



## Legal and Civic Services Department

Our Ref: NL/cc/jm/tg

Date: 2 June 2025

Mr Peter Hall  
The Finance Committee Clerk  
Room 382  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw,  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

**Via email only**

[deathsstillbirthsbabyloss@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:deathsstillbirthsbabyloss@niassembly.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Hall,

Thank you on behalf of Belfast City Council for allowing the council the opportunity to review and comment upon the deaths, Still Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Council officers have reviewed the Bill and has no specific comment on the content of the legislation and is content with same. This response will have to be endorsed by our Elected Members, and I would be grateful if this response could be accepted subject to any proposed changes they may wish to make. We intend to bring this to our Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in June, with that decision being ratified by Council in July.

The Council would, however, like to take this opportunity to bring some further related suggestions to the Department's attention.

Currently when the Council registers a still birth, or the birth of an infant under 1 year old, a short form birth certificate is provided to the family free of charge as per Art 40A of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. If the family wish to obtain a long form certificate they have to pay for it. The Council would ask the Department to consider allowing for a long form death certificate being issued in these scenarios free of charge. The bereaved parents often want a long form certificate as it states the cause of death. The parents are often in a highly distressed state when



they register the death, and it is extremely difficult and upsetting for the parents, and the Council staff dealing with them, to ask for payment in these circumstances.

Another issue the Council would ask the Department to consider is whether the fee for marriage certificates could be waived in circumstances where one of the parties to be married is terminally ill with a very limited life expectancy. Again this is a scenario where Council staff find it very insensitive to ask for payment.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to make these representations.

Yours sincerely

**Nora Largey**  
**City Solicitor/Director of Legal & Civic Services**