



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01443

Name of petitioner

Maureen Sharkey on behalf of Scottish Care & Information on Miscarriage (SCIM)

Petition title

Investigating the cause of miscarriage

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to offer all women, who have suffered miscarriage, investigations following one loss through miscarriage and to review NHS Scotland's policy on the investigation and treatment of couples who experience miscarriage to help relieve the anxiety and distress to women caused by the current guidelines.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

SCIM have campaigned steadily on this issue since 1994 but it is very difficult to engage with the health service. Most recently, we have approached Robert Calderwood, Chief Executive of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. This has resulted in a response that does not grasp the seriousness of this issue. The SCIM Management Committee asked Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Board, to offer women who have suffered miscarriage, investigations following one loss though miscarriage. However we were referred to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists guidelines (2011): <http://www.rcog.org.uk/files/rcog-corp/GTG17recurrentmiscarriage.pdf>

We approached every health authority in 1995 and were referred to guidelines which call for three consecutive miscarriages before the relevant tests would be offered. This is the position of the GGHB at the most recent approach. Our charities resources do not allow us to test the other boards, however we have no reason to believe that any other health board, in Scotland, would behave differently.

We have also approached Neil Bibby MSP, Mary Fee MSP and other Glasgow City Councillors such as Cllr Elaine Smith and Cllr Gordon Matheson who have all expressed their support in this matter and some of whom suggested that we submit a petition to the Scottish Parliament.

Petition background information

Since 1994 Scottish Care & Information on Miscarriage (SCIM) have offered therapeutic counselling support to all women who have suffered miscarriage regardless of gestation or recurrence of their loss. We are recognised by the Scottish Government as being the only organisation of our kind in Scotland. We also offer counselling support to women who have suffered stillbirth or neonatal loss. Our website is:

www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk

To ensure all-round support we offer women referrals to hospitals, GP's and clinics to assist with the medical attention required during miscarriage, in an emergency situation and following miscarriage.

Currently, it is only women who suffer recurrent miscarriages (three consecutive miscarriages in a row) in the first trimester who are offered testing or women in the second trimester. The SCIM Management Committee would like an immediate review of this policy to assist in relieving the anxiety and distress caused by the current guidelines. Our clients regularly report to us the distress that the policy causes them. It is important to us and our clients that this is changed as there is no valid medical evidence for this policy and we believe that it is a matter for government direction.

We are the only, Scottish based, charity who deal therapeutically, with the effects of miscarriage through counselling.

The latest statistics show that in 2010 there were 5,708 miscarriages in Scotland alone (ISD Scotland July 2012). The problem is that due to the large number of miscarriages and that miscarriage is seen as a gender issue this means that no research has been done to validate the current definition of recurrent miscarriage.

This policy causes high levels of anxiety and distress to women, which has a knock-on effect on their families. According to our clients self evaluation their most common thoughts and feelings following miscarriage are illustrated in the graph.

Below are some of the statements that our client group have made as a result of the current criteria for testing to be carried out:

"I can't believe that I've got to go through this all again, to get testing done, I feel very depressed about that"

"I had 4 miscarriages in a row and I got very limited help and advice. They just focused on the Rhesus negative part of things and my age and blamed it all on that. They weren't willing to do anything else, they just advised me to keep trying"

"Before my third miscarriage, I was determined to get pregnant quickly just to be offered tests, but in hindsight I don't think that I was ready."

We find this policy inexplicable as it delays the finding of medical reasons and condemns some women to the trauma of miscarriage who would otherwise not have to go through such a distressing experience. We strongly feel that there is a need for a review of NHS Scotland's policy on this issue.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/miscarriagetesting>

Related information for petition

www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

Closing date for collecting signatures online

19 / 10 / 2012

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Currently, it is only women who suffer recurrent miscarriages (three consecutive miscarriages in a row) in the first trimester who are offered testing or women in the second trimester.

Scottish Care & Information on Miscarriage (SCIM) Management Committee would like an immediate review of this policy to assist in relieving the anxiety and distress caused by the current guidelines. It is important that this is changed as there is no valid medical evidence for this policy.