



21th July 2023

Dear Steve,

The Independent Pregnancy Loss Review & Government Response

I am writing to inform you that the final report of the Independent Pregnancy Loss Review, 'Care and Support when baby loss occurs before 24 weeks gestation' will be published on gov.uk tomorrow and laid in the House of Commons as a Command Paper on Monday 24th July. In addition to this, we will publish our Government response.

The Review was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in England and led by Zoe Clark-Coates MBE and Samantha Collinge RM. The report fulfils the requirement set out in the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019 which requires the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the preparation and publication of a report on whether, and if so how, the law ought to be changed to require or permit the registration of pregnancy losses which cannot be registered as still-births under the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953.

The Review examined the impact on families of not being able to formally register a baby or pregnancy loss before 24 weeks gestation and whether it would be beneficial to introduce a registration or certification of loss scheme to recognise what has happened and help parents who are grieving. In an interim report provided to me last year, the Review recommended that the government should introduce a voluntary scheme to enable parents who have experienced a pre-24 weeks baby or pregnancy loss to record and receive a certificate to provide recognition of their loss. The recording and issuing of a certificate to bereaved parents who want one will provide comfort and support by validating their loss.

I subsequently included a commitment to introduce a new Certificate of Baby Loss in the Women's Health Strategy for England. Further work has since been undertaken to take forward this proposal, and national roll out will start during Baby Loss Awareness Week, 9th – 15th October. The certificate will also be tested with 1,000 bereaved families who will be able to advise government on the application process. Those involved with testing this summer will be able to receive a certificate themselves.

The Review's Terms of Reference also included looking at options to improve NHS gynaecology and maternity care practice for parents who experience a miscarriage and other causes of baby loss before 24 weeks gestation.

The report clearly describes the experiences of many women and their partners who seek NHS care and support during and after losing a baby or pregnancy before 24 weeks gestation. It also describes the constraints often faced by NHS staff in trying to provide high-quality and compassionate care. It is important that we listen to the voices of the women and men who bravely shared their experiences with the hope of improving future care for those going through a baby or pregnancy loss before 24 weeks gestation.

The report makes 73 recommendations that describe a comprehensive plan for improving the quality and experience of care for miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy and terminations of pregnancy for medical reasons.

Our response at this time considers in detail what action we can take in the short term to improve the care and experiences of those who suffer early baby loss.

Going forward, together with the NHS and the wider healthcare system, we will carefully consider each of the remaining recommendations made by the Review in turn and seek to publish an annual update of our work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maria', with a stylized flourish above the name.

MARIA CAULFIELD