# Conservative MP's Initiative Reveals Failures in Maternity Care Leading to Birth Trauma



On May 13, 2024, a report on maternity care failures, specifically focusing on birth trauma, was published following an initiative led by Theo Clarke, the Conservative MP for Stafford and a birth trauma sufferer herself. This report, driven by both expert testimony and personal experiences from 1,300 individuals, was prepared by an all-party parliamentary group chaired by Clarke. It highlighted significant issues in how birth trauma is managed in the NHS, revealing both physical and psychological impacts on women.

The study showed that, while the majority of the approximately 600,000 annual births in England are not traumatic, about 30,000 new mothers (4%-5%) experience post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of childbirth complications. The report detailed problems such as poor communication, lack of empathy, inadequate record-keeping, and insufficient treatment accessibility post-birth. Additionally, it pointed to stark racial and socioeconomic disparities in maternity outcomes.

The discussion in the report also brought up controversial medical practices, like the continued use of forceps, which are used far more frequently in England compared to countries like Sweden and Austria. In response to the findings, women’s health minister Maria Caulfield apologized to affected mothers, and Amanda Pritchard, head of NHS England, acknowledged that the current standards were inadequate.

Recommendations from this report call for substantial reforms, including a new national minimum standard for maternity care and improved postnatal checks. The report's publication comes at a time when nearly two-thirds of maternity units in England have been rated as unsafe by the Care Quality Commission, pointing to a critical need for systemic improvements in maternity care.