



## **Briefing from Sands on the Always There campaign for women who are pregnant following loss to be able to access Continuity of Carer in maternity services in Scotland**

### **Action needed**

All women who are pregnant again following the death of a baby should have immediate access to a well-resourced and properly implemented model of "Continuity of Carer" in their local maternity service.

### **About Continuity of Carer**

Care from the same midwife or small team of midwives throughout pregnancy and birth, and in the days afterwards is known as "Continuity of Carer" and is currently being rolled out in Scotland. When a single midwife or team of midwives cares for a woman and her family there is more opportunity to develop a vital relationship of trust and to hear and understand individual needs and concerns. Women who are pregnant following the death of a baby are not currently prioritised for this model of care.

Research shows that women who receive continuity of care are; 16 per cent less likely to lose their baby, 19 per cent less likely to lose their baby before 24 weeks and 24 per cent less likely to experience pre-term birth<sup>1</sup>. Women receiving continuity of care report higher ratings of maternal satisfaction with the care they received.

### **Why is this important for women who are pregnant following a previous loss?**

This model of care has been shown to save lives and creates emotional and psychological safety for parents. This is particularly important when a baby dies, or for those pregnant following loss.

Sands estimate that that if every woman who had lost a baby post 24 weeks and up to 28 days old went on to have another pregnancy in the following 12 months, that would equate to 1 in every 135 pregnancies. This is an achievable target, that would protect this vulnerable group as services recover from Covid and the model is rolled out.

### **What is the current situation and what are we calling for?**

The Scottish Government committed to all pregnant women being able to access Continuity of Carer in *The Best Start* plan in 2017<sup>2</sup>. Rollout of the model has begun with vulnerable families being offered additional tailored support. The Government recognised pregnant women who've experienced a previous loss as vulnerable in visiting guidance for maternity appointments during Covid<sup>3</sup>, a principle that we believe should also be applied when prioritising those to receive Continuity of Carer.

**We are calling on the Scottish Government to ensure that as the midwifery-led Continuity of Carer model is rolled out, every woman who is pregnant following again after the death of a baby is able to access it as a priority.**

### **About Sands**

Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity, works across the UK to support anyone affected by the death of a baby, improve the care that parents receive from the NHS, and reduce the number of babies dying.

### **For more information**

Contact [campaigns@sands.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@sands.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004667.pub5/full>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-five-year-forward-plan-maternity-neonatal-care-scotland/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/06/coronavirus-covid-19-hospital-visiting-guidance/documents/coronavirus-covid-19-maternity-and-neonatal-settings-visiting-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-maternity-and-neonatal-settings-visiting-guidance/govscot%3Adocument/Revised%2BVisiting%2Bin%2BMaternity%2Band%2BNeonatal%2BGuidance%2BFinal%2B2%2BDecember.pdf>