



Statement on the Launch of the Certification for Pre-24-week Loss in Northern Ireland

“At Mariposa International, through our Saying Goodbye division, we are deeply moved that bereaved parents in Northern Ireland will soon be able to receive baby loss certificates — long-awaited recognition for so many families who have endured unimaginable loss.

Stormont’s Finance Minister John O’Dowd, whose department drafted the bill, said it would “offer a small candlelight of hope to many families” in Northern Ireland who suffer loss. This affirms the Northern Ireland Government’s commitment to recognising babies who die before 24 weeks of gestation. It is hoped that the scheme will be in place by March 2026. Parents will also be able to apply for a free certificate for losses that occurred in the past, mirroring the system already in place in England.

This initiative stems from a campaign we at Mariposa International launched in 2015 to ensure that every parent across the UK has the opportunity for official acknowledgement of their baby’s existence and their profound loss. The campaign was championed in the House of Lords by Baroness Benjamin, and that vision was ultimately realised through the Government’s Pregnancy Loss Review — which I, Zoe Clark-Coates, and Sam Collinge were honoured to co-chair, author and deliver.

The introduction of baby loss certificates represents one of the 73 national recommendations from the Pregnancy Loss Review. Five recommendations have now been (or are soon to be) implemented — with 68 more to go — each designed to transform bereavement care, maternity safety, and support for families across the country. While baby loss certificates will not be right for everyone, they provide comfort and validation for thousands of families — affirming a simple but powerful truth: their babies were here, they were loved, and they will always matter.

We are delighted that Ministers in Northern Ireland have decided to progress the certification system urgently, ensuring that bereaved families across the country receive the dignity and acknowledgement they so deeply deserve.”

Zoe Clark-Coates MBE, BCAh – Founder and CEO of Mariposa International, and Co-Chair and Author of The Pregnancy Loss Review