
Stillbirth or infant death

When you speak to the client

Parents may still be eligible for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment, if a baby is:

- stillborn
- born alive and then dies

They may avoid meeting or speaking to people following the death of their baby. Some may find that speaking to officials can be hard.

Use the same language as the client

Using similar language will reassure the client that you're listening to them and not cause further undue stress by using terms they do not know. For example, they may say 'my baby died when I was 6 months pregnant' or 'I lost my child when he was 4 months old' and find it difficult to understand 'still birth' or 'infant death'.

If the parent refers to their baby by name, use this name too. It means the conversation becomes personal. If they say 'my son/daughter', follow suit and say 'your son/daughter'.

The phrase 'pregnancy loss' can be used to describe when a baby is born and shows no sign of life. This applies to miscarriages and stillbirths.

Use the word 'loss', if it's appropriate. Some parents may not relate to this term, as they don't like people saying that they have 'lost' their baby. For example, parents whose baby was born alive, but then died, have not experienced a 'pregnancy loss'.

It might be difficult for some parents to use the term 'miscarriage' if their loss is after 12 weeks of pregnancy. After 12 weeks the mother has to birth the baby, so this may change how parents think of the situation – a loss, rather than a miscarriage. It may be possible to use the phrase 'late miscarriage' for this later period, but you must be sensitive about it.

Listen to the parent and follow their lead.

Show empathy

You should speak to the client in an open and honest way. Do it with empathy – you can use such phrases as ‘I am very sorry that your baby has died’ and ‘I cannot imagine how that feels’.

Acknowledge the difficulty and sadness in what has happened.

Be sensitive when asking questions

Ask permission to ask questions, for example:

- ‘Is it ok if I ask you...?’
- ‘Is it ok to continue?’

Pre-empt difficult questions with a phrase, for example: ‘What I’m about to ask could be difficult’.

Instead of directly asking questions, try saying, for example: ‘What I’m going to do now is talk about eligibility: “If a baby was born before 24 weeks, who showed no sign of life, then the parent would not be eligible.” Does that sound like it might be similar to what happened to you?’.

Be prepared that some parents, especially if they find they are not eligible, may feel frustrated.

Be sensitive when establishing what happened to the baby. Acknowledge that you appreciate this is difficult for the parent to talk about. Explain that to process the claim you need to know what has happened. Be patient and understanding.

Do not minimise what has happened

Do not say things to try and make it better. Do not try to compensate or minimise what has happened, for example by saying things like: ‘at least you still get the money; or ‘at least your pregnancy was not further on’.

If you say the wrong thing, acknowledge it and say that you are sorry. Not saying anything at all - being silent - is the worst response of all.

If the client is upset

If the client is crying, allow them time to do so. Reassure them by saying: 'It's ok. Take your time'. Be prepared to pick up the conversation at another time if the person becomes too upset.

Remember, this is not about you – do not make references to when you felt grief.

Eligibility and definitions

Standard BSG eligibility rules apply for parents of a baby that is:

- stillborn
- born alive and then dies

Miscarriage

A miscarriage is a pregnancy loss before the 24th week of pregnancy, where a baby is born showing no sign of life. A loss:

- in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy is called an 'early miscarriage'
- between 12 and 24 weeks of pregnancy is called a 'late miscarriage'

A parent who has had a miscarriage is **not eligible** for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment.

Stillbirth

A stillbirth is a pregnancy loss after the beginning of the 24th week of pregnancy, where a baby is born showing no sign of life.

Parents of a stillborn child will qualify for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment if they meet all the other eligibility criteria.

Infant death

Neonatal death is when a baby dies within the first 28 days of life.

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), also known as 'cot death', is the sudden, unexpected and unexplained death of an apparently healthy baby. Most deaths happen during the first 6 months of a baby's life.

Parents of a baby who is born alive and who then dies will qualify for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment if they meet all the other eligibility criteria. This includes parents of a baby who is born alive prematurely and dies before the 24th week of pregnancy.

Application window

The 'application window' for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment is from the 24th week of pregnancy until 6 months after the child is born.

You should also accept applications where the child is born alive before the 24th week of pregnancy (prematurely).

