

Your address

24 April 2018

Maree Todd MSP  
Minister for Childcare and Early Years  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Maree Todd MSP,

### **Keep Children in Scotland Safe**

I am writing to you to ask the Scottish Government to change legislation to make it mandatory for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Providers to have a member of staff on duty with a 12-hour Paediatric First Aid qualification, when children are present, or on visits.

#### **Why is this important?**

Not all nurseries or childcare providers in Scotland have staff trained in paediatric first aid on site to deal with immediate life threatening first aid emergencies like choking or asthma attacks.

Infants and children, who need simple first aid treatment, before an ambulance arrives, are being put at risk everyday.

In England and Wales all childcare settings should have at least 1 member of staff with a 12 hour Paediatric First Aid qualification. This became law in September 2014. The tragic Millie Thompson case in 2012 brought into sharp focus the fact that paediatric first aid training can mean the difference between the life and death of a child.

I am now asking the Scottish government why this law can't be applied to all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Providers in Scotland, to bring us in line with England and Wales.

Why does the Scottish government not seem to think that childcare staff on duty, when children are present, don't need to hold a Paediatric First Aid qualification?

In late 2016 a FOI request to all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland had some horrifying replies -

- 30% of Local Authorities said they did not require ELC Providers to have staff on site with a Paediatric First Aid qualification
- Of those that did require Paediatric First Aid training, the level varied widely from 3 - 9 contact hours. There was no consistency of course length or course content across Local Authorities.

### **Why a 12-hour Paediatric First Aid course?**

I am sure you realise that first aid for infants and young children is quite different to that of adults. This 12 hour paediatric first aid course is seen as the 'standard' first aid course for childcare across the rest of the UK, but not in Scotland. The training includes time to cover infant and child specific issues around CPR, asthma, febrile convulsions, recognition of meningitis and more. None of these are included on a standard 6 hour Emergency First Aid at Work course.

If the law were changed, to create parity between England, Wales and Scotland then this situation would be resolved instantly.

The Scottish government is working towards doubling the amount of free childcare hours for parents of young children in Scotland. More children will be put at risk for longer, unless this change is made. Now is the perfect time to change the law.

As other childcare legislative changes are enacted it is the perfect time to change the law to ensure that Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Providers have Paediatric First Aid trained staff on duty when children are present, or on visits.

Why should we have to wait for another young child to die in a nursery before the government acts?

Yours sincerely