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The Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

19 May 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

**RE: Thematic Review into Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
Maternity Service**

I'm writing on behalf of the Nottingham City Council Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee regarding the Thematic Review into Maternity Services at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH).

As you know this is an issue of great importance to Nottingham, and one we have been monitoring closely as a Committee. You will be aware of the work we have done to this end which we outlined in our letter¹ to you on 16 March, which we are still waiting for a response to.

At our committee meeting today (19 May) we heard from NUH and the Thematic Review. I am writing with particular reference to the Thematic Review.

The Review Team attended this meeting to discuss the progress so far. This included:

- 590 families having come forward to the Review and a detailed breakdown of their engagement to date.
- 75 staff members have come forward to the Review and steps taken to encourage more staff to come forward.
- Holding listening sessions since January 2022 to provide the opportunity to share their experiences of the Trust's maternity services with the Review Team, in order to inform learning, themes and recommendations.

¹<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/documents/s133959/Enc.%20%20for%20Nottingham%20University%20Hospitals%20NHS%20Trust%20Maternity%20Services.pdf>

- Held listening sessions with service users from under- represented groups including refugee/asylum seeking women; Urdu and Arabic speaking women in community settings, with further sessions planned.
- Provided dedicated and bespoke psychological support to families.
- Actively seeking and speaking with 30 women and families from underrepresented groups.
- Having a public-facing website (available in multiple languages), a family hotline and dedicated email inbox for families.
- Thematic analysis of NUH Public Board Papers
- Thematic analysis of Clinical Commissioning Group Board and Committee Papers.
- Discussions with NUH Non-Executive Directors, Audit Committee Chair, Quality Committee Chair, outgoing Chair and new Chair, Acting Chief Executive, Chief Nurse and Director of Midwifery.

I believe this demonstrates positive steps forward and has built on our recommendations made at Committee – to which I have found the Review Team to be responsive. I am particularly pleased to see the commitment to engage underrepresented groups, a matter especially important to us in Nottingham City. However, I am clear that whilst we can see efforts go into ensuring the success of the review by the Review Team, this has been made more challenging by recent events outside of the Review Team’s direct control. I understand this has caused additional trauma to some families. It is our view that the Review is being severely impeded by the lack of leadership as a result of the vacant chair post.

In a letter to families on 22 April David Sloman, Chief Operating Officer at NHS England and NHS Improvement said, *“A new chair needs to lead this review with sufficient senior experience to address the concerns and challenges faced at Nottingham University Hospitals, to speed up the process and to deliver a review that can bring about real change for women and babies in Nottingham.”*²

I agree that a new Chair must have sufficient senior experience, and must prioritise speeding up the process to deliver a review that can bring about real change for women, families, and babies in Nottingham. It is disappointing therefore, notwithstanding the reasons for Julie Dent CBE’s resignation, that almost one month on, the review still does not have a Chair.

Further to this, in your press release on 4 May you state *“The Department of Health and Social Care is working with NHS England to put in place the right leadership to deliver an independent review to urgently bring about real change so that no families have to go through the same pain in the future.”*³

The press release goes on to state *“Building on the discussions the Secretary of State had with some families today and on the feedback received so far, all affected*

² https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/2022/04/B1584_Nottingham-University-Hospitals-NUH-proposals-letter_220422.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-and-social-care-secretary-meets-with-nottingham-maternity-review-families>

families will be contacted by the NHS setting out next steps.” To our knowledge families have not received this promised communication, 15 days on. Whilst I appreciate this is a serious decision which must be given important consideration this delay continues to be unacceptable.

As a Committee we believe it must be your absolute priority to work with families to appoint a Chair to continue the work of the review with the utmost urgency. I would be grateful therefore if you could prioritise responding to me with what steps you are taking on the following questions:

- What steps have you taken, and will you take to work with families to appoint a chair of the review?
- When do you anticipate the initial findings of the review to be published? What are you doing to expediate this? What communication should families expect to receive before publication?
- Who now has oversight for the review – is this shared or responsibilities separated?
- What measures have you put in place to monitor the implementation of any findings by NUH?

I am clear that the lack of leadership over the past month has destabilised the Review. I am calling on you to now show the necessary leadership to get this Review back on track. I would be happy to meet with you, or a representative from your Department to discuss this important issue further.

I want to reiterate that as a Committee we believe this review is urgent. In our letter to you on 16 March we set out our view that the issues at NUH are very much a live and ongoing concern for current and prospective parents in Nottingham. The Review must contribute to current and ongoing work to improve maternity care today. It is therefore critical that the Review fulfils its commitment to *“monitoring progress of both immediate safety concerns and the Transformation & Change Programme; this aims to provide oversight and support for the NUH Maternity Improvement Programme.”* as set out in the Review Terms of Reference⁴.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to all families who are affected by the significant failings at NUH Maternity. It is their commitment and resolve to bringing these serious failings to light that has ensured a system-wide commitment to fixing the service. It is essential for them, and for current and future babies and families we get this right.

I anticipate your urgent response.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Georgia Power
Chair of the Nottingham City Council Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny
Committee

cc Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
Care Quality Commission
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Alex Norris, Member of Parliament for Nottingham North
Lilian Greenwood, Member of Parliament for Nottingham South
Nadia Whittome, Member of Parliament for Nottingham East



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