If the client experienced a stillbirth

A stillbirth is when a baby dies after 24 completed weeks of pregnancy.

One of the eligibility criteria for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment is that the applicant or partner has been at least 24 weeks pregnant. There is no separate eligibility condition for stillbirth.

Check SPM

If the client has stated in their application they have experienced a stillbirth, this will show in SPM. To check:

1. Log in to SPM
2. Search for the client record
3. Go to the BSG application case
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'. You will see a ticked 'stillbirth' box there.

To process the application, you must verify the client is eligible for BSG. You can do this either by:

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- verifying the client's pregnancy
 - verifying the stillbirth

Verify the client's pregnancy

Verify via the BabyBox API

If the client applied for a Baby Box and gave permission for their data to be shared with the Baby Box provider, you can verify their pregnancy via the Baby Box API on SPM. Follow the ['Verifying pregnancy'](#) guide on how to do this.

Verify via other evidence

If the Baby Box API does not return a match, or the API is not appropriate, ask the client to send in either:

- a MAT B1 certificate (to verify the pregnancy)
- a Stillbirth Certificate or Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth (to verify the stillbirth)

Follow the ['Ask a client for more information or evidence'](#) guidance on how to do this.

If the client provides a MAT B1 certificate, follow the ['Verifying pregnancy'](#) guide to verify and record the pregnancy.

Verify stillbirth

If the applicant provides a Stillbirth Certificate or a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth, update SPM. To do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#)
2. [Search for the client record](#)
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#)
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'. Check the date of birth held in the Evidence matches that on the certificate. Update if required. See the SPM ['Pregnancy and Baby Payment details evidence'](#) guide on how to do this.
7. Update the 'Date of Birth' verification by selecting 'Other Reason' from the drop down list.

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8. Update the 'Comments Box' with information that the client sent in either a Stillbirth Certificate or a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth.

If the client experienced infant death

Infant death is when a baby dies before they reach 6 months of age.

If the client applied for a child who has died, you will see the word 'Deceased' to the child's record on SPM.

If the client or their partner has taken responsibility for the child

Follow the ['Verify child responsibility'](#) guide for eligibility criteria and processes.

If the client or their partner has given birth

They may still be eligible for Pregnancy and Baby payment if they apply within six months of the child's birth.

To process the application, you must verify the client is eligible for BSG. You can do this either by:

- verifying the client's pregnancy
- verifying the child's birth or death

Verify the client's pregnancy

Verify via the BabyBox API

If the client applied for a Baby Box and gave permission for their data to be shared with the Baby Box provider, their pregnancy can be verified via the Baby Box API on SPM. Follow the ['Verifying pregnancy'](#) guide on how to do this.

Verify via other evidence

If the Baby Box API does not return a match, or the API is not appropriate, ask the client to send in either:

- a MAT B1 certificate (to verify the pregnancy)

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- a child's Birth or Death Certificate (to verify the child's birth)

Follow the '[Requesting Additional Information/Evidence](#)' guidance on how to do this.

If the client provides a MAT B1 certificate, follow the '[Verifying pregnancy](#)' guide to verify and record the pregnancy.

Verify the child's birth or death

If the client provides the child's Birth Certificate

Update SPM. To do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#)
2. [Search for the client record](#)
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#)
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'. Check the date of birth held in the Evidence matches that on the certificate. Update if required. See the SPM '[Pregnancy and Baby Payment details evidence](#) guide on how to do this.
7. Update the 'Date of Birth' verification by selecting 'Birth Certificate' from the drop down list. See the SPM '[Pregnancy and Baby Payment details evidence](#) guide.

If the client provides the child's Death Certificate

Update SPM. To do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#)
2. [Search for the client record](#)
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#)
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'. Check the date of birth held in the Evidence matches that on the certificate. Update if required. See the SPM '[Pregnancy and Baby Payment details evidence](#) guide on how to do this.
7. Update the 'Date of Birth' verification by selecting 'Other Reason' from the drop down list.
8. Update the 'Comments Box' with information that the client sent in the death certificate.

