

P-05-871 Make baby and toddler changing available in both male/female toilets, Correspondence – Petitioner to Chair, 20.03.19

Thank you for taking the time to consider my petition; it is something that I and many feel strongly about. As we continue to evolve as a society, having baby changing facilities often limited to female toilets causes angst and issues of safety.

I have, on many occasions, had to change my son in areas not designed for changing a baby. These range from the top of a wheelie bin and the bench outside of a restaurant I had eaten in that refused me access to the baby changing facilities because I was a man and they were in the ladies toilets.

Over the last 5 months, I have had lots of conversations with fathers who have similar experiences to me. Some of them now have second thoughts about taking their children out for fear of not being able to access changing facilities.

While it is correct that many places are starting to put changing facilities in disabled toilets, I note that in the Public Toilet act that the British Standard is that it's not in a Unisex toilet. I may have misunderstood this, but my understanding of 'Unisex' is that it is available to people of either gender, If this is the case, the British Standard is to ensure that someone is disadvantaged. Be that Man or Woman.

With the default being that the Baby changing facilities generally go into the ladies toilets, by omission then the Act seems as if it is discriminating against Men who are trying to look after and bond with their children.

New York recently changed legislation to ensure that any new or refurbished toilets had baby changing facilities available to both men and women. Often we like to show that we are ahead of the curve here in Wales (the 5p bag charge to help the economy being one) this is an opportunity to help people who look after children obtain the access that they need while out and about.

A recent ITV Wales News piece showed that Baby Changing tables could be obtained for as little as £25, these have Wheels and are able to be placed where needed.

This is a small change that could have a wide reaching impact for a lot of people's lives.

Some Links to Articles:

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health/uncomfortable-unhygienic-dangerous-places-dads-15819227>

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2019-02-06/dads-call-for-baby-changing-units-to-be-available-in-all-mens-toilets/>

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/new-york-changing-tables-mens-restrooms_us_5c2e0fd1e4b05c88b7066d5a