



The Rt Hon James Murray MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
(by email)

23rd June 2026

Dear James,

I am writing to you today to express my support for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) screening to be added to the NHS newborn heel-prick test.

As you know, around 1 in 40 people in the UK carry the faulty SMN1 gene and early detection and treatment is essential to prevent irreversible damage from the progression of SMA. While the In-Service Evaluation of newborn screening for SMA is a welcome step in the right direction, the fact that it will not cover all babies in England, and none in Wales or Northern Ireland, presents unacceptable risks of a postcode lottery for those newborns. I welcome the commitment of the previous Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to expand the In-Service Evaluation to cover all of England, and hope that you honour this commitment and extend it to Wales and Northern Ireland.

It is time we join our Scottish, European and Canadian partners and roll out screening for Spinal Muscular Atrophy for all newborns.

Please can I request that you:

- 1) Commit to extending the In-Service Evaluation of Spinal Muscular Atrophy to all newborns in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 2) Set out a timetable for adding Spinal Muscular Atrophy screening to the NHS newborn heel-prick test if recommended by the findings of the ISE.

Thank you for your attention on this matter and I look forward to receiving a response.

Yours Sincerely,

Ellie Chowns MP