9. Update the 'Date of Death' verification by selecting 'Death Certificate'.

Clear outstanding evidence on SPM

If the client states they experienced stillbirth or that their child died, SPM will create up to 3 verifications:

- Pregnancy
- Date of Birth
- Date of Death

Only 1 of these items must be verified for the client to be eligible for a Pregnancy and Baby Payment. All verifications, however, must be cleared on SPM to allow the Application Case to be authorised.

If the pregnancy does not need to be verified

Clear the 'Pregnancy' verification. To do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#)
2. [Search for the client record](#)
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#)
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'.
7. Select the 'Date of Birth' from the drop down list.
8. Note in the 'Comments Box' if the client provided a Death Certificate.

If the date of birth does not need to be verified

Clear the 'Date of Birth' verification. To do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#)
2. [Search for the client record](#)
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#)
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.

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6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'.
 7. Select 'Other' from the drop down list.
 8. Note in the 'Comments Box' if the client provided a MAT B1 or a Death Certificate.

If a Death Certificate has not been provided

Clear the 'Date of Death' verification. To do this:

1. Log in to SPM
2. Search for the client record
3. Go to the BSG application case
4. Select 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Select 'Evidence' from the left of the screen.
6. Select 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details'.
7. Select 'Death Certificate' from the drop down list.
8. Note in the 'Comments Box' if the client provided a MAT B1 or a Birth Certificate.

Letters to clients who experienced a stillbirth or infant death

To ensure clients who have experienced a stillbirth or infant death are treated with additional sensitivity, tailored award and disallowance letters have been created.

If you see a ticked 'stillbirth' checkbox in the 'Pregnancy and Baby Grant Details' or a child is shown as 'deceased' on SPM, do this:

1. Stop generation of the award of the deny letter on SPM. See the SPM 'Award and deny letters' guide on how to do this.
2. Follow the 'Non-standard letters' guidance to issue the appropriate letter to the client.

Support for bereaved parents

Citizens Advice Bureau

Bereaved parents may be eligible for additional benefits. Direct them to their nearest [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) or advise to call the helpline.

Helpline: 0800 800 9060

Website: www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

Child Bereavement UK

A charity that offers support to families when a baby or child dies.

Helpline: 0800 600 2227

Website: childbereavementuk.org

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland

A charity that offers support to families when a baby or child dies.

Helpline: 0845 600 2227

Email: support@crusescotland.org.uk

Website: www.crusescotland.org.uk

Miscarriage Support

A counselling service supporting people affected by miscarriage, neonatal death and stillbirth.

Helpline: 0141 552 5070

Email: info@miscarriagesupport.org.uk

Website: www.miscarriagesupport.org.uk

Sands (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity)

A charity that supports anyone affected by the death of a baby before, during or shortly after birth.

Helpline: 0808 164 3332

Email: helpline@sands.org.uk

Website: www.sands.org.uk

Sands Lothian (Stillbirth and neonatal death society)

A Lothian-based charity – not related to Sands above. It supports families following the death of a baby through specialised bereavement services. This includes befriending and counselling. They can refer families to other services in Scotland.

Helpline: 0131 622 6263

Email: info@sands-lothians.org.uk

Website: sands-lothians.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends

A charity that offers support to family members after the death of a child including online, telephone and local support and resources.

Helpline: 0345 123 2304

Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Website: www.tcf.org.uk

The Scottish Cot Death Trust

A charity dedicated to the sudden unexpected death of babies and young children.

Helpline: 0141 357 3946

Email: contact@scottishcotdeathtrust.org

Website: www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org

Sure Start Maternity Grant previous award

Check for a Social Fund interest

A BSG Pregnancy and Baby Payment cannot be awarded if a client or their partner have already been paid an SSMG for the same child.

An SSMG award will be displayed as a Social Fund interest on the [External Standard Enquiry Facility \(e-SEF\)](#).

A Social Fund interest is where a client is getting a benefit award from DWP, or has applied for a benefit from DWP.

A Social Fund interest can also apply to other payments than SSMG, for example Budgeting Loans and Funeral Expenses.

To check for a Social Fund interest:

1. [Log in to e-SEF](#).
2. Choose 'Interests History' from the top menu bar. Do this for the client and their partner.

