

NHS England and NHS Improvement
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

26 May 2022

Dear Families,

Independent thematic Review of maternity services at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

I want to begin by apologising for the distress caused by the delay in our announcing a new Chair and to take this opportunity to update you on how the work to replace the existing Review has been developing as we have taken on board various views that you have shared with us.

We have listened to the concerns that you raised with the Secretary of State when you met him in person and through recent correspondence that you have shared with us. Our work has been centred on ensuring that the new Review addresses those concerns, learns from other reviews, and provides a mechanism by which you can share your experiences and your views, so that real improvements can be experienced by people accessing maternity services in Nottingham now or in the future.

After careful consideration and in light of the concerns from some families, our own concerns, and those of stakeholders including in the wider NHS that the current Review is not fit for purpose, we have taken the decision to ask the current Review team to conclude all of their work by Friday 10 June.

This means that the publication later today of the interim report by the current Review team and the accompanying briefing sessions by the team planned for next week and week commencing 6 June will bring their work to a conclusion. Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust needs to urgently consider the findings of this interim report and make the immediate changes necessary to ensure the safety of mothers and babies in their care, and we will ensure that they do so.

We will be asking the new national Review team to begin afresh, drawing a line under the work undertaken to date by the current local Review team, and we are using this opportunity to communicate that to you clearly. I should add that, where you actively give consent, the new Review team will be able to access documentation such as the transcripts from your listening sessions. The new team will communicate with you about this in due course once it is established.

We have reflected on the strength of feeling from families and stakeholders to this Independent Review about the appointment of a new Chair, and I would like to restate that we feel it imperative for this new Review to have the confidence of all families

involved and families who may also come forward in the future. We have listened to your concerns. I can confirm that Donna Ockenden has agreed to chair the new Review and we will work with her to develop a new Terms of Reference that reflects the need to both drive urgent improvements to local maternity care and the need to deliver actionable recommendations that can be implemented as quickly as possible.

You have highlighted the need to ensure that families as well as NHS staff are supported to speak up, and we need to ensure that the lessons from previous reviews are learnt. We want to see a report concluded in a thorough but timely way with strong engagement with families, clinical experts, the Trust, and others, in order to enable immediate learning and rapid action to improve services for mothers and babies on a continuous basis.

In addition, we are developing a new standardised formal approach to appointing review chairs. We are absolutely committed to learning from feedback from this and other reviews to get that right, and from the challenges and shortcomings in this case, especially through the transition from regional to national oversight.

You will of course want to know further details as to the timescales and next steps for the new Review and we will set these out as soon as possible. In order to enable us to communicate with you directly following the conclusion of the current Review, and ahead of Donna formally beginning her role as Chair of the new Review, we would please ask you to email england.nuhtindrev@nhs.net with your contact details confirming that you are happy to be contacted by the national team at NHS England and NHS Improvement.

I would like to reiterate that we recognise the distressing impact this process has had on you and your families and the NHS is committed to providing the support that you need. The specialist psychological support remains in place and I would encourage you to contact Trent PTS at fpss@trentpts.co.uk or on 0115 200 1000 for more information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Sloman', with a flourish at the end.

Sir David Sloman
Chief Operating Officer
NHS England and NHS Improvement