

**PRESS RELEASE: Embargoed until 13h00 Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

## **DESPITE THE COVID 19 CRISIS CHAIR OF MATERNITY REVIEW ASSURES FAMILIES PROGRESS IS CONTINUING AS LETTERS ARE SENT TO A FURTHER 400 FAMILIES**

Today 400 families have been sent letters telling them that their maternity care and treatment at the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust have been referred to the independent review team being chaired by Donna Ockenden.

These letters, sent to families by Donna Ockenden who is the review Chair, discuss the Terms of Reference which explain the work of the independent review team. The Terms of Reference can be found here:

<https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/6192/ToR-SaTH-Maternity-Independent-Review-Revised-November-2019.pdf>

The letters also provide information to enable families to make a choice as to whether they want their care to be reviewed by the independent team.

### **Maternity review commissioned by Jeremy Hunt in 2017**

This independent maternity review was commissioned by Jeremy Hunt in 2017, when he was Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, following concerns raised by the parents of Kate Stanton-Davies who died shortly after birth in 2009 and Pippa Griffiths, who died just after she was born in 2016.

### **Donna Ockenden confirmed today that the number of families involved in the maternity review stands at 1,170.**

Donna explained: *“The 400 families written to today have been passed to us by the Trust for review. They are not new cases and were included in the numbers last year.”*

When explaining why these additional families have been sent letters today Donna Ockenden explained: *“Throughout the autumn and winter of 2018, the Trust, supported by NHS Improvement, undertook its own review of maternity care, where records existed, from the year 2007 to the end of 2018. This led to the identification of just over 330 families who at that time were not known to my maternity review team. I am now writing to those families to ask them if they would like to be included in the review.”*

When asked what the total number of families now stands at Donna Ockenden replied; *“The total now stands at 1,170 as more families have been identified.”*

Explaining the existence of the further families, Donna Ockenden added: *“following media attention in the autumn of 2018, a number of families contacted the Trust*



*directly and either asked for their cases to be reviewed, or to be included, in the independent maternity review. This group of families have also been written to today, together with a number of families who commenced legal proceedings against the Trust.”*

**The need to reach out to all potentially affected families by the end of May 2020**

Donna Ockenden added: *“By writing to all these families I am giving them the opportunity to ask questions about our independent review so they can make a choice as to whether they want their care to be independently reviewed by my team. We appreciate that any contact can be unsettling for families, but it is vital that our independent review reaches out to all potentially affected families.”*

*Donna added, “I want to assure people that despite this covid crisis progress is continuing and today I am making one last appeal to any family yet to get in touch to please do so by May 2020. I have made a commitment to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to deliver my final review report. We have to give ourselves the time to write the report and ensure it does justice to the testimony we have heard from families. So please get in touch by the end of May. Your story is important to us.”*

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