Update SPM

If there's no relevant Social Fund interest on e-SEF

If a Social Fund interest shows on e-SEF with no end date, or an end date within the last 12 months, do this:

1. [Log in to SPM](#).
2. [Search for the client's record](#).
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#).
4. Choose 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Choose 'Other Benefit' and review any evidence listed.

If there's no Social Fund evidence, you do not need to do anything else.

If there's a Social Fund evidence, do this:

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1. Delete associated 'Other Benefit' evidence.
 2. Update a note on the Application Case with the date, time and result of the Social Fund interest check on [e-SEF](#).

If there's a relevant Social Fund interest on e-SEF

1. [Log in to SPM](#).
2. [Search for the client's record](#).
3. [Go to the BSG application case](#).
4. Choose 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Choose 'Other Benefit'.

If Social Fund shows in 'Other Benefits' evidence

1. Add start date of the Social Fund interest in the start date field.
2. Make sure the 'claimed only' box is ticked.
3. Update the comments box with the date and time of when you checked [e-SEF](#).

If Social Fund does not show in 'Other Benefits' evidence

1. Add a Social Fund to 'Other Benefits' evidence.
2. Add start date of the Social Fund interest in the start date field.
3. Tick the 'claimed only' box.
4. Update the comments box with the date and time of when you checked [e-SEF](#).

See the SPM ['Update evidence – if client received SSMG'](#) guidance.

Consider if an SSMG has been awarded

There will be situations where an SSMG could not have been awarded for the same pregnancy or child. These include clients not meeting SSMG pregnancy or residency conditions.

SSMG pregnancy conditions

The conditions will not be met if Social Fund interest is not within the appropriate SSMG application period which is either:

- from 29 weeks of pregnancy until the child is six months old

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- until the child turns one if the client or their partner have become responsible for a child

For example:

On the BSG application date of 30 November 2018 the client or their partner is 25 weeks pregnant. e-SEF shows a Social Fund interest from 10 to 20 October 2018.

SSMG could not have been awarded. The client would not have met the condition of being at least 29 weeks pregnant.

Residency conditions

The conditions will not be met if:

- e-SEF holds a Scottish address for the client or their partner for the full Social Fund interest period
- and that interest period is since DWP stopped accepting SSMG applications for Scottish residents

For example:

The BSG application date is 30 June 2019. e-SEF shows a Social Fund interest with a start date of 1 June 2019 and no end date. e-SEF holds a Scottish address since 2017.

SSMG could not have been awarded. The client would not have met the residency conditions.

If an SSMG could not have been awarded

Update SPM. To do this:

1. Log in to SPM.
2. Search for the client's record.
3. Go to the BSG application case.
4. Choose 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Choose 'Other Benefit'.
6. Make sure the 'claimed only' box is ticked.
7. Update the Social Fund evidence in the comments box with:

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- date and time of when you checked e-SEF
 - reasons why a relevant SSMG could not have been awarded

Verify an SSMG Award

If there's an open Social Fund interest and it's possible that a relevant SSMG could have been awarded, contact DWP or Department of Communities (Northern Ireland)(DfC) to verify a previous award.

You can identify Northern Irish cases by the Office Code 07286.

Update SPM

To do this:

1. Log in to SPM.
2. Search for the client's record.
3. Go to the BSG application case.
4. Choose 'Evidence' from the top menu bar.
5. Choose 'Other Benefits'.
6. Update the Social Fund evidence in the comments box with:
 - name of the person you spoke to in DWP or DfC
 - date and time of call
 - any other information provided

If an SSMG has not been awarded

Tick the 'claimed only' box.

If an SSMG has been awarded

1. Add the SSMG award date in the start date field.
2. Change the 'Other Benefits' drop down from Social Fund to SSMG.
3. Remove tick from 'claimed only' box.
4. Clear the 'Other Benefits – Social Fund' verification.
5. Update the comments box with:

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- date of the DWP or DfC call
 - any SSMG award details

See the SPM ['Update evidence – if client received SSMG'](#) guidance.

When you check BSG eligibility and a verified SSMG award is on SPM, this will show as a disallowance reason. A BSG award will not be made.