# Nottingham University Hospitals faces unprecedented corporate manslaughter probe over maternity care failings



A significant investigation into the Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust has been launched, centring on allegations of corporate manslaughter. The probe, formally initiated by Nottinghamshire Police, comes on the heels of a shocking history of neonatal deaths and serious injuries connected to the trust’s maternity services, which encompass the Queen's Medical Centre and City Hospital.

The trust has been under scrutiny due to what many are calling one of the largest maternity reviews in NHS history, led by independent midwife Donna Ockenden. This comprehensive examination is reviewing approximately 2,500 cases of neonatal deaths, stillbirths, and serious harm to mothers and their babies. The allegations surrounding these cases depict a distressing pattern of avoidable tragedies that have taken place over several years.

Detective Superintendent Matthew Croome, who is spearheading the investigation known as Operation Perth, stated that the inquiry is focused on whether the trust exhibited gross negligence in managing its maternal care. "We are assessing if the overall responsibility lies with the organisation rather than specific individuals,” he noted during a press briefing. The ambition is to establish whether the management's failings directly contributed to the loss of life. Importantly, this investigation has uncovered more than 200 family cases thus far, with expectations to examine as many as 2,500 in total, indicating the extensive scale of the issues involved.

The complexity of the investigation is underscored by the fact that, just four months prior, the trust was fined £1.6 million for avoidable failings linked to the deaths of three babies in 2021. Details from these cases revealed a series of systemic failures, including inadequate care escalation and poor communication, exposing mothers and infants to undue risk. The admissions made by the trust highlight a pervasive culture of negligence; while efforts to improve staffing and training have been put in place, campaigners contend that accountability measures for individuals remain insufficient. As noted by the Nottingham Families Maternity Group, despite two years of ongoing inquiries, no staff members have been disciplined or dismissed for their roles in these tragic outcomes.

In a poignant statement, Dr Jack and Sarah Hawkins, whose daughter Harriet was stillborn under the trust's care, expressed their mixed feelings regarding the ongoing investigation. "This investigation is just one piece of the jigsaw towards accountability," they asserted, underscoring the broader necessity for individual accountability alongside institutional measures. Their sentiments resonate with many families who have suffered similar losses, highlighting the deep emotional scars left by what they describe as systemic failures.

The mounting pressure for accountability reflects a growing frustration among families who believe that their concerns over maternity safety have consistently been ignored. “Had our concerns been listened to and acted upon, lives could have been saved,” remarked a representative for affected families, affirming the urgent need for systemic change within the trust to prevent future tragedies.

Compounding these issues, it has come to light that crucial records related to the scandal were mysteriously deleted, prompting internal investigations that failed to determine the cause of this loss. While these files have since been digitally recovered and passed to the police, questions about the trust's operational integrity remain paramount.

Amidst this backdrop, the trust's leaders issued a statement acknowledging their responsibility and expressing sorrow for the pain inflicted on families. "We are deeply sorry for the pain and suffering caused. We know that for many families this harm and suffering will be lifelong," they conveyed, reaffirming their commitment to the ongoing police investigation and the independent review led by Ockenden, albeit with the recognition that systemic changes take time and require unwavering dedication.

As the inquiry unfolds, it stands as a crucial juncture for accountability within the NHS, wherein the hope is for meaningful change that prioritises patient safety and respects the dignity of those affected by such harrowing experiences.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70zzk72g7xo)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.cqc.org.uk/press-release/cqc-prosecutes-nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-after-it-failed-provide-0), [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-admits-failings-in-baby-deaths-case-13306525)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/12/nottingham-nhs-trust-fined-over-three-newborn-babies-deaths), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c805923e338o)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/09/01/nottingham-maternity-scandal-victims-call-for-police-action/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.cqc.org.uk/press-release/cqc-prosecutes-nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-after-it-failed-provide-0), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70zzk72g7xo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/09/01/nottingham-maternity-scandal-victims-call-for-police-action/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70zzk72g7xo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14772769/Manslaughter-probe-launched-scandal-hit-NHS-trust-hundreds-babies-died-injured.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/press-release/cqc-prosecutes-nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-after-it-failed-provide-0> - The Care Quality Commission (CQC) prosecuted Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust for failing to provide safe care and treatment to three mothers and their babies, resulting in a total fine of £1,667,944. The cases involved Daniela O’Sullivan and her baby Adele, Ellise Rawson and her baby Kahlani, and Emmie Studencki and her baby Quinn. The trust admitted to multiple failings, including inadequate escalation of care, poor communication, and failure to deliver babies in a timely manner, exposing them to significant risk of avoidable harm.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/12/nottingham-nhs-trust-fined-over-three-newborn-babies-deaths> - Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust was fined £1.6 million after admitting to failing to provide safe care and treatment to three babies who died shortly after birth. The trust pleaded guilty to six counts related to the deaths of Adele O’Sullivan, Kahlani Rawson, and Quinn Parker, and the treatment of their mothers. The court heard that serious and systemic failures exposed all three mothers and their babies to significant risk of avoidable harm. The trust's chief executive, Anthony May, apologised and stated that improvements had been made, including hiring more midwives and providing further training to staff.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c70zzk72g7xo> - Families affected by the Nottingham maternity scandal have called for more accountability. The largest inquiry of its kind in NHS history is currently under way into care given to thousands of families at the Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) NHS Trust, which runs maternity departments at City Hospital and Queen's Medical Centre. Campaigners have expressed concern that after two years of investigation, no one at the trust has been 'investigated, sanctioned, disciplined, or dismissed'.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/nottingham-university-hospitals-nhs-trust-admits-failings-in-baby-deaths-case-13306525> - Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust admitted it failed to provide safe care and treatment to three babies who died within days of their births. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) charged the trust over the deaths, which all occurred in 2021. At Nottingham Magistrates' Court, the trust admitted six charges of failing to provide safe care and treatment to the three children and their mothers. The court was told that 'serious and systemic failures' exposed all three mothers and their babies to significant risk of avoidable harm.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c805923e338o> - An NHS trust is to be prosecuted over the deaths of three babies in its maternity care. The deaths all occurred in 2021 at the Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) NHS Trust. It is understood that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has charged the trust with failing to provide safe care and treatment to both the babies and their mothers. The trust has indicated it plans to plead guilty to the charges when the case is heard at Nottingham Magistrates' Court next week.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/09/01/nottingham-maternity-scandal-victims-call-for-police-action/> - Nottingham maternity scandal victims have demanded police action against hospital leaders. The families affected by the maternity care failings that led to the death and harm of hundreds of babies and mothers at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust (NUHT) have said they 'expect action' to be taken against its former senior bosses. The Nottingham Families Maternity Group met with the Nottinghamshire Police’s Chief Constable, Kate Meynell, to ask for a criminal investigation to be launched.