

New research from Labour reveals that almost half of maternity units close doors to new mothers

New

research published today by the Labour Party shows that nearly half of England's maternity units closed to new mothers at some point in 2016.

Data

obtained by Labour under the Freedom of Information Act shows:

- 42 hospital trusts which responded to an FOI request say they temporarily closed maternity wards to new admissions at some point in 2016

- Some closures lasted more than 24 hours, while over ten trusts shut temporarily on more than ten separate occasions each

- In 2016 there were 382 occasions when units had to close their doors, a 70 per cent increase from 2014

- Hospitals report capacity and staffing issues as most common reason for closures

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health, said:

"These findings show the devastating impact which Tory underfunding is having for mothers and children across the country. It is staggering that almost half of maternity units in England had to close to new mothers at some point in 2016. The uncertainty for so many women just when they need the NHS most is unthinkable.

"Under this Government, maternity units are understaffed and under pressure. It's shameful that pregnant women are being turned away due to staff shortages, and shortages of beds and cots in maternity units.

"Families are being sorely let down by this Government's failure to recognise the

crisis

facing our NHS. The Tories need to get a grip and take urgent action to make sure closures like this don't continue to happen."