

PE2082: Improve the support provided to families affected by cot death

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to stop promoting The Lullaby Trust to Scottish families for cot death support, as this charity only provides support to families who live in England and Wales; and improve the practical support available to families by prioritising the promotion of The Scottish Cot Death Trust who have been supporting families since 1985.

Background

Cot death or Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) are the terms used when healthy infants die suddenly and unexpectedly with no apparent reason for their death.

Known risk factors for SUDI include avoidable and unavoidable factors:

- Male gender
- Second born or later
- Small for gestational age or prematurity
- Prone and side sleeping position
- Unsafe bedding
- Parental smoking and substance use
- Co-sleeping

Prevention campaigns over the years have focused on reducing avoidable risk factors. This has included highlighting the increased risk of co-sleeping and encouraging caregivers to place infants on their backs to sleep (e.g. the Back to Sleep campaign).

Despite a reduction in the number of SUDIs over the years, it is still the most common cause of death in infants between 1 and 12 months old. In

Scotland, there are around 40 SUDIs every year which equates to a death every 9 days.

Scottish Cot Death Trust

The [Scottish Cot Death Trust](#) describes itself as ‘the only charity in Scotland dedicated to the sudden and unexpected death of babies and young children’.

The Trust provides funding for research as well as campaigns and education on how to reduce the risks. It also provides bereavement support to anyone affected by SUDI.

In [its most recent return to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator \(OSCR\)](#), the Trust details its income for 2022/23 was £203,695. This income came from a mixture of donations, fundraising, grants and investments.

Scottish Government Action

The petition is calling for the Scottish Government to stop supporting the Lullaby Trust. This may be referring to the fact that the Scottish Government recently developed new [advice on safe sleeping](#) along with the [Lullaby Trust](#), the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative and the Baby Sleep Information Source.

A recent [statement from the Solicitor General for Scotland on safe sleeping](#) also includes the Lullaby Trust helpline number.

In its annual return to OSCR, the Scottish Cot Death Trust highlights differences between the Scottish Government’s messaging on safe sleeping, and that promoted by the Trust:

“We continue to operate in a landscape where there is variation between the safe sleep messages of Scottish Government and the Trust, particularly relating to bed-sharing. We recognise that mixed messages can be confusing for parents but believe our position on safe sleep remains guided by the strongest evidence [...] Although there is a variation in our messaging, we hope to strengthen our relationship with Scottish Government where our positions align.”

However, the Scottish Government does also support the Scottish Cot Death Trust by providing grant funding for the National Coordinator role within the organisation.

The Lullaby Trust is registered as a charity in England and Wales.

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