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Dear Baroness Bottomley,

Thank you for your contribution to the debate on the Still-Birth (Definition) Bill Second Reading on Friday 4 July.

I am writing to respond to your question regarding Part 2 of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc) Act 2019, which provided for a change in law to enable or require coroners to investigate stillbirths, and what the Government is currently doing on this.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Ministry of Justice jointly consulted in 2019 on proposals to provide coroners with new powers to investigate term stillbirths. In 2023, a factual summary of responses to the consultation was published. We are considering the issues emerging from the consultation responses, together with the Ministry of Justice and will outline the Government's position on the 2019 consultation in due course.

However, we anticipate that the independent Investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal care that the Secretary of State, DHSC, recently announced may wish to consider the overall investigation landscape more broadly.

The terms of reference and scope will be announced shortly. Subject to that we will want to ensure Government's final conclusions on coronial investigations of stillbirths reflect any relevant recommendations the independent Investigation may make.

I hope you find this letter helpful. I will also send a copy to those Peers who spoke during the second reading and place a copy in the House library.

Baroness Wheeler

Captain of the King's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard Household
Deputy Chief Whip