

14 April 2022

An open letter to everyone served by The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

On Wednesday 30 March 2022, Mrs Donna Ockenden published her final report of the Independent Review of Maternity Services at our hospitals.

The report is devastating for our local communities, and it describes the pain and the loss endured by hundreds of families over the last two decades or more.

There are no words that could ever adequately convey how saddened I am by the report.

Today, I want to say to everyone in the communities we serve, including the women and families who have experienced such devastating loss, just how sorry I am for our unacceptable and avoidable failings.

I fully recognise that words and apologies will never be enough and what you now want to see is meaningful action and real change.

I give you my commitment that we will build on the work we have done to date and urgently take action to make our maternity services as safe as possible for women and families.

We are taking forward urgently all of the findings and recommendations set out in Mrs Ockenden's first report.

Since this interim report, published in December 2020, we have made significant progress.

We have recruited more midwives and consultant obstetricians meaning we now have a senior doctor on our maternity wards 24 hours a day.

Women are in control and can choose the type of birth they want with the introduction of birth option clinics and a review of birthing plans at every contact. For those women at 'high risk', you will be provided with a named consultant specialising in this care.

We have invested significantly in staff training, the leadership team overseeing our maternity services has been strengthened, and we have improved how we listen to, involve, and engage with women and families to ensure that their views are heard and acted on.

Staff too must be heard, and we encourage all our colleagues to speak up and raise any concerns confidentially through several channels, whether it's about patient safety or their own personal welfare. These channels are being strengthened further and I want my colleagues to know that if you do raise any concerns, you will be supported, listened to and the appropriate actions will be taken. Details of how to access these routes are shared within the organisation.

If you are a current or former member of staff at the Trust affected by this report and you wish to speak with someone about it, confidential methods of support are available to you and are set out at the end of this letter.

Undoubtably, there is much more we need to do and it's important to me that you are kept informed of our progress. On a monthly basis, we are 'live-streaming' the meetings of our Ockenden Report Assurance Committee to the public, which is chaired independently.

At these meetings, questions can be submitted in advance, and we provide updates on the key pieces of work we are undertaking and the progress we are making.

Our next meeting takes place on Tuesday 21 June 2022 (1430-1700 hrs), and I would like to invite you to join us via the web link that we will publish on our website nearer the time. We will also be providing regular maternity updates on our website at: www.sath.nhs.uk.

Having a baby is the most special time and families rightly expect the NHS to be there for them every step of the way.

We know that the report and the extremely distressing experiences that the families shared with us will have been very upsetting and worrying for many of you. If you are concerned about your care, have questions, or just want to speak with someone, I encourage you to get in contact with your midwife, consultant, or GP in the first instance.

Alternatively, please contact us via the following email address: sath.maternitycare@nhs.net

I want you to know that we are moving in the right direction, supported by investment in our maternity workforce, changes in our ways of working and the hard work and commitment of all our staff and partners.

We are now urgently building on this progress to ensure we deliver the best possible maternity services that you, the people in our communities, rightly deserve.

Thank you,

Yours faithfully,
Louise Barnett
Chief Executive
The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

Please see the support options on the following page

Support Options

For anyone to access:

As always, local and national support systems are available for **anyone** to access, as follows:

- [NHS 111](#) can be called using **111** if it is out of hours and you do not think it is an emergency situation. They will also link you to local services if you cannot find a local GP or hospital.
- [Samaritans](#) **08457 90 90 90** – The Samaritans are there to talk to 24/7 and will offer help in tough times.
- [Mind](#) **0300 123 3393** – Mind is a mental health charity that provides support. There is a link at the top of their webpage titled “I need urgent help” which will ask a number of questions and provide you with advice in your situation.
- **Call 999** - For medical and mental health emergencies

For current and former staff:

The Staff Wellbeing Hub, available to current or former members of staff:

- **Hub Telephone Number:** 07890 066445, available 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday
- **Hub Email:** stwstaffwellbeing@mpft.nhs.uk
- **Hub Website:** <https://stwics.org.uk/staff-psychological-wellbeing-hub>

If a current or former staff member wishes to talk to a psychologist with concerns around maternity and/or the Ockenden Review, then please use the following:

- Phone the Hub between 9am-5pm, or email or use the online referral out of hours
- You will be given an appointment with one of our psychologists (working in Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) and given their name). These are all evening appointments and will be via phone or Microsoft Teams

If help or support is needed outside these hours, the following is available:

- The Staff Support Phone Line is available 8am to 8pm, 9am-6pm over the Bank Holiday weekend, on 07785 317454