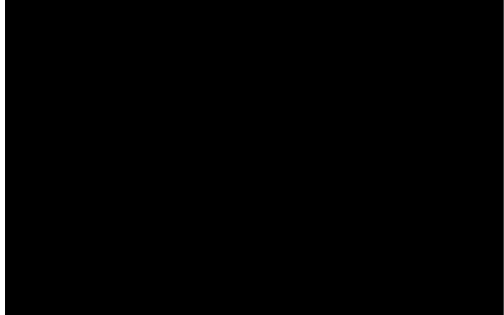


# NO BREATH REQUIRED

Same harm. Same justice.



nobreathrequired.uk

Ref: NBR/2026/002 - Coronial Oversight of Stillbirths – Section 4 Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019

Ms Catherine Atkinson  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

---


Dear Ms Atkinson,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as a Minister within the Ministry of Justice. Secondly, I would like to bring to your attention an issue which falls within your portfolio: coronial oversight of stillbirths.

In 2019, the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 introduced a statutory requirement under Section 4 that:

“The Secretary of State must prepare and publish a report containing a consideration of whether, and if so how, coroners should investigate stillbirths.”

A public consultation was undertaken in 2019. However, the factual summary of responses was not published until 2024, and since then there appears to have been little visible progress.

In addition, Freedom of Information requests submitted by bereaved parents in 2025  were refused under Section 35 exemptions on the basis that policy work remained ongoing.

We have attempted to raise this issue with the Secretary of State. Initially, correspondence was redirected toward the Department of Health and Social Care despite this being fundamentally a justice issue. More recently, responses have deferred to the non-statutory Maternity and Neonatal Investigation currently underway.

After a delay of seven years since Royal Assent, we do not believe it is appropriate for implementation of a statutory duty within Justice purview to be further deferred pending a non-statutory review operating under Health purview.

Our MP, Sir Gavin Williamson, has also attempted to raise the matter through Written Parliamentary Questions (UINs 121720–121723). However, all four questions received the same response, again deferring to the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation and citing the 37-week threshold contained within its published Terms of Reference.

These responses have led to confusion and a number of apparent contradictions.

Firstly, the parliamentary responses suggest that no substantive work beyond the consultation and factual summary has been undertaken. This appears difficult to reconcile with the earlier use of Section 35 exemptions on the basis that policy development work was ongoing. In addition, the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation itself was only announced in June 2025, raising questions as to what work, if any, was being undertaken prior to that point.

Secondly, while Ministry of Justice responses cite the 37-week threshold contained within the published Terms of Reference for the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation, the Chair of the review, Baroness Amos, has confirmed in writing that Workstream 4 is considering oversight of stillbirths irrespective of gestation.

This creates an apparent inconsistency between the published ministerial response and the position described by the Chair of the review. It also risks conflating two distinct issues:

- the health system review of maternity care; and
- the separate question of coronial and legal oversight, which remains a justice responsibility.

More recently, WPQ UIN 1126 was tabled specifically to clarify this discrepancy. However, after initially being allocated to the Ministry of Justice, it was subsequently reallocated to the Department of Health and Social Care. It remains unclear why this occurred given that coroners fall within Justice responsibility.

I am therefore writing to you as the newly appointed Minister responsible for this area to highlight:

- the continuing absence of visible progress seven years after Parliament legislated on this issue;
- the apparent contradiction between responses indicating ongoing policy work and later statements suggesting that no assessment has been undertaken;
- the continued deferral of a statutory justice issue to a non-statutory health review; and the confusion created by differing descriptions of the scope of Workstream 4.

I would ask that you familiarise yourself with this issue and review our campaign website, <https://nobreathrequired.uk>, which sets out the legislative timeline, relevant correspondence, parliamentary questions, and the position of bereaved families seeking equitable access to independent oversight.

Parliament has already legislated on this matter. Seven years later, bereaved families remain unclear as to what substantive progress, if any, has actually been made.

Yours sincerely,



Founders, No Breath Required

On behalf of previous signatories and other families of stillbirth

Enc:

- FOI [REDACTED] Response (dated 24 September 2025)
- Letter to the Lord Chancellor (dated 30 September 2025).
- Letter from Baroness Amos (dated 7 October 2025).
- Letter from the Lord Chancellor (dated 9 February 2026).
- Letter to the Lord Chancellor (dated 24 February 2026).
- WPQ UIN 121720 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-03-18/121720>
- WPQ UIN 121721 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-0318/121721>
- WPQ UIN 121722 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-0318/121722>
- WPQ UIN 121723 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2026-0318/121723>
- Letter from Baroness Amos (dated 7 April 2026).

cc:

- Sir Gavin Williamson MP
- Nick Timothy MP, Shadow Justice Secretary
- Jess Brown-Fuller MP, Liberal Democrat Justice Spokesperson
- Andy MacNae MP, Chair, APPG on Baby Loss
- Michelle Welsh MP, Chair, APPG on Maternity



Ministry  
of Justice

Disclosure & Library Team  
Ministry of Justice  
Postal Point 5.22  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

data.access@justice.gov.uk

24 September 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

## Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 27 August 2025 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ):

- 1. Contact details for a representative of the Death Management, Inquests and Administrative Law team please.**
- 2. All information held by MOJ (i.e. internal reports, correspondence, etc) about work on the topic of Coronial investigations of stillbirths undertaken since 7 December 2023:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/coronial-investigations-of-stillbirths/public-feedback/coronial-investigations-of-stillbirthsfactual-summary-of-consultation-responses>

Your request has been handled under the FOIA. We have answered each question in turn, as set out below.

