

PE1735/A

Scottish Government submission of 22 October 2019

Scotland's Baby Box provides parents with over 30 items for their baby including clothes, books, and thermometers. In addition, there is information on safe sleeping, breastfeeding and post-natal depression. These are aimed at supporting parents and giving each child the best possible start in life by providing essential items for the baby's arrival.

The Scottish Government recognises the key importance of providing advice for mothers regarding pelvic health following childbirth. However, the Baby Box is not intended to provide all relevant information for expectant parents. The Ready, Steady, Baby guide, which is distributed to all mothers at their first midwife check-in and is available online, is intended to provide comprehensive information to expectant parents and it includes information on pelvic floor exercises and urinary incontinence. Midwives also provide advice to pregnant women on urinary incontinence and pelvic floor exercises and health visitors reinforce these messages after the baby's birth.

We regularly review the contents of the Baby Box and advice we have received suggests that an increase in leaflets would lead to a decrease in impact.

One study by NCBI stated "The use of written information was contingent on its visibility to parents. This was sometimes due to the process of provision, with official material provided among other promotional literature as part of the post-natal package. When given in this way, the importance of the literature was lost. However, for those parents who read the leaflet it provided useful information, and in one case was reported to be highly influential."

Another by BMJ found: "The potential of the leaflets was further diluted because they were often given out "wrapped" within advertising materials or concealed within the maternity folder. During interviews, questions about the leaflets usually failed to elicit any response from most women. They often confused them with other information related to pregnancy or indeed denied having received them. It was often only after coaxing by the researcher or after her suggestion that women look within their maternity folder that leaflets were discovered and some comments were forthcoming."

Therefore, in line with the current approach for providing information to expectant parents, we do not think there would be an advantage in adding additional information on pelvic floor exercises to the Baby Box. However, we will add information on pelvic floor exercises to the Scottish Government's Parent Club website and link to the full advice on the NHS website.