

The next Welsh government must commit to saving more babies' lives and supporting bereaved parents



sands 

Saving babies' lives.
Supporting bereaved families.

Sands. Charity Registered in Scotland SC042789, England and Wales 299679. We also operate in Northern Ireland.
Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 2212082. Registered Address: 10-18 Union Street, London, SE1 1SZ.

Introduction

With Senedd elections in May 2026, this baby loss awareness week (9-15 October) a group of bereaved parents, supported by Sands, have launched a petition addressed to the next Welsh Government. The petition calls on the next Welsh Government to adopt ambitious targets to save more babies' lives in Wales and ensure that all bereaved families can access the bereavement care they need.

Why should the government adopt targets?

Despite an overall decline in stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates in Wales since 2010, there has been a lack of consistent progress in reducing deaths. In contrast, in England where the government adopted national maternity safety ambitions in 2015, there has been more sustained progress.

Whilst the ambitions will not be fully met, they have helped to focus policy decisions on reducing rates in England.

By 2022, the stillbirth rate in England was

23.5% lower

than the 2010 rate and the neonatal mortality rate was

25.0% lower.

The Sands and Tommy's Joint Policy Unit (JPU) have proposed new targets for all nations in the UK to align under, with an expiry date of 2035. This includes:

- A stillbirth rate of 2.0 stillbirths per 1,000 total births.
- A neonatal mortality rate of 0.5 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births for babies born at 24 weeks' gestation and over.
- Eliminate inequalities in these outcomes based on ethnicity and deprivation.

Focussed on matching the best performing countries in Europe, if met these targets would have a **significant impact**.



Over

1,000 babies in Wales may have survived

if stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates had been the same as the best performing countries in Europe between 2019-2023.¹

Key messages



- There has been a **lack of sustained progress** in reducing stillbirth and neonatal death rates in Wales.
- The Sands and Tommy's JPU have proposed ambitious targets to **match the best performing countries** in Europe.

Improving support for bereaved parents in Wales

When a family experiences baby loss, they must be able to access high-quality bereavement care. This includes information and referral to specialist psychological support if needed.

Where someone lives and their background can affect their chances of getting the care and support they need. The next Welsh Government must commit to supporting Health Boards to implement a National Bereavement Care Pathway for Wales.

Following pregnancy or baby loss, some bereaved parents may develop mental health needs requiring specialist psychological support. **Currently the only Health Board with a specialist psychological support pathway for baby loss is Cardiff and Vale.** In July 2025, the government announced plans to evaluate and replicate existing psychological support services in Cardiff across Wales. This evaluation and rollout must include the specialist baby loss pathway.

Key messages



- All bereaved parents must be able to **access high-quality bereavement care.**
- The next government must commit to **supporting Health Boards to implement a National Bereavement Care Pathway** for Wales.
- The next government in Wales must commit to **evaluating the specialist baby loss psychological support pathway** in Cardiff and Vale and expanding it to all Health Boards across Wales.



How you can help



Write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care – Jeremy Miles MS – and the Minister for Women's Health – Sarah Murphy MS – raising these issues. We would be happy to provide a template letter.



Contact your party's health spokesperson – and ask them to commit to adopting targets to save babies' lives and ensure all bereaved parents in Wales can access high-quality bereavement care in your party's manifesto. We can provide a template letter.



Table written parliamentary questions or raise the campaign in the chamber – we can support you with briefings and suggested questions.