### Question 1

I can confirm that the MOJ holds all of the information that you have requested. The information requested in relation to this question is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you.

The team's email address is: coroners@justice.gov.uk

### Question 2

I can confirm that the MOJ holds all of the information that you have requested. However, some of it is exempt from disclosure under section 35(1)(a) of the FOIA, because it relates to the formulation or development of government policy.

Section 35(1)(a) is a qualified exemption, requiring a public interest test. We have considered whether the public interest in disclosing the requested information outweighs the need to protect the internal policy-making process. When assessing whether or not it is in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we have taken into account the following factors:

## **Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure**

- Disclosing this information will ensure transparency and accountability, particularly in how government decisions are made.
- Disclosing this information will enable the public to understand how any decisions have been or will be made in relation to the subject matter which may affect them.

## **Public interest considerations in favour of withholding the information**

- Officials and ministers require a “safe space” to consider policy options, exchange views and deliberate before decisions are finalised. Disclosure of internal drafts and communications could inhibit frank discussion and reduce the quality of policy advice in future.
- Disclosing this information relating to the development of policy could lead to misunderstanding or misrepresentation of evolving policy positions, particularly if it is released outside of a planned, but as yet uncompleted process.
- There is a risk that officials will become more cautious or guarded in their contributions (the chilling effect), undermining the effectiveness of the policymaking process in relation to the subject matter. This is particularly an issue if material relating to policy development is released before the policy-making process has been completed.

On balance, we consider that the public interest favours withholding the requested information.

Some of the information requested in relation to this question is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you.

The information can be accessed via the following link, specifically, the transcript of the Parliamentary debate on Baby Loss and Coroners which took place on 19 March 2024 and which is available at:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-03-19/debates/3D651E82-FFBC428C-8ECC-3AC3D9AAA410/BabyLossCoroners>

## **Appeal Rights**

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within 40 working days of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure & Library Team, Ministry of Justice, Postal Point 5.22, 102 Petty France,  
London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

**Death Management, Inquiries and Coroners Division**



Ref: Progress regarding Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019

The Rt Hon David Lammy MP  
Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

30<sup>th</sup> September 2025

---

Dear Secretary of State,

We write to you as parents of babies who were born without taking a breath or showing signs of independent life. It is important to note that, for some of us, there remains dispute over whether our children did in fact show signs of life at birth, disputes that have never been independently resolved. We introduce ourselves in this way because many bereaved parents find the legally defined term stillbirth to be an inaccurate and dehumanising description, one that contributes to a culture in which our children are not recognised as people in their own right.

Among us are also families whose babies took a first breath but died shortly afterwards. They recognise that it is only by chance their children survived birth long enough to be classified as neonatal deaths rather than stillbirths, and that, in truth, our experiences and the failures that led to them are shared. Perversely, the current system creates a cruel inconsistency whereby a baby who lives briefly after birth is afforded coronial oversight, but a baby who dies moments earlier, before taking a first breath, is not. This leads to the untenable situation in which poorer care, resulting in an earlier death, attracts less scrutiny. No parent should have to accept that the timing of their baby's final heartbeat determines whether justice is possible.

For too long, our babies have been denied the human right to a truly independent investigation into the circumstances of their deaths. We, as parents, have been told that our children do not count as people and that their deaths do not warrant coronial oversight.

Have no doubt: had any of us attempted to end our pregnancies at the same gestations at which our babies died, we would have faced criminal investigation and likely prosecution. Why, then, is it acceptable that when those deaths occur following alleged failures in clinical care or systemic maternity safety, we are forced to rely on inadequate internal investigations by NHS Trusts and regulators, with only the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman or civil litigation as escalation routes when official findings deny what the evidence shows?

We are aware, via a recent Freedom of Information response from the MoJ and DHSC, that the Government referred to the ongoing Rapid Review of Maternity Services led by Baroness Amos, stating that "the independent investigation may wish to consider the overall investigation more broadly."

It is unacceptable that a Government which has held a statutory duty under Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019, to make arrangements for the preparation and publication of a report on whether, and if so how, coroners should investigate stillbirths, should now defer to a non-statutory review commissioned by the DHSC, more than six years after Royal Assent. The question before you is not one of clinical outcomes but of justice, Section 4 of the 2019 Act places this responsibility firmly within your Department's remit.

As bereaved parents, we are accustomed to our voices being minimised, dismissed as too emotional to be heard. Reviews of maternity care have come and gone, with recommendations left unimplemented. We have endured self-investigation by individual Trusts and the wider NHS. We will not stand by while this statutory requirement is allowed to stall any longer. You do not need the Amos Review to confirm that NHS investigative processes are flawed, this has been documented repeatedly, including by parliamentary committees, regulators, and inquiry chairs.

