

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Ockenden Report Statement

Mr Speaker, with permission, I'd like to make a statement on the Ockenden Report.

This independent review was set up in 2017 in response to concerns from bereaved families about maternity at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust.

Its original scope was to cover the cases of 23 families but since it began, sadly, many more families have reported concerns.

Due to this tragically high number of cases and the importance of this work to patient safety early conclusions were published in an initial report in December 2020. We accepted all of the recommendations from this first report and the NHS is now taking them forward.

Today, the second and final Report has been published.

This is one of the largest inquiries relating to a single service in the history of the NHS looking at experiences of almost 1,500 families, from 2000 to 2019. I'd like to update the House on the findings of this report, and then turn to the actions that we are taking as a result.

This report paints a tragic and harrowing picture of repeated failures in care over two decades which led to unimaginable trauma for so many people.

Rather than moments of joy and happiness for these families their experience of maternity care was one of tragedy and distress and the effects of these failures were felt across families, communities and generations. The cases in this report are stark and deeply upsetting. Of twelve cases where a mother had died the report concludes that in three quarters of those cases the care could have been "significantly improved".

It also examined 44 cases of HIE a brain injury caused by oxygen deprivation. Two thirds of these cases featured "significant and major concerns" in the care provided to the mother. And the report says from almost 500 cases of stillbirth, one in four were found to have major concerns in maternity care which if managed appropriately "might or would" have resulted in a different outcome.

When I met with Donna Ockenden last week she told me about basic oversights at every level of patient care. Including one case where important clinical information was kept on Post-it notes which were then swept into the bin by cleaners with tragic consequences for a newborn baby and her family. In addition, there were repeated cases where the Trust failed to undertake serious incident investigations and where investigations did take place, they didn't follow the standards that would have been expected.

These persistent failings continued as late as 2019 and multiple opportunities to address them were ignored including by the Trust Board who were accountable for these services.

Reviews from external bodies failed to identify the substandard care that was taking place and some of the findings gave false reassurances about maternity services at the Trust.

The CQC only rated maternity services inadequate for safety in 2018 which is unacceptable given the huge deficiencies in care that are outlined in this Report.

The Report also highlights serious issues with the culture within the Trust. For instance, two thirds of staff were surveyed and reported that they had witnessed cases of bullying and some staff members withdrew their co-operation with the Report within weeks of publication. The first report already concluded – and I quote – that “there was a culture within the Trust to keep Caesarean rates low because they were perceived as the essence of good maternity care”. And today’s report adds that – and I quote again – “many women thought any deviation from normality meant a Caesarean section was needed and this was then denied to them by the Trust”.

Mr Speaker, it is right that both the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives have said recently that they regret their campaign for so-called normal births. It’s vital that across maternity services that we focus on safe, personalised care where the voice of the mother is heard throughout.

The Report shows a systemic failure to listen to families affected many of whom who had been doggedly persistent in raising issues over several years. One mother said that she felt like a “lone voice in the wind”. Bereaved families told the Report that they were treated in a way that lacked sensitivity and empathy and appallingly, in some cases the Trust blamed these mothers for the trauma that they had been through. In the words of Donna Ockenden, the Trust “failed to investigate, failed to learn and failed to improve”.

We entrust the NHS with our care, often when we are at our most vulnerable. In return we expect the highest standards I have seen with my own family the brilliant care that NHS maternity services can offer. But when those standards are not met we must act firmly and the failures of care and compassion that are set out in this Report have absolutely no place in the NHS.

To all the families that have suffered so greatly: I am sorry.

The Report clearly shows that you were failed by a service that was there to help you and your loved ones to bring life into this world. We will make the changes that the Report says are needed, at both a local and national level.

Mr Speaker, I know that Honourable Members and those families who have suffered would want reassurances that the individuals who are responsible for

these serious and repeated failures will be held to account.

I'm sure that the House will understand that it is not appropriate for me to name individuals at this stage. However, I'd like to reassure Honourable Members that a number of people who were working at the Trust at the time of the incidents have been suspended or struck off from the professional register and members of senior management have also been removed from their posts. There is also an active police investigation – Operation Lincoln – which is looking at around 600 cases. Given that this is a live investigation .I am sure that Honourable Members will recognise that I'm not able to comment further on that.

