on whether medical assistance should be given to babies born alive and breathing before 23 weeks is both difficult and nuanced, and that they are best made by clinicians in discussions with parents. Your letter notes that while you agree with this general point, you do not necessarily believe that current guidelines strike the right balance or that they should not be subject to public scrutiny.

The Committee considered your request that it undertake an inquiry on this petition at its meeting on 13 May 2015. While committee members acknowledged the significant and sensitive subject to which the petition relates, you will be aware that the Committee has a heavy legislative workload at the moment. Unfortunately, this means that its programme is likely to be

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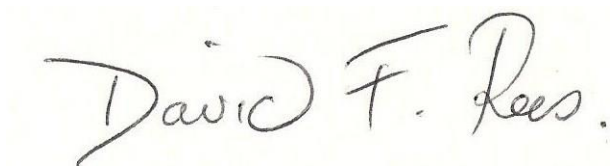
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

full for a significant amount of this calendar year and would not allow the time that is necessary to give this complex matter the consideration it requires. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed to:

- seek written clarification from the Chief Medical Officer about her expectations of individual hospitals' application of professional guidance for the treatment and care of extremely premature babies;
- reflect on the CMO's response, and options for future scrutiny of this topic, when it considers its forward work programme later this year.

I attach a copy of the Committee's letter to the Chief Medical Officer for your awareness, and will share her response once received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'D' and 'R'.

David Rees AM

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee