# NHS maternity investigation targets systemic failures amid calls for transparency and equity



A sweeping national investigation into systemic failures in NHS maternity and neonatal services has been launched, with 14 hospital trusts across England named for scrutiny. The inquiry, led by Baroness Valerie Amos, aims to uncover the root causes of safety lapses and cultural issues that have afflicted maternity care for over 15 years, with a strong emphasis on the experiences of bereaved and harmed families.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting acknowledged the "extraordinary courage" of families who came forward, stating their voice is central to ensuring that no other families endure similar tragedies. He emphasised that, despite the vast majority of births being safe, the investigation cannot ignore instances of preventable harm. "Every single preventable tragedy is one too many," Streeting said, highlighting that the investigation seeks to make maternity care safer and more compassionate.

The trusts under review represent diverse regions and communities, encompassing Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust; Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust; East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust; Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust; Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust; Oxford University Hospitals; Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust; Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust; The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King’s Lynn; University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust; University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust; University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust; and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust / Somerset NHS Foundation Trust.

Baroness Amos has underscored the importance of centring the lived experiences of mothers, fathers, and non-birthing partners in guiding the investigation and shaping forthcoming national recommendations. Particular attention will be paid to the inequalities faced by Black and Asian women and families from marginalised backgrounds, whose concerns have historically been neglected. The investigation is set to begin this summer, with initial recommendations expected by December 2025.

Healthcare professionals and bodies have voiced support for the investigation, while also calling for urgent support for staff and transparency throughout the process. Gill Walton, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), stressed the imperative for the inquiry to proceed rapidly to provide answers for families and relief for overstretched maternity staff. She highlighted ongoing disparities where Black and Asian women face disproportionately higher risks of maternal death and adverse outcomes, a matter the investigation will address alongside broader socioeconomic inequalities.

Professor Ranee Thakar, president of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, called for a review process marked by compassion, transparency, and appropriate support, noting the critical state of the maternity workforce amid staff shortages and burnout. NHS Confederation’s Rory Deighton described the investigation as essential for learning from past failings to enhance safety and equity in maternity care, recognising the persistent challenges faced by services.

The national inquiry follows a series of maternity scandals and independent reviews that highlighted issues such as women’s voices being ignored, safety concerns being dismissed, and poor leadership fostering toxic environments within some trusts. These systemic problems have tragically resulted in avoidable harm to mothers and babies, galvanising calls for a thorough and transparent examination.

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust and Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, among others, have expressed their commitment to cooperating fully with the investigation to improve maternity care outcomes. The inquiry will initially focus on the most concerning cases within these trusts, seeking to produce a detailed understanding of the causes behind the tragedies examined.

Alongside the investigation, the government has established a National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce chaired by Health Secretary Wes Streeting to support ongoing improvements in maternity services nationally. Parents and families impacted by previous failings have welcomed the investigation as a vital step toward accountability and safeguarding future generations, while recognising the challenges ahead for both families and frontline maternity staff.

This landmark review represents one of the most extensive efforts to date to address deep-rooted issues within NHS maternity care, with the ultimate goal of creating a system that delivers safe, equitable, and compassionate care for all mothers and babies in the UK.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1–3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-amos-to-spearhead-maternity-and-neonatal-investigation), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-06-23/government-launches-national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/)
* Paragraph 5–6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-06-23/government-launches-national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services), [[7]](https://www.hwdpt.org/news/2025-06-24/government-orders-investigation-failing-maternity-services)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/), [[5]](https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/news/national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services/), [[6]](https://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/national-investigation-mat-neo/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/), [[4]](https://www.hardingevans.com/news/2025/07/07/national-nhs-maternity-investigation-what-families-need-to-know/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/2025-06-23/government-launches-national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services), [[7]](https://www.hwdpt.org/news/2025-06-24/government-orders-investigation-failing-maternity-services)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/14-nhs-trusts-to-be-focus-of-national-maternity-investigation-are-named-NCMS4E5B5RPFJLUZ2FKXNSKQTI/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-amos-to-spearhead-maternity-and-neonatal-investigation> - Baroness Valerie Amos has been appointed to lead an independent investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal care, aiming to drive urgent improvements in care and safety. The review will identify ways to urgently improve care and safety, with bereaved and harmed families central to the investigation, including working with the Chair to shape her team of expert advisers and the terms of reference. The investigation is set to begin this summer and produce an initial set of national recommendations by December 2025.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-06-23/government-launches-national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services> - The UK government has launched a national investigation into NHS maternity services following a series of maternity scandals. The investigation aims to provide truth to families suffering harm and drive urgent improvements to care and safety. It is expected to report back by the end of the year. The government has also launched a 'National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce', which will be chaired by Health Secretary Wes Streeting.
4. <https://www.hardingevans.com/news/2025/07/07/national-nhs-maternity-investigation-what-families-need-to-know/> - As of June 2025, seven NHS Trusts have been publicly named in the national investigation into NHS maternity services. The investigation aims to examine systemic problems in maternity services and identify areas for improvement to ensure safer care for mothers and babies. The investigation is set to begin this summer, with the first report due in December 2025. The 10 most concerning maternity and neonatal care units will be investigated first, followed by a system-wide investigation.
5. <https://www.uhsussex.nhs.uk/news/national-investigation-into-nhs-maternity-services/> - University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust is part of the rapid national investigation into NHS maternity services announced by the Secretary of State for Health. The Trust is committed to supporting the investigation to help improve maternity care at UHSussex and across the wider NHS. The investigation aims to produce a clear understanding of the circumstances and causes of the nine tragic cases it will be looking at here.
6. <https://www.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/national-investigation-mat-neo/> - Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is participating in the national investigation into maternity and neonatal services. The Trust is committed to supporting the investigation to help improve maternity care at Bradford and across the wider NHS. The investigation aims to produce a clear understanding of the circumstances and causes of the cases it will be looking at here.
7. <https://www.hwdpt.org/news/2025-06-24/government-orders-investigation-failing-maternity-services> - The Government has ordered a rapid investigation of up to 10 failing maternity services to provide truth and accountability for impacted families and drive urgent improvements. Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting announced the investigation after meeting families and listening to their deeply painful stories of trauma, loss, and a lack of basic compassion caused by failures in NHS maternity care.