## Timeline

We note that there has been no progress on this matter since this Government came to power, and therefore set out below the recent timeline for clarity:

- 26 March 2019 – Royal Assent to the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019. Section 4 places a duty on the Secretary of State to “make arrangements for the preparation and publication of a report on whether, and if so how, coroners should investigate stillbirths.”
- 26 March 2019 – Launch of consultation on coronial investigations of stillbirths by the MoJ and DHSC.
- 26 May 2019 – Commencement of the Act (two months after Royal Assent).
- 18 June 2019 – Consultation closing date.
- 10 September 2019 – Expected publication date for Government response (as stated in consultation document).
- 7 February 2024 – Publication of “Factual Summary of Consultation Responses” (summary only, no policy position).
- 8 February 2024 – Parliamentary Question on publication status (Tim Loughton MP).
- 20 February 2024 – MoJ response stating that publication was paused during the pandemic.
- 19 March 2024 – Westminster Hall debate: “Baby Loss: Coroners.” MPs expressed disappointment at continued inaction. No timetable was published, no legislative proposal was tabled, and no firm commitment was made to extending coronial jurisdiction. The statutory duty under the 2019 Act was not described as discharged.
- 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Labour Government formed. No known progress has been made regarding this issue.

## Our Position

It is inexcusable that:

- the statutory requirement to publish a position was paused, citing COVID-19, and that it took 56 months from consultation close to release even a factual summary;
- the previous Government made no substantive progress on discharging the duty; and
- this current Government, up to the announcement of the Rapid Review on 23 June 2025, has made no commitment to completing the report required by law.

Now, the MoJ appears again to defer action pending the outcome of the Rapid Review. This is misplaced. The 2019 consultation has already been undertaken; and the Terms of Reference for the Amos Review do not encompass the full question posed by Section 4.

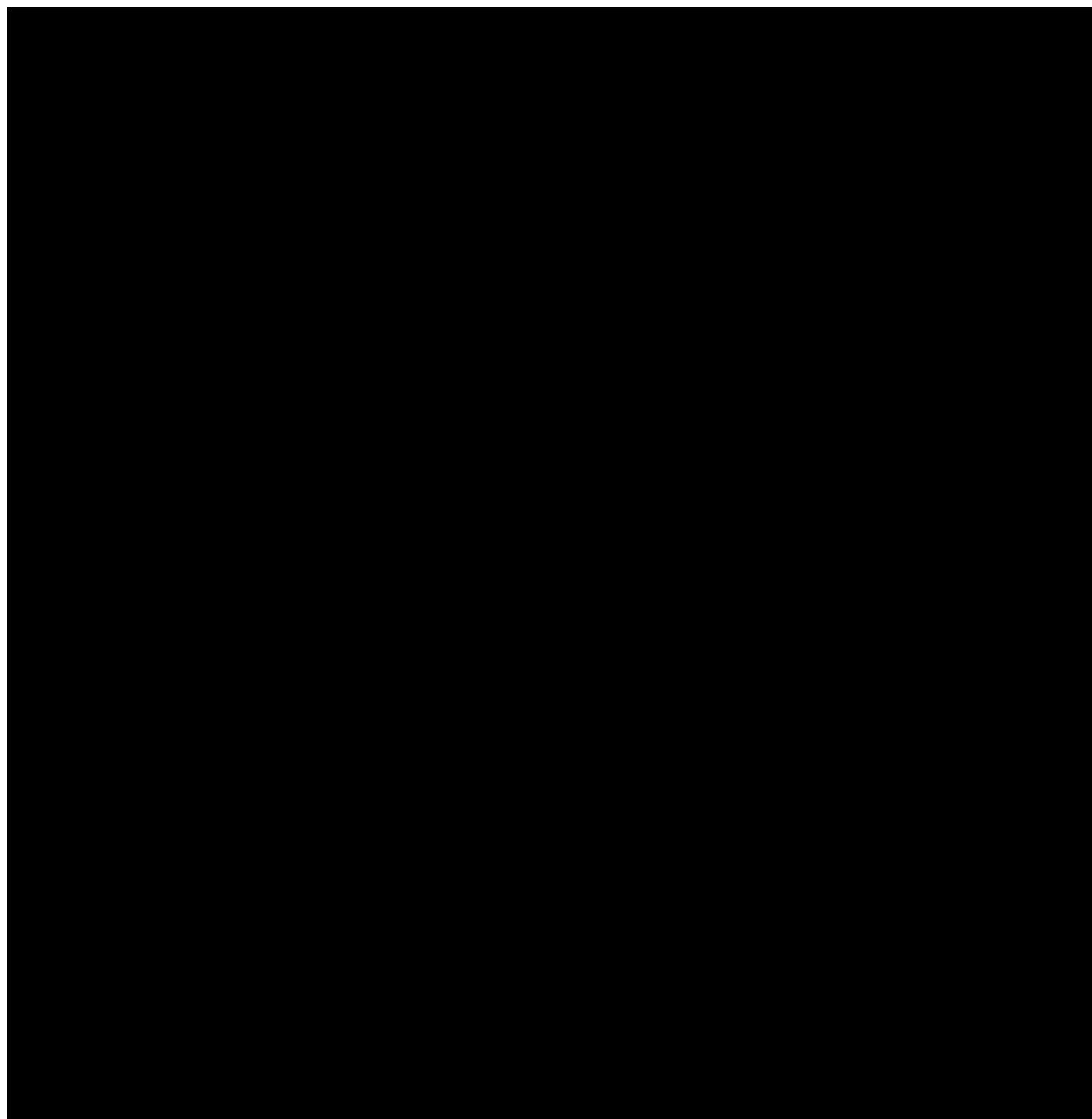
While those ToRs include reference to exploring “the potential role of coroners in the investigation of lateterm stillbirths (37 weeks or later),” such limitation is absent from the 2019 Act which takes its definition for stillbirth (being after the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy) from Section 41 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 as amended by the Stillbirth Definition Act 1992. The Governments 2019 consultation did propose that coronial involvement be

limited to gestations over 37 weeks, without clinical or legal justification, however the 2024 factual summary of responses noted multiple objections to gestational limit and did not highlight any supporting opinions. Families whose babies died before 37 weeks are no less entitled to justice than those whose losses occurred after.