Today's report acknowledges that since the initial report was published in 2020, we have taken important steps to improve maternity care. This includes £95 million of maternity services across England to boost the maternity workforce, to fund programmes for training, development and leadership. The second Report makes a series of further recommendations. It contains 66 for the local Trust 15 for the wider NHS and 3 for me as Secretary of State.

The local Trust, NHS England, and the Department of Health and Social Care will be accepting all 84 recommendations. Earlier today, I spoke to the Chief Executive of the Trust, who was not in post during the period examined in the report. I made it clear how seriously I take this Report and the failures that were uncovered and I reinforced that the recommendations must be acted on promptly. But as the Report identifies, there are wider lessons that must also be learnt and it contains a series of actions that should be considered by all Trusts that provide maternity services. I have asked NHS England to write to all of these Trusts, instructing them to assess themselves against these actions and NHS England will be setting out a renewed delivery plan that reflects these recommendations.

I am also taking forward the specific recommendations that Donna Ockenden has asked me to put in place. The first is the need to further expand the maternity workforce. Just a few days ago, the NHS announced a £127 million funding boost for maternity services across England. This will bolster the maternity workforce even further and it will also fund programmes to strengthen leadership, retention and capital for neonatal maternity care.

Second, we will take forward the recommendation to create a working group independent of the Maternity Transformation Programme with joint leadership from the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Finally, Donna Ockenden said that she endorses the proposals that I announced in January to create a Special Health Authority to continue the Maternity Investigation Programme that is currently run by the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch. Again, we will take her proposals forward and the SHA will start its work from April next year.

I would like to thank Donna Ockenden and her whole team for the forensic and compassionate approach that she has taken throughout this distressing inquiry. This report has given a voice at last to those families who were

ignored and so grievously wronged and it provides a valuable blueprint for safety and safe maternity care in this country for years to come.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the families whose tireless advocacy was instrumental to this Review being set up in the first place. I cannot imagine how difficult it must have been for them to come forward and tell their stories and this Report is testament to the courage and the fortitude that they have shown in the most harrowing of circumstances.

This Report is a devastating account of bedrooms that are empty families that are bereft and loved ones taken before their time. We will act swiftly so that no families have to go through the same pain in the future.

I commend this statement to the House.

[Parole reform to keep dangerous prisoners off streets](#)

Press release

Public protection will be put back at the heart of the parole system to stop the release of dangerous offenders from prison.



- new powers for ministers to refuse release of highest-risk prisoners
- stronger release test to put emphasis back on public protection
- victims able to attend hearings in full – some to be held in public for first time

Justice Secretary Dominic Raab today (30 March 2022) announced a package of landmark reforms designed to restore public confidence in the system, including a tougher Parole Board release test to ensure prisoners who still pose a risk are kept behind bars.

The most dangerous offenders – murderers, rapists, terrorists and those who have caused or allowed the death of a child – will also now face ministerial scrutiny, including a new power to block their release in the interests of public safety. Where the Parole Board cannot confidently say the prisoner is safe to leave prison, they will refer the decision to the Justice Secretary.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab MP, said

Through our parole reforms, we will stand up for the rights of victims and make public safety the overriding factor in deciding on parole decisions.

That's why we are changing the criteria for release, putting more people with law enforcement experience on Parole Board panels, and adding a Ministerial check on release of the most serious offenders.

The package of reforms announced today will strengthen the law to ensure that the parole systems puts the emphasis firmly back on public protection. This includes:

- Enshrining in law the expectation that the Parole Board will take a more precautionary approach. The wording in legislation will leave no room for interpretation and make clear that the only priority is whether a prisoner is safe to release
- Greater ministerial scrutiny on the release of the most dangerous offenders, including a new power to block their release in the interests of public safety
- Changing the law to increase the proportion of Parole Board members from policing backgrounds, and ensure they sit on hearings for the most dangerous offenders. Their first-hand experience in dealing with serious offenders and the risk they pose will put a greater focus on public protection in parole hearings. Currently, less than 5 per cent of the Parole Board's membership falls into this category.

