# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **Extending Financial Support to Families When a Child Dies** |
| **DATE** | **18 March 2024** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government** |

The loss of a child is devastating for a family. Providing practical support for those families continues to be important to Welsh Ministers. I am grateful to all partners who help provide compassionate and pragmatic services to those affected by such a difficult loss.

In 2017, the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and One Voice Wales (OVW) agreed arrangements to waive burial or cremation fees for children and young people under 18 years old.

A review in 2019 found that these arrangements had provided a positive step in achieving better consistency in relation to the waiving of charges for child burial or cremation across Wales. However, many families were still burdened with the stress and worry about paying for other funeral costs.

Since April 2021, the Welsh Government has provided additional financial support to help towards these costs, with £500 being made available to any family in Wales which has lost a child.

This is a universal offer regardless of the family’s income, although there is no obligation to accept the payment should the family not want it. Families have used the money in a number of ways, including towards the cost of memorials and headstones as well as supporting funeral costs.

My officials have reviewed the funding with the support of the Child Bereavement Working Group, which is made up from members across local government, the Registrars Service and the WLGA.

I have agreed that the Welsh Government will continue to provide funding to local authorities to support both aspects of the arrangement – waiving fees and the additional support for bereaved families. An updated Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Welsh Government, the WLGA and OVW to reaffirm our collective commitment to supporting bereaved families.