#### Our Request


Given that the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019 imposes a clear statutory duty to publish a report on coronial jurisdiction for stillbirths, and that the consultation closed over six years ago, we respectfully request that the Ministry of Justice now publish its full response and position no later than three months from the date of this letter, i.e. by 31 December 2025.

Yours sincerely,





Supported by:

- 
- c.c.           - The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
                  - The Rt Hon the Baroness Amos Chair of the Independent Maternity and Neonatal Investigation

Baroness Valerie Amos  
Chair of the National Maternity  
and Neonatal Investigation

7 October 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

I am sorry for the delay in responding to your email.

I have noted your concerns regarding the Terms of Reference specifying 37 weeks pregnancy in relation to the coronial involvement in the investigation of stillbirths.

The Terms of Reference refers to the role of coroners in the investigation of late-term stillbirths (37 weeks or later) as there was a proposal to introduce coronial investigations of stillbirth cases in England and Wales, which was consulted on by the then-Government in 2019.

As set out in the high-level plan shared with families last week, within the methodology there is a specific workstream on this - ***workstream 4: Legal framework for Coronial involvement in stillbirths and compensation awards arising from harms sustained from clinical negligence***

The methodology for this workstream and evidence gathered will not be restricted to 37 weeks. It includes collecting evidence in relation to coronial investigations for all stillbirths. As with all workstreams, this workstream will include hearing from and taking evidence from families, and I would like to hear from you and other families on this if you wish to.

When the investigation reports on this matter we will include the relevant evidence we have collected in relation to stillbirths occurring at 37 weeks pregnancy and before 37 weeks pregnancy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valerie A.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Baroness Amos



Ministry  
of Justice

The Right Honourable  
**David Lammy MP**  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Lord Chancellor & Secretary  
of State for Justice

Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson CBE MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: [REDACTED]

09 February 2026

Dear Sir Gavin,

### **CORONIAL INVESTIGATION OF STILLBIRTHS**

Thank you for your letter of 22 October 2025 on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] regarding the government response to the 2019 consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths. I sincerely apologise for the delay in providing this reply, which has taken longer than the usual expected timescale for a response. This was due to the coordination of input from other government departments, which was necessary in order to provide a response for [REDACTED]

I also hope [REDACTED] will take this reply as a response to the letter of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to the Deputy Prime Minister, which was signed by him, alongside [REDACTED] along with a number of other bereaved parents, concerning the 2019 consultation on the coronial investigations of stillbirths.

First, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to parents bereaved by baby loss. Bereavement is never easy, but the loss of a child is unimaginable and we recognise that losing a baby can significantly impact on parents' and others' lives.

The landscape of maternity investigations has continued to evolve since publication of the consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths in 2019 and the factual summary of responses published in 2023.

Most recently, this government commissioned the independent Investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal services led by Baroness Amos. As indicated in the investigation's terms of reference, it will, amongst other issues, look to understand the potential role of coroners in the investigation of late term stillbirths (37 weeks or later).

It is important that the government's final conclusions on coronial investigations of stillbirths reflect any relevant recommendations the independent Investigation makes, and therefore we intend to communicate our position on this issue after the Investigation has published its final report and recommendations in Spring 2026.

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T +4420 3334 3555

E <https://contact-moj.service.justice.gov.uk/>  
[www.gov.uk/moj](http://www.gov.uk/moj)

102 Petty France

F +44870 761 7753

London  
SW1H 9AJ

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The Investigation has launched a Call for Evidence, which has been developed following extensive insight and feedback from families, we would encourage your constituent to share their story at the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation Call for Evidence, which can be accessed at <https://www.matneoinv.org/call-for-evidence/>.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**RT HON DAVID LAMMY MP**

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
JUSTICE**

OFFICIAL

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Ref: Section 4 – Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019

The Rt Hon David Lammy MP  
Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

---

Dear Secretary of State,

We write further to recent correspondence in which we were informed via our Member of Parliament, that consideration of coronial jurisdiction of stillbirth may be addressed through the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation led by Baroness Amos.

With respect, we do not consider that position to resolve the statutory duty imposed by Parliament under Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019.

Section 4 places a clear obligation on the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the preparation and publication of a report on whether, and if so how, coroners should investigate stillbirths. The consultation on this matter closed in June 2019. A factual summary of responses was eventually published in February 2024. No substantive Government position has followed.

Nearly six years after the consultation closed, no substantive Government response has been published. It remains unclear whether the statutory duty has been discharged.

We are concerned that deferring progress pending the outcome of a non-statutory review commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care risks conflating two separate matters. The question of coronial jurisdiction is one of justice and legal oversight. It rests properly within the remit of the Ministry of Justice. A health-led review cannot substitute for the discharge of a statutory duty imposed on a different department.

