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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



23 July 2014

Dear Mr Howlett

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1505

Further to your letter of 23 June 2014 in regards to the above petition, I offer below the Scottish Government's response.

- The Committee requests that the petitioner and other stakeholders are consulted as part of the revision of the *Ready Steady Baby!* leaflet to include information on GBS. Will you undertake to do this?

Scottish Government's Child and Maternal Health Division worked with NHS Health Scotland, the Senior Medical Officer for Maternal and Women's Health, Senior Medical Officer for Children and Young People along with the petitioners to agree the following text which is to be added to the *Ready Steady Baby!* leaflet from 4 September 2014:

"Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

This is one of many bacteria that can be present in our bodies. It usually causes no harm. GBS is commonly found in the digestive system and the female reproductive system. It's estimated that about one in four pregnant women in the UK carry GBS. Most pregnant women who carry GBS bacteria go on to have healthy babies. Extremely rarely, GBS infection during pregnancy can also cause miscarriage, early (premature) labour or stillbirth. Around the time of labour and birth, some babies may come into contact with GBS and there's a small risk that GBS may cause infection in the baby around childbirth. Rarely, GBS infection in newborn babies can cause serious complications that can be life-threatening.

If a baby develops GBS infection less than seven days after birth, it's known as early-onset GBS infection. Most babies who become infected develop symptoms within 12 hours of birth. Please follow this link if you would like more information - <http://www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/group-b-streptococcus-gbs-infection-newborn-babies-information-you>

What are the symptoms and signs of GBS infection in my baby?

Most babies who are infected with GBS show symptoms within 12 hours of birth. If your baby is considered at increased risk of GBS infection, he or she will be monitored for signs of infection immediately after birth and before discharge . This will include assessing your baby's general wellbeing, feeding, temperature, heart rate and breathing rate.

Babies with GBS infection may be very sleepy, be floppy and not feed well. If you are worried about your baby contact NHS 24 or your health visitor or GP. If you cannot contact any health professionals within 4 hours then access Emergency Departments.”

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely

John Froggatt
Deputy Director
Scottish Government: Child and Maternal Health Division
Children and Families Directorate