

Petitioner submission of 11 May 2023

PE1911/LL: Review of Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 as it relates to post-mortems

I plead that you, as MSPs, exercise your power to make essential changes to post-mortems and tissue retention processes. Some of you are new to the committee and this petition was born out of the sudden and devastating loss of my child, Richard.

Richard's post-mortem revealed shocking truths. Not only was it not the expected view and grant, but my child's brain, throat, and tongue had been removed without my knowledge or consent. The mental cruelty of invasive post-mortems on families and the disrespectful treatment of the deceased is disgraceful when there is an alternative available in digital scanners. As I conduct more research and speak to more individuals, I feel society has been turning a blind eye to this invasive medieval practice for years, as it is not their loved one being butchered. I had to ask if they had removed my son's eyes as they had removed everything else!

Regarding tissue samples, it is crucial to provide the next of kin with the choice to accept or decline their return upon issue of the death certificate. This should be routine and would ensure dignity and control in the face of tragedy. I endured an eleven-month-long and emotionally draining process. In stark contrast, other countries automatically offer these samples back to loved ones, giving them the choice.

Post-mortems, in non-suspicious cases should only be carried out with explicit next-of-kin permission. Digital scanning capabilities with accurate results are used globally, why not in Scotland to eradicate invasive techniques. I suggest our country goes further than digital scanners and adopts an opt-out option for post-mortem and tissue retention. This would resolve numerous issues, such as the current and future shortage of pathologists, financial savings, and the prevention of mental health issues among the next of kin. Just as with organ donation, we should have the right to choose.

The horror and grief were overwhelming for my family. I ran a business, drove a car, attended meetings and had a normal life. Due to what was performed on my child and the ordeal I went through, I no longer drive, I'm now a recluse, up at 3am or 4am to distract myself from the

nightmares of what my child went through. I have spoken with many others like me who have also received a life sentence of grief and trauma due to these procedures. How do the people who perform such invasive and unnecessary post-mortems sleep at night with this on their conscience – they can have no conscience. The opt-out option would give us OUR human rights – your body belongs to YOU!

Please support a more compassionate and respectful approach with greater transparency and accountability.