The reforms will also restore confidence in its work and put public safety at the heart of every parole decision. It will put victims front and centre of the process and give them a stronger voice. This will include:

- Parole boards required to consider submissions from victims when making release decisions
- Victims will be given the chance to attend hearings as an observer and ask questions. Currently, victims are limited to a statement shared with the Board explaining how the crime impacted on their life
- The Parole Board will trial more detailed decision letters for victims, explaining their thinking more clearly and increasing transparency
- Along with victims, the media and prisoners will be able to apply for a hearing to be held publicly, with the board considering whether it would be in the interests of justice. This follows the case of rapist John

Worboys which prompted calls for the greater transparency.

Today's publication of the 'Root and Branch' review delivers on a manifesto pledge to make the system more transparent and improve victims' experience. Offenders subject to life sentences, indeterminate sentences for public protection, extended sentences and certain recall cases are all subject to the parole process, meaning their release must be directed by the Parole Board.

Notes to editors

- The full [Root and Branch review](#) can be found on GOV.UK
- Currently, parole hearings are conducted by a panel of one to three members who come from a variety of backgrounds, including judges and psychiatrists. The panel considers a wide range of evidence and hears from the professionals working with a prisoner, such as probation officers or prison psychologists, and listens to victims about the impact the crime had on their lives. In order to direct release, the panel must be satisfied that it is no longer necessary for an offender to be in prison in the interest of public protection. In practice this means ensuring that any risk presented by a prisoner can be safely managed in the community.

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[Get ready for Analysis in Government Month!](#)

News story

Head of the Analysis Function Sir Ian Diamond encourages analysts across government to get involved with Analysis in Government Month 2022.



Preparations are well underway for Analysis in Government Month 2022 and we

caught up with Head of the Government Analysis Function and National Statistician, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, to find out his priorities for the month.

“Recent years have highlighted the importance of government analysis. As Head of the Government Analysis Function, I have been immensely proud of all the fantastic work undertaken by analysts working across government.

The [Analysis in Government Awards in December](#) was a brilliant opportunity to celebrate the very best of this analytical work. Many of the exemplars had a similar theme running throughout; collaboration, whether it be across teams, professions, departments, or functions. These exemplars demonstrate what can be achieved when we work together, and why collaboration features heavily in the Analysis Function vision. This is why the theme of this year’s Analysis in Government Month is #AnalysisCollaborate.

[Analysis in Government Month 2022](#) is set to be a fantastic event. The month will feature a range of content including live events, training, blog posts, Evaluation Day and a hackathon. We want to encourage collaboration by bringing the analytical community together.

The events are open to all members of the Analysis Function, local government analysts, aspiring analysts and anyone with an interest in government analysis (such as other civil servants, academics or analysts in non-government organisations).

I encourage you to keep an eye out for the agenda and to make the most of the opportunities available to you. To keep up to date with the latest news;

If you have any specific queries about this event, please email Analysis.Function@ons.gov.uk.

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[Peter Mather appointed to BEIS board to support plans to bolster energy security](#)

- Business and Energy Secretary appoints Peter Mather to BEIS board
- Mr Mather holds nearly 40 years of experience in the energy industry, recently serving as Regional Senior Vice President, Europe, and Head of Country UK for BP
- The appointment will help bolster the department’s push towards energy independence and support the UK’s transition to a low carbon economy

Kwasi Kwarteng has today (Wednesday 30 March 2022) appointed Peter Mather as a Non-Executive Board Member at the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The board sets the vision for the department and guides overarching policy. Board members provide advice to the Secretary of State and the department's executive team.

Peter Mather will lead on the board for overseeing the department's work on the UK's transition to a low carbon economy, while prioritising efforts to increase the UK's clean energy independence by increasing home-grown energy and renewables.

Peter's role will be vital in shaping government policy that helps consumers, businesses, and heavy industry to reduce emissions and reliance on expensive fossil fuels, while harnessing the benefits of cheap, clean renewable energy.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

In our national mission to ensure the UK's clean energy independence, Peter's wealth of experience in the energy industry will prove invaluable as we ensure our energy security into the future by boosting nuclear power and renewables in the UK.

