



Council

Motions

Date: 22 November 2023

Class: Part 1

Contributors: Head of Governance and Committee Services

Outline and recommendation

To receive motions from Members of the Council.

Motion: Support calls for a full statutory public enquiry into maternity safety in England, and provide greater support and scrutiny to our healthcare partners in Lewisham.

Proposer: Cllr Ese Erheriene

Seconder: Cllr Carol Webley-Brown

This council:

a. notes that:

1. Maternity care in England is in a very challenging situation.
2. Last year in its State of Care report, the Care Quality Commission said it had “ongoing concerns about the safety of maternity services”. In October, the CQC rated 10% of maternity services as Inadequate (up from 6% last year) and rated 39% of maternity services as Requiring Improvement (up from 33% last year). The number of services rated as Good fell to 47% from 56% year-on-year, and the number rated as Outstanding fell from just 4% to 3% in the same time period. A Nuffield Trust report in August said infant mortality was higher for black women with 6.6 deaths per 1000 live births — more than double the infant mortality rate for white ethnic groups.
2. However, despite the fact there have been several reports into maternity services and the surrounding health inequalities, the picture continues to worsen. And last

year, £2.6 billion was paid out to families in compensation because of maternity harm.

4. Now, the Maternity Safety Alliance — a campaigning group of bereaved families — is calling for a full statutory public enquiry into maternity services to address these ongoing concerns.
5. According to 2021 census data, 48.5% of Lewisham’s population identify as coming from a global majority ethnic group — with 26.8% identifying as "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African". Women account for 52.5% of Lewisham’s population. Lewisham also has a young population, with around 25% of childbearing age.
6. While Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust is a positive outlier in maternity health. Its services in this area are rated Good, compared to two thirds of health trusts rated Inadequate or Requiring Improvement. But the most recent data is not publicly broken down for global majority women and historically the data shows that health inequalities continue to exist.

(b) believes that:

1. Black and global majority women should have the freedom to give birth safely and should be provided improved levels of care by maternity healthcare providers in Lewisham and across the country.
2. The Council, as outlined in its joint Lewisham, Lambeth, and Southwark sexual and reproductive health strategy vision for 2024, should work with partners to reduce reproductive health inequalities.

(c) resolves to:

1. Publicly join the Maternity Safety Alliance’s calls for a full statutory public enquiry into maternity safety in England e.g. through the release of a press release.
2. Write to the Department of Health and Social Care asking it to support the official campaign to offering a full statutory public inquiry into maternity safety in England.
3. Undertake a review of maternity outcomes for black and global majority women at key health providers in the borough (e.g. Lewisham Hospital), and publicise the findings.
4. Support our local health partners to improve maternity outcomes for black and global majority women.