

Twins trust.

We support twins, triplets and more...

News release

Tuesday November 26

A CHARITY in Scotland supporting twins triplets and more, has encouraged the Scottish Government to lead the way by providing better support for multiple birth families.

Twins Trust is supporting Glasgow south side mum Jennifer Edmonstone with her petition to secure more support for families with twins, triplets or more, which includes both financial and non-financial elements.

The most recent response from Holyrood referenced the new initiatives being rolled out to help parents and guardians, but these do not specifically cover multiple birth families. In fact, they do not go further than targeting families with low or no income and are universal to all births.

Jennifer, who's mum to three-year-old identical twin girls, said: "It is great that the Scottish Government is listening and taking note of our concerns.

"However, I would urge them to refer back to the original petition narrative and the presentation Helen Peck from Twins Trust and I made about the huge impact a multiple birth has on a family physically, emotionally and financially.

"By putting all births on a level playing field, by its very nature, means that multiple births are at a disadvantage. A clear example of this is child benefit. Every first birth has a higher rate of child benefit payment and every second birth has a lower rate of child benefit payment.

"Multiple births cannot be directly compared to having a child, then having a subsequent child. Everything comes at once and has to be paid for.

"As most families plan to have one child at a time, they often struggle to have up to double the costs all at once, whether that be paying for nursery fees or having to buy shoes. A way of combatting that stress would be to reconsider child benefit payments in line with its original policy intention."

Helen Peck, Twins Trust Scottish coordinator, said: "Our families have to pay double or triple the nursery fees, possibly change their work pattern which could have a direct impact on income, start maternity leave earlier because of a high risk pregnancy, and use up more leave if babies spend time in neonatal care.

“There is a higher rate of postnatal depression and relationship breakdown within the multiple birth community linked to high risk pregnancy, the many more premature babies requiring time in hospital at birth and throughout their lives, and the pressures that are attached to that.

“We’re just asking for what is right and fair and we are delighted that this is being looked at in Scotland.

“Twins Trust remains committed to its campaigning work in order to secure fair treatment for families in our community.”

The 2010 report by Professor Stephen Mackay for Twins Trust states the following.

Despite an apparent rough similarity in income levels, parents raising twins or triplets report higher levels of financial stress (see table 3.5). Whilst 26% of all families said they were ‘living comfortably’, and 28% of those raising singletons when age-matched to multiple births, only 17% of those raising twins or triplets could say the same.

Some 13% of those with a multiple birth said they were finding it quite difficult, rather than 8% for those raising a single child (which would fall to 7% if their mothers’ age profile matched that of multiple births).

In terms of the previous year, during which the sampled child or children were born, 62% of the multiple birth group said they were now financially worse off, compared with 41% of other parents. Only 11% of those raising twins/triplets said they were better off, compared with 19% for all mothers.

Notes to Journalists

For further information on multiple births please contact Alyson Chorley alysonchorley@twinstrust.org or pressoffice@twinstrust.org call 01252 332344 / 07791 383494.

For more information about Twins Trust in Scotland, contact Helen Peck on 07525 418935.

Twins Trust is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to improving the lives and wellbeing of families with twins, triplets or more. Representing 20,000 members and 100 local clubs in the UK, Twins Trust provides help and support to both parents and professionals to meet the unique challenges faced by multiple birth families. We invest in research to save lives, change lives and create better futures for multiple birth families. We also run a unique quality improvement project at Maternity Units to encourage and help with adherence to NICE QS46.

For further information, please visit www.twinstrust.org

1. Follow us on: Twitter/Facebook/Insta @twinstrust
2. For confidential and emotional support for families with multiples, please call Twinline which is staffed by trained volunteers that are parents of multiples and can offer support on sleeping, feeding, crying, behaviour, discipline, school issues or special needs. It is

free to call on 0800 138 0509 and is open Monday to Friday from 10am–1pm and from 7pm–10pm.