I look forward to working with him, and the rest of our board, to deliver on our energy security goals and to supercharge our use of cheap, clean renewables.

Peter has a wealth of knowledge in energy policy and strategy, with nearly 40 years of experience at BP. Peter has recently stepped down from BP as Regional Senior Vice President, Europe, and UK Head of Country, where he was deeply involved with the company's net zero strategy, sitting on government councils for Jet Zero, Hydrogen, Carbon Capture Usage and Storage, as well as chairing the Business in the Community Climate Action Leadership team and the CBI's Climate Change and Energy Board.

While the UK's reliance on fossil fuels continues to fall, there will be an ongoing need for oil and gas over the coming decades while we ramp up renewable energy capacity, as recognised by the independent Climate Change Committee. The UK government is clear that we cannot have a cliff-edge where North Sea oil and gas are abandoned overnight. Turning off the taps would put energy security, British jobs and new industries like hydrogen and Carbon Capture and Storage at risk – and we would be even more dependent on foreign imports.

This appointment underlines the Business and Energy Secretary's commitment to utilise commercial experience and expertise to bolster the government's efforts to strengthen energy security and support Britain's transition away from volatile and expensive fossil fuels over the coming decades.

Non-executive board members are experts from outside government who provide oversight and challenge to the department in the development of policy and the management of resources.

BP is also working to cut carbon emissions and decarbonise its operations by generating cleaner energy through renewables such as wind and solar.

[Launching Analysis in Government Month 2022](#)

The second Analysis in Government (AiG) Month will take place throughout May 2022 with the theme of #AnalysisCollaborate

Successful collaborations are the key to great working relationships and that's why this year we'll build on last year's AiG Month (which had a theme of "Analysis Connect") by exploring the brilliant things we can achieve by working collaboratively.

You can expect more insightful people stories, engaging events, interviews with senior leaders... plus we've even got an Evaluation Day and a Hackathon that you can get involved with.

There's nothing better than bringing together different skills from diverse teams and we're super excited to celebrate AiG Month with analysts from across government and beyond.

Don't miss our launch event on Tuesday 3 May

AiG Month will include events, talks and activities covering interesting and useful content, and enabling you to connect with analysts from all different departments, grades and professions.

COMING SOON: Keep checking this page for our AiG Month preview... coming soon.

Inside the minds of our senior leaders

- Analysis Function Leader Q&A: During the month, we'll share insightful Q&A from senior leaders where we'll ask pertinent questions affecting analysts across government, but also tackle the really important issues like scones... jam or cream first?!
- Desert Island Discs: Head of the AF Sir Ian Diamond chooses eight recordings, a book and a luxury item that he would take if he were to be cast away on a desert island...

Challenge Analysts

- The AF Hackathon: Form a team (across departments and professions) and work together on an analytical task, for example a data visualisation creation. We will crown the winning team!

Live events

We're collaborating with a host of colleagues to bring you a range of interesting seminars throughout the month.

- Analysis across Government: Analytical teams from departments such as HM Revenue and Customs, Ministry of Defence and the Office for National Statistics join us to explore analysis across government.
- AFx launch: Find out about our new AFx events and how you'll be able to get involved this year
- More events to be announced soon!

As we build the calendar of events, we'll publish more details here and on the [AF Eventbrite page](#).

People stories

A focus on the biggest analysis stories from your departments and professions with a range of articles for you to dip into throughout the month.

Dates and locations

- All events will take place online during May 2022.
- You will have time for collaborating and networking with colleagues across government with similar interests and work streams.

Who is Analysis in Government Month for?

Analysis in Government Month is open to:

- Members of the Analysis Function and local government analysts
- Aspiring analysts (both within and outside of government)
- Policy professionals, Finance professionals, Operational Delivery Professions and anyone with an interest in government analysis, for example; other civil servants, academics or analysts in non-government organisations

Registration

Can't wait?! To get into the spirit of AiG Month why not [recap on videos, blogs and events from AiG Month 2021](#)?

What is the Analysis Function?

Watch our video [Proud to be the Government Analysis Function](#) and why not subscribe to our channel while you're there?

Contact

If you have any specific queries about this event, please email Analysis.Function@ons.gov.uk.