



Mr Marc Wyn Jones
Clerk for Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee
Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

3rd of March 2010

Dear Mr Jones,

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee - Inquiry into Neonatal Care

I noted with interest the announcement by the Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee to hold an inquiry into Neonatal Care in Wales.

Wales Women's National coalition will not present formal evidence for this inquiry due to its focus on neonatal standards and services. We wish, however, to reiterate ASH Wales' assertions (letter sent 02/03/10) on the necessity of tackling tobacco use amongst pregnant women in Wales and its substantial effect on the demand for neonatal services.

The amount of women in Wales who smoke before or during pregnancy is higher than anywhere else in the UK, at 37%. Only 41% of women in Wales who smoked were likely to have given up smoking before or during pregnancy and 22% of women in Wales were likely to smoke for the duration of their pregnancy. Premature births, low birthweight, birth defects, miscarriage and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome are all related to smoking during pregnancy. Other longer term health damage caused by smoking during pregnancy includes respiratory illnesses and glue ear, which causes hearing problems, during the childhood years.

It is essential that pregnancy-specific smoking prevention and cessation programmes are developed here in Wales. These programmes should reflect the needs of pregnant women such as provision of midwives who are trained in tobacco cessation and appropriate referral interventions. Access to cessation services and products that support them whilst quitting would also be beneficial.

Stop Smoking Wales is undertaking some initiatives that will engage with pregnant smokers. However, there is currently a lack of systematic service delivery to support pregnant smokers to quit across the whole of Wales.

I hope that Members of the Committee find this information useful. Further information can be found at www.ashwales.co.uk and www.stopsmokingwales.com.

Yours sincerely

Naomi Brightmore
Director

Information has been derived from the following documents:
ASH Essential Information "Smoking, Sex and Reproduction". The full document may be accessed at http://www.ash.org.uk/files/documents/ASH_112.pdf
Stop Smoking Wales Annual Report 08-09 - www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk/8080/SSW%20Annual%20Report%202008-09%20Final.pdf

Wales Women's National Coalition

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