We also note that the Terms of Reference for the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation refer to “late-term stillbirths (37 weeks or later)”. The 2019 Act contains no such gestational limitation. The legal definition of stillbirth, as adopted in statute, applies from 24 weeks’ gestation. Any proposal to narrow consideration to a later gestation would therefore require clear legal justification and Parliamentary scrutiny.

The current position creates a structural inequity. Where a baby shows independent signs of life, however briefly, coronial jurisdiction may follow. Where a baby dies moments earlier, before taking a breath, no such oversight is available, even where serious clinical failings are alleged. The 2019 Act was intended to examine that disparity. It has not yet been resolved.

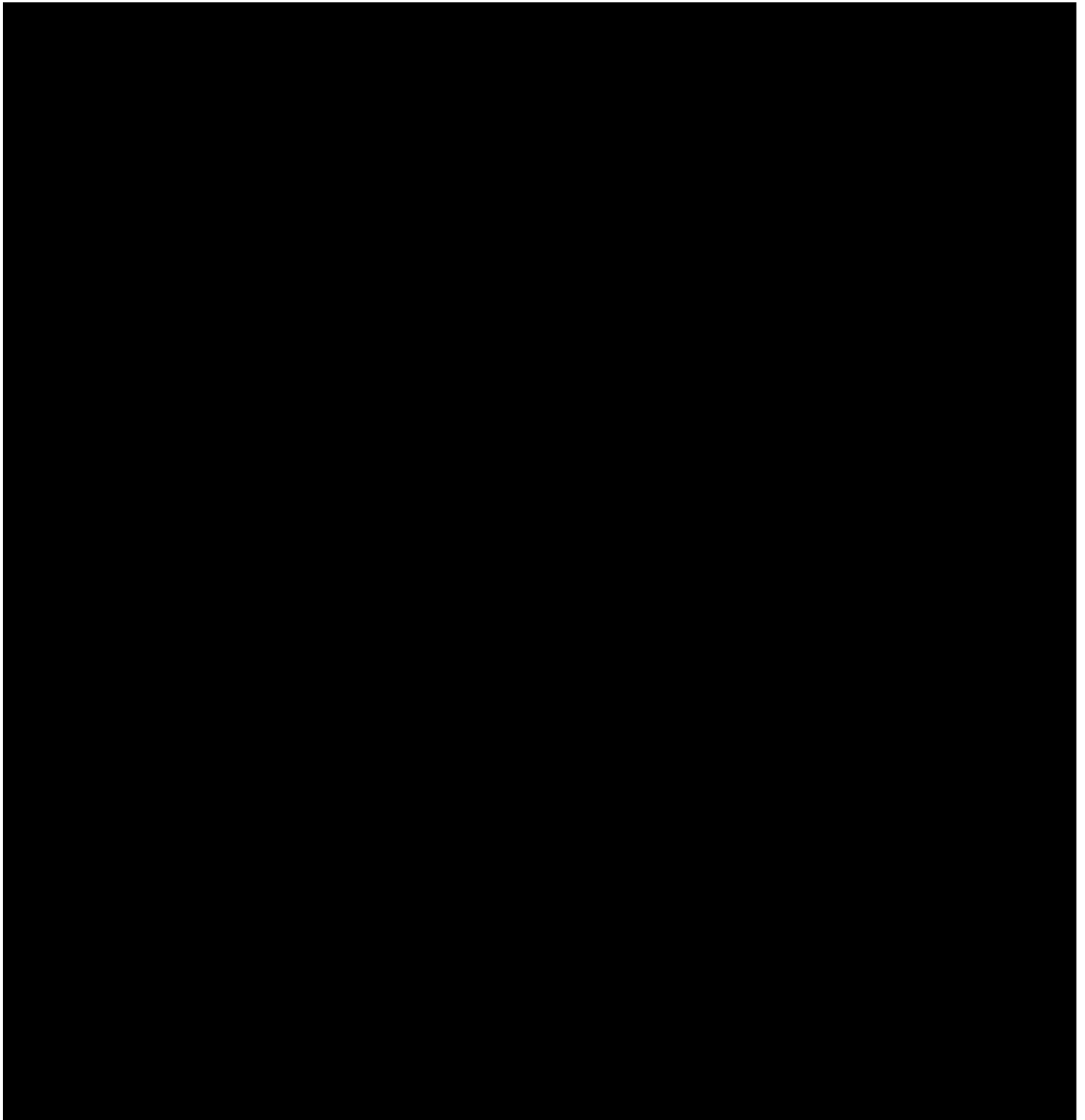
Parliament imposed this duty in 2019. It has not been formally concluded. Continued deferral risks undermining confidence that statutory obligations, once enacted by Parliament, will in fact be fulfilled.

