



West Middlesex University Hospital

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Legal Requirement for Reporting Fetal Death Prior to 24 Weeks Gestation:

According to the House of Commons Library Briefing Paper (*Registration of Still Birth* June 9 2016):

The birth of a baby who is born alive must be registered, whatever the length of the completed pregnancy. If a baby lives for even a short time after being born and then dies, both the birth and death must be registered. A neonatal death generally means a death within the first 28 days of life.

When a baby is stillborn (born dead) after 24 weeks pregnancy, the birth must be registered. However, there is no provision to allow the registration of stillbirths before the 24th week of pregnancy.

The charity Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death charity) provides forms of certificate that health care staff may use or adapt for a baby born dead before 24 weeks pregnancy.

In March 2016, the Government indicated that it has no plans to change the definition of stillbirth which is based on the age of viability.

In January 2014, Tim Loughton introduced a Private Members' Bill, intended to enable registration of a child stillborn before the threshold of 24 weeks. The definition of stillbirth was to be based on the experience of giving birth. The Bill did not progress any further.

Sources: House of Common Library Briefing Paper (Registration of Still Birth 2016)
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05595/SN05595.pdf> [accessed 01/07/2016] Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953