



National Health Service in Scotland
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

THE STILL-BIRTH (DEFINITION) ACT 1992

Summary

1. The Still Birth (Definition) Act 1992 reduces from 28 weeks to 24 the minimum gestational age by which a still birth is defined bringing this into line with the consensus of professional bodies about the age at which a foetus can be said to be viable. The Act will require the certification of all babies born dead after 24 weeks gestation on or after 1 October 1992.

Background

2. The General Register Office for Scotland has already advised all registrars of births and deaths in Scotland, and in September will issue to doctors and midwives revised instructions and replacement books of medical certificates of stillbirth.

3. One effect of this change will be to enable Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance and Social Fund Maternity Payments to be paid to qualifying mothers who, on or after 1 October 1992, give birth to a still born child after 24 weeks gestation.

4. A joint CMO/CNO letter is currently being issued to all doctors, midwives and nurses in Scotland informing them of these changes.

Action

5. Please ensure that all other personnel who need to know about these changes such as health visitors, chaplains, bereavement officers and counsellors are also made aware of them.

6. This circular should be copied to Unit General Managers for information.

Yours sincerely

DAVID R STEEL
Director of Administration

24 August 1992

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

For information:
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NHS Trusts
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To be copied to Unit
General Managers for
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