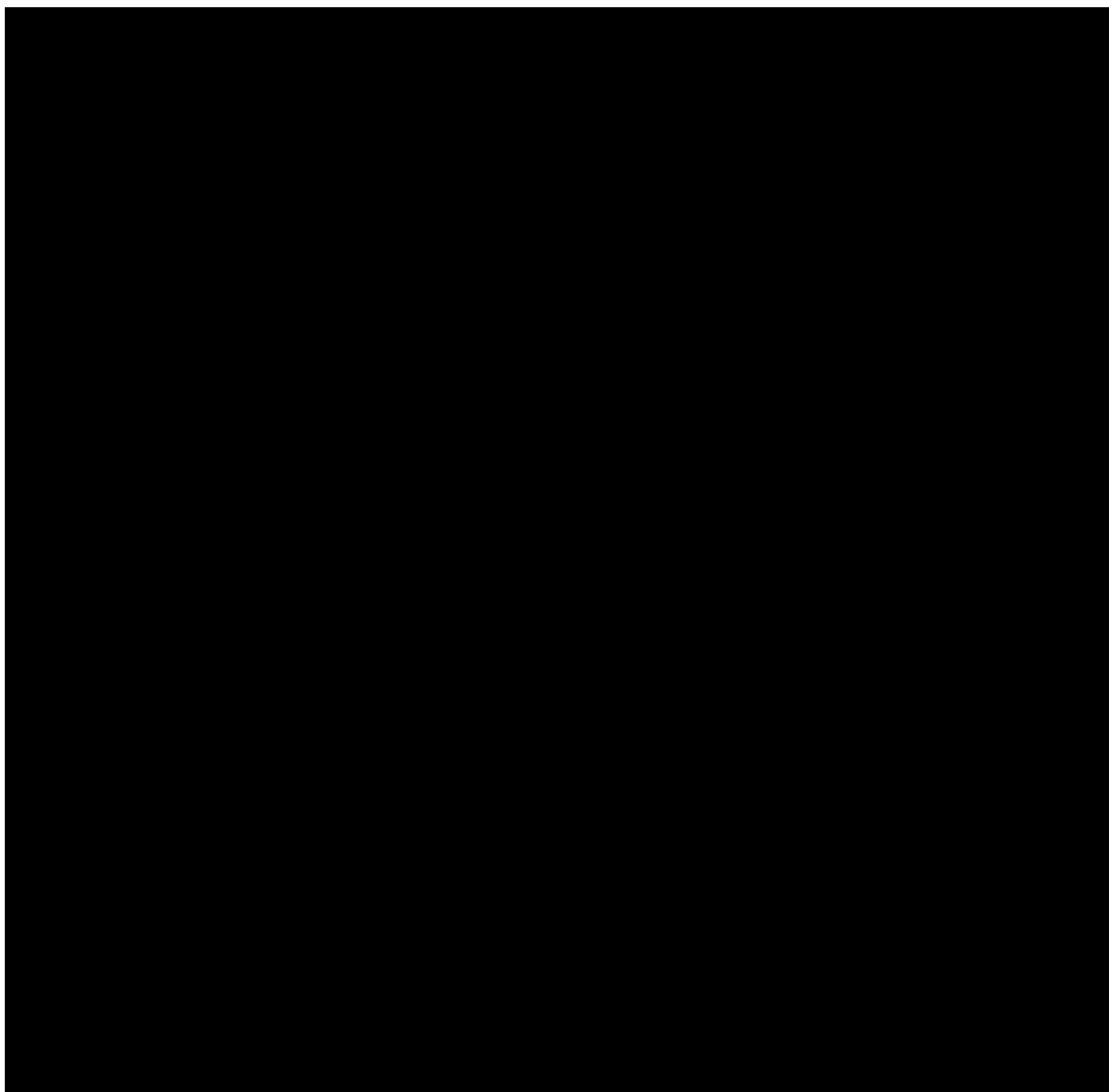
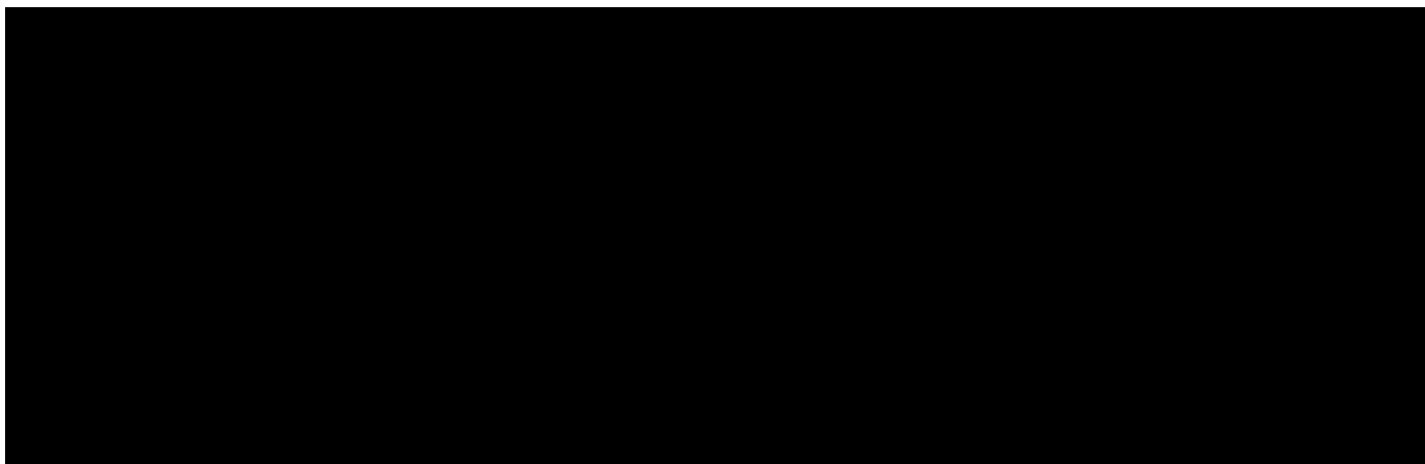
We would therefore ask that you:

1. Provide confirmation of whether the government considers the Section 4 duty to have been discharged.
2. If not, a clear timetable for publication of the Government's substantive response, that does not rely on other non-statutory processes.
3. Clarification that the Ministry of Justice does not intend to defer its statutory responsibility pending conclusions of the DHSC-led investigation.

