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Our Reference: 202500478887

Your Reference: East Dunbartonshire Council - Council Meeting - 19 June 2025

1 September 2025

Dear Ann Davie ,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 June 2025 to Neil Gray MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, outlining East Dunbartonshire Council's Motion on Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG). I am responding to you as Maternity lies within my portfolio.

I appreciate the Council's commitment to raising awareness of this serious and often misunderstood condition, and I commend your proactive steps to support affected individuals within your community.

The Scottish Government recognises that HG can have a profound and debilitating impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of those affected and their families. We acknowledge the potential life-altering nature of HG, sometimes for the duration of the woman's pregnancy. The Scottish Government expects all Health Boards to follow National evidence-based Guidance and best practice, for example The Management of Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy and Hyperemesis Gravidarum (Green-top Guideline No.69) | RCOG. We would also expect this guidance to be followed for treatment and management in primary care settings.

While there is no dedicated national programme solely focused on HG, the Scottish Government is actively working to improve maternal health through broader initiatives that can positively impact HG care:

- The Best Start Programme: This is a five-year plan to transform maternity and neonatal services in Scotland. It promotes continuity of carer, trauma-informed care, and personalised support — all of which are crucial for women experiencing HG.
- Early Child Development Transformational Change Programme: This includes improvements in maternity care and nutrition, such as free vitamins for pregnant women, which may help mitigate some

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HG symptoms

- Universal Health Visiting Service and the Family Nurse Partnership. To be eligible for this, you must meet the criteria, which is first-time mothers who are:
 - Aged 19 or under at the start of pregnancy
 - Aged 20 to 24 may also be eligible if wider risk factors are identified, such as social, emotional, or health-related vulnerabilities

The Universal Health Visiting Service and the Family Nurse Partnership services provide early support and monitoring, which can help identify and manage HG more effectively.

The Scottish Government shares your concerns about the need for timely, compassionate and effective care, and we strongly agree that early diagnosis and treatment are essential to improving outcomes and reducing the long-term impact on women's health. Raising awareness among healthcare professionals and the public is key to ensuring that those affected are believed, supported, and treated appropriately from the outset. You may be interested to know that a session on HG was held at the Scottish Early Pregnancy Network meeting on 11 March 2025.

We welcome the Council's decision to mark Hyperemesis Gravidarum Awareness Day annually and to promote the work of organisations such as Pregnancy Sickness Support. Your call for enhanced national action, including improved awareness, training, funding, and consistent care pathways aligns with our broader commitment to strengthening maternal health services across Scotland.

The recently updated Maternity Pathway and Schedule of Care outlines a trauma-informed, family-centred approach to maternity care, with continuity of carer and personalised support at its core. This framework ensures that all pregnant individuals receive high-quality care tailored to their clinical and emotional needs, and it supports early identification and management of conditions such as HG.

Additionally, the Ready Steady Baby! guide provides comprehensive information on pregnancy, labour, birth, and early parenthood, including mental health support and guidance on managing pregnancy-related health issues. This resource is distributed to all expectant parents at their initial booking appointment and is designed to empower families with accessible, evidence-based information throughout their maternity journey.

The Scottish Government has commissioned Healthcare Improvement Scotland to develop a set of Maternity Standards designed to drive improvements in Maternity care throughout pregnancy, including care for women with HG. HIS is developing the standards in line with its established standards development methodology and will be consulting on the standards later in the year, with a view to rolling these out in 2026. The scope of the Standards is available on the Maternity Care Standards page on the HIS website and details of the consultation, including the draft standards, will be made publicly available there.

In addition, HIS extended its routine Safe Delivery of Care inspections to all 18 obstetric maternity units in Scotland from January 2025. The maternity inspection programme is intended to shine a light on improvements that can be made locally and lessons that can be learned by all maternity services across Scotland to continue to drive up standards. Inspection reports are published on the HIS website here. The Maternity Care Standards will be incorporated into the HIS Safe Delivery of Care in acute settings maternity inspections programme once in place.

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In a recent parliamentary response, the Scottish Government acknowledged the emotional and physical toll HG takes on pregnant women and their families, emphasising the importance of appropriate, evidence-based guidance and compassionate care.

Thank you again for bringing this important issue to our attention.

Yours sincerely



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