

Louise Barnett
Chief Executive
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
Stretton House
Shrewsbury
SY3 8XQ

23rd July 2020

Dear Louise

Support available for patients, families and staff affected by the independent review of maternity services from SaTH and the wider system

Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin have agreed to send this joint letter following the recent media coverage of the decision by West Mercia Police to investigate whether any criminal offence has been committed by individual staff members or the Trust.

For some time we have been informally asking the system what emotional support is available to the families who have raised concerns about their experience of maternity services or where their case has been added to the review because the Trust identified issues with the care and treatment provided. We are aware that for some their experience of maternity services was some time ago while for others it is very recent.

We would also like to know about the support that has been made available to staff involved, particularly those currently involved in providing maternity services.

We are concerned that:

- Patients and families will be anxiously waiting for the final report from the review and their case might not be included in the report, or the report might not answer their questions and concerns.
- Patients and families currently using services will be anxious that they will not receive safe care and treatment.
- Staff who were practicing during the period covered by the review will feel vulnerable and that they do not have a voice and this might impact on their performance.
- Current staff will feel under scrutiny and unjustly blamed for any identified failings in the department, leading to them wanting to leave and putting the service at risk of not meeting the needs of women and families who are using the service now or will need to use it in the future.



As a consequence, we would like to know:

1. What psychological/emotional support has been made available to date to the women and families whose cases are being looked at by the independent review? How long will any support be available to them and who is providing that support?
2. What plans are in place to support women and families when the Ockenden Review is published? We anticipate support will be necessary to address the emotional impact of the findings as well as any outstanding questions or concerns of individuals. What support will be available, who will be able to access it and for how long?
3. What support is in place for women and families currently using maternity services to address any concerns they might have? Including plans for when the Ockenden Review is published.
4. What support is available for ex-staff and current staff members directly involved in the cases under review? How long will any support be available to them and who is providing that support?
5. What support is available to current staff working in maternity services, not directly involved in cases under review?

For your information, both Healthwatch have been asked to give the review access to all information we hold about maternity services (e.g. comments received, Enter & View reports) and relevant correspondence. We are complying with this request.

We are writing under the statutory framework afforded to Healthwatch under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and require a response to these questions within 20 working days.

We look forward to receiving your response to these questions no later than 21st August 2020.

Yours sincerely



Lynn Cawley
Chief Officer
Healthwatch Shropshire



Paul Shirley
General Manager
Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin



Vanessa Barratt
Chair of the Board
Healthwatch Shropshire



Barry Parnaby
Chair of the Board
Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin