

## Petitions Briefing

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 2 Abril 2019

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### Research briefing: Make baby and toddler changing available in both male and female toilets

**Petition number:** P-05-871

**Petition title:** Make baby and toddler changing available in both male and female toilets

**Petition text:** Within Wales there are many businesses, hospitals and council run parks/sites that don't have baby changing available for use by both men and women. Normally the facilities are only available in female toilets.

This means that men are often forced to hunt out facilities that they can use, or on many occasions, use makeshift measures like changing their child on the floor, on top of wheelie bin lids in toilets, balancing on their laps and on benches outside.

We would ask the Assembly to ensure that all future renovations and new builds within areas open to the public have an area that provides a safe and clean space to change babies/allow toddlers to go to the toilet safely and as a short term measure make a standalone or drop down changing unit available.

In 2018, the social media campaign #SquatforChange drew attention to fathers' frustrations with the lack of baby changing facilities in male public toilets. The campaign was started on Instagram by American [Donte Palmer](#) but was quickly picked up in the UK too.

The British Toilet Association best practice [recommends](#) that "all toilets in public places should cater for the needs of parents of either sex with babies and young children", but acknowledges that "older style toilets were not designed for family, mother and young children or disabled needs and certainly not for baby changing by males".

## United States

The '[Bathroom Accessible in Every Situation Act](#)' 2016 provides that federal buildings should be equipped with baby-changing facilities and that they should be installed in men's toilets as well.

In January 2019 New York [changed legislation](#) to ensure that any new or refurbished toilets have baby changing facilities available to both men and women.

## Scotland

Part 3.12.12 of the [Scottish Building Standards](#) (2017) state:

Baby changing facilities should be provided either as a separate unisex facility or as a dedicated space within both male and female sanitary accommodation and not within an accessible toilet.

## Wales

The Welsh Government's response highlights that Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires every local authority in Wales to **develop a local toilets strategy**. This must include an assessment of their community's need for toilets (including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for disabled people), and must set out how the local authority proposes to meet this need. Local authorities will be required to consult with interested parties on their draft strategies.

Local toilet strategies need to be in place by 31 May 2019. The provisions of the 2017 Act **do not require local authorities to provide toilet facilities**, or does it prevent authorities from closing toilets. It is intended to improve the planning of provision so that alternative provisions to traditional public toilets are sought within communities, and that any decisions are taken in the context of a community's needs.

The Welsh Government has produced [statutory guidance](#) for local authorities, including consideration of the needs of parents of young children and toilet provision in future refurbishments and new builds.

The Welsh Government's response to the petition states:

**Building Regulations do not set requirements (for new build or refurbishments) for toilet or baby changing provision**, but set design standards where these facilities are to be provided. Where baby changing provision is intended, the statutory guidance and related British Standard recommend it should be accessible and not in unisex toilets.

[Part M](#) (access to and use of buildings) of the Welsh Government's Building Regulations states:

**Wheelchair-accessible unisex toilets should not be used for baby changing.** [..]

The provision of an enlarged cubicle in a separate-sex toilet washroom can be of benefit to ambulant disabled people, as well as parents with children and people (e.g. those with luggage) who need an enlarged space. In large building developments, separate facilities for baby changing and an enlarged unisex toilet incorporating an adult changing table are desirable.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this briefing is correct at the time of its publication. Readers should be aware that these briefing papers are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.