This is not a clinical policy question. It is a matter of justice and statutory accountability. It now requires resolution.

Yours sincerely,





Enclosures:

- Ref: Progress regarding Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 – Correspondence to Secretary of State dated 30 September 2025
- MOJ Ref: MC128417 – Response from Secretary of State dated 9 February 2026

Copied to (Parliamentary Scrutiny Bodies)

- Andy Slaughter MP, Chair, House of Commons Justice Committee
- Layla Moran MP, Chair, House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee
- Simon Hoare MP, Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
- Sarah Owen MP, Chair, APPG on Baby Loss
- Michelle Welsh MP, Chair, APPG on Maternity

Copied to (Members of Parliament with Constituency Interest)

- Fleur Anderson MP
- Edward Agar MP
- Alison Bennett MP
- Sian Berry MP
- Richard Burgon MP
- Sir Christopher Chope MP
- The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
- Gareth Davies MP
- Jonathan Davies MP
- Anneliese Dodds MP
- Anna Geldard MP
- Lilian Greenwood MP
- Andrew Griffith MP
- Amanda Hack MP
- Adam Jogee MP
- Peter Kyle MP
- John Milne MP
- Andy McDonald MP
- James Naish MP
- Alex Norris MP
- Michael Payne MP
- The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
- Dave Robertson MP
- Tom Rutland MP
- Jeff Smith MP
- Adam Thompson MP
- Christian Wakeford MP
- Katie White MP
- The Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson MP
- Nadia Whittome MP

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## Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

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# Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

[Show full question](#)

## Question for Ministry of Justice

UIN 121720, tabled on 18 March 2026

### Question

**Sir Gavin Williamson**

Conservative

Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge

Commons



To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment the Department has made of the potential impact of the delay in reporting on coronial investigations of stillbirths following the 2019 consultation on bereaved families.

### Answer

**Alex Davies-Jones**

Labour

Pontypridd

Commons



### Answered on

26 March 2026

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to all parents bereaved by baby loss. Bereavement is never easy, but the loss of a child is unimaginable, and we recognise the profound and lifelong impact this has on parents and families.

As I set out in my answer to the Right Honourable Member of 12 March, the wider landscape of maternity investigations has continued to evolve since the publication of the consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths in 2019 and the factual summary of responses published in 2023.

Most recently, this Government commissioned the independent investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal care led by Baroness Amos. As outlined in the investigation's terms of reference, it will, amongst other issues, look to consider the potential role of coroners in the investigation of late term stillbirths (37 weeks or later). We are aware that Baroness Amos has confirmed she will publish her final report in June 2026.

As I have previously confirmed to the Right Honourable Member, the Department has not made a formal assessment of the delay in publishing a decision in this area. It is important that the Government's published position on coronial investigations of stillbirths is fully informed by any findings and relevant recommendations the independent investigation makes, and more broadly that it supports the most effective model for maternity investigation, one that strengthens learning, improves accountability and delivers better outcomes for families.

Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019 provides the statutory framework to enable, by way of regulation, amendments to be made to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in respect of the investigation of stillbirths and makes provisions about the content of those regulations.

The Government's 2019 consultation, and the factual summary in 2023 were jointly published by the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice. The Government intends to communicate its position on this issue after the investigation has published its final report.

## Answered by

**Ministry of Justice**



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## Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

1 [▼ Show full question](#)  
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UIN 121721, tabled on 18 March 2026

## Question




**Sir Gavin Williamson** >  
Conservative

---

Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge  
Commons

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to limit consideration of coronial investigations to stillbirths occurring at 37 weeks' gestation or later; and on what statutory basis gestational thresholds may be applied.

## Answer



**Alex Davies-Jones** >  
Labour

---

Pontypridd  
Commons

## Answered on

26 March 2026

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to all parents bereaved by baby loss. Bereavement is never easy, but the loss of a child is unimaginable, and we recognise the profound and lifelong impact this has on parents and families.

As I set out in my answer to the Right Honourable Member of 12 March, the wider landscape of maternity investigations has continued to evolve since the publication of the consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths in 2019 and the factual summary of responses published in 2023.

Most recently, this Government commissioned the independent investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal care led by Baroness Amos. As outlined in the investigation's terms of reference, it will, amongst other issues, look to consider the potential role of coroners in the investigation of late term stillbirths (37 weeks or later). We are aware that Baroness Amos has confirmed she will publish her final report in June 2026.

As I have previously confirmed to the Right Honourable Member, the Department has not made a formal assessment of the delay in publishing a decision in this area. It is important that the Government's published position on coronial investigations of stillbirths is fully informed by any findings and relevant recommendations the independent investigation makes, and more broadly that it supports the most effective model for maternity investigation, one that strengthens learning, improves accountability and delivers better outcomes for families.

## Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019 provides the statutory framework to enable, by way of regulation, amendments to be made to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in respect of the investigation of stillbirths and makes provisions about the content of those regulations. [▼ Show full question](#)

The Government's 2019 consultation, and the factual summary in 2023 were jointly published by the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice. The Government intends to communicate its position on this issue after the investigation has published its final report.

### Answered by

Ministry of Justice



## Question for Ministry of Justice

UIN 121722, tabled on 18 March 2026

### Question



**Sir Gavin Williamson**  
Conservative  
Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge  
Commons

[>](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on whether the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care will report to Parliament on coronial investigations of stillbirths following the...

[Show full question](#)

### Answer



**Alex Davies-Jones**  
Labour  
Pontypridd  
Commons

[>](#)

### Answered on

26 March 2026

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to all parents bereaved by baby loss. Bereavement is never easy, but the loss of a child is unimaginable, and we recognise the profound and lifelong impact this has on parents and families.

As I set out in my answer to the Right Honourable Member of 12 March, the wider landscape of maternity investigations has continued to evolve since the publication of the consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths in 2019 and the factual summary of responses published in 2023.

Most recently, this Government commissioned the independent investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal care led by Baroness Amos. As outlined in the investigation's terms of reference, it will, amongst other issues, look to consider the potential role of coroners in the investigation of late term stillbirths (37 weeks or later). We are aware that Baroness Amos has confirmed she will publish her final report in June 2026.

As I have previously confirmed to the Right Honourable Member, the Department has not made a formal assessment of the delay in publishing a decision in this area. It is important that the Government's published position on coronial investigations of stillbirths is fully informed by any findings and relevant recommendations the independent investigation makes, and more broadly that it

## Coroners: Perinatal Mortality

supports the most effective model for maternity investigation, one that strengthens learning, improves accountability and delivers better outcomes for families. [▼ Show full question](#)

Section 4 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019 provides the statutory framework to enable, by way of regulation, amendments to be made to the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in respect of the investigation of stillbirths and makes provisions about the content of those regulations.

The Government's 2019 consultation, and the factual summary in 2023 were jointly published by the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice. The Government intends to communicate its position on this issue after the investigation has published its final report.

### Answered by

Ministry of Justice



## Question for Ministry of Justice

UIN 121723, tabled on 18 March 2026

### Question



**Sir Gavin Williamson**

Conservative

Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge

Commons



To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether responsibility for reporting to Parliament on coronial investigations of stillbirths following the 2019 consultation rests with his Department.

### Answer



**Alex Davies-Jones**

Labour

Pontypridd

Commons



### Answered on

26 March 2026

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to all parents bereaved by baby loss. Bereavement is never easy, but the loss of a child is unimaginable, and we recognise the profound and lifelong impact this has on parents and families.

As I set out in my answer to the Right Honourable Member of 12 March, the wider landscape of maternity investigations has continued to evolve since the publication of the consultation on the coronial investigation of stillbirths in 2019 and the factual summary of responses published in 2023.

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## Written questions, answers and statements

UK Parliament > Business > Written questions, answers and statements > Find written questions and answers > 112

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The Government's 2019 consultation, and the factual summary in 2023 were jointly published by the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice. The Government intends to communicate its position on this issue after the investigation has published its final report.

### Answered by

Ministry of Justice



# Perinatal Mortality: Coroners

## Question for Department of Health and Social Care

UIN 1126, tabled on 14 May 2026

### Question



**Sir Gavin Williamson**

Conservative

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Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge

Commons

>

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to correspondence from the Chair of the Maternity and Neonatal Investigation confirming that the Investigation is not limited to 37 weeks' gestation and considers stillbirth from 24 weeks onwards, what the Government's policy is on coronial investigation of stillbirths; and whether the Ministers agreed to a change in the Terms of Reference.

[^ Hide full question](#)

Awaiting response: due for answer by 18 May 2026

### To be answered by

**Department of Health and Social Care**

↗

Baroness Valerie Amos

Chair of the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation 7 April 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for reiterating your concerns regarding the Terms of Reference specifying 37 weeks pregnancy in relation to the coronial involvement in the investigation of stillbirths.

In our previous correspondence, I confirmed that the methodology and evidence gathered for the Investigation relating to coronial involvement in stillbirths would not be limited to 37 weeks. That remains the case. I know you have been interviewed by the Investigation team on this issue and I am grateful to you for the evidence you have provided.

As you have noted, the recent Interim Report published by the Investigation was clear that although the original Terms of Reference had specified 37 weeks or later, following family feedback, the Investigation had decided it was important to look more widely at when babies are stillborn, as many of the questions raised about coronial involvement apply once 24 weeks gestation is reached. We will also make this clear when we publish our final report, which will include all relevant evidence we have collected in relation to stillbirths, regardless of gestation.

You also raised concerns that recent Parliamentary Questions had made reference to the Terms of Reference and the wording on 37 weeks. As you are aware, the Investigation is independent of Government and I am not responsible for Parliamentary Questions or the answers given to them by Ministers on behalf of the Government. Any amendment or correction to an answer is a matter for Ministers and Parliament. Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valerie A.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Baroness Amos