

MP to call for support for bereaved children

Edinburgh West MP Christine Jardine will call on the UK Government on Thursday to develop a new protocol for informing children of bereavement support available to them.

Ms Jardine, whose family saw the loss of her father when she was 20 and her sisters were just 13 and 8 years old, believes that too many children are missing out on help at this difficult time, as there is no formal mechanism to inform them of what is available.

At any one, time public sector bodies and charities simply do not know how many children need their support, where they are, and how to adjust services to meet demand.

The Liberal Democrat has previously signed a petition from leading charity, Winston's Wish, to introduce a register of bereaved children to automatically recognise young people who may need their help.

Ms Jardine will now use a debate in Parliament to call on the government to introduce new guidelines to ensure every child who is bereaved knows what is available to them through public services, such as counselling, as well as charity networks offering tailored support.

Speaking ahead of the debate, Ms Jardine said: "This issue is one that means a great deal to me personally, and it is a

privilege to lead this vital debate to ensure vulnerable young people get the right support.

“Schools, social services and fantastic charities do a wonderful job of helping youngsters every day—but only the children they know about.

“They have no way of knowing exactly how many young people need or would benefit from their help, meaning they cannot reach out and offer support.

“This change would mean every child who loses a family member or close friend and is struggling with loss knows what support is out there to help them through an incredibly difficult time.

“I have not met anyone in Parliament who does not want to address this problem and does not recognise its significance. I truly believe this is not a partisan or political issue.

“All I am asking from the Government is the time and attention to find a way to make this small change, which will transform the lives of thousands of grieving children right across the country.

“That is the least they deserve.”



Christine Jardine MP PHOTO Alan Simpson