

For MPs, OSC chairs and scrutiny officers, LA chief execs, directors of children's services, safeguarding CHAIRS, LINKs, former people's platform members

Use the text below to paste into an email and attach:

- T:\Corporate Affairs\Communications\Media and briefing\IRP and CQC handling plan\FINAL VERSIONS COMMS MATERIALS\111005 Factsheet for stakeholders.pdf
- T:\Corporate Affairs\Communications\Media and briefing\IRP and CQC handling plan\FINAL VERSIONS COMMS MATERIALS\111004 BHR Mothers to be questions and answers on busy units

Maternity services at Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

Dear [insert appropriate]

You will have noticed that there has been considerable media attention on Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust and maternity over the past week, so I wanted to give you an update about maternity services at the trust and outline some steps we are taking to ensure that they can continue to provide safe services for mothers and babies.

In recent months, we have been working closely with the trust to improve safety and make sure every woman can have a positive experience of childbirth. They now have one of the best midwife to birth ratios and best levels of senior doctor cover in London.

We need to build on this and we have agreed a range of actions with the trust, so that we can continue to provide safe services for local women. These will relieve pressure on the maternity service and give the trust breathing space to make the necessary changes to further improve the safety and quality of services more quickly.

As you will be aware, there are peaks and troughs in the number of deliveries: some days are very busy, some much less so. Our priority is to ensure that the labour ward is never so busy as to be unsafe. A small reduction in the maximum number of births, with more rigorous monitoring and escalation processes, is now in place.

I have attached a factsheet which gives some more detail about this work and a document which the trust has produced for mums-to-be, with common questions and answers. This is being used by clinicians at the trust and in the community by GPs and midwives, when they talk to women who might have concerns.

We have been advised that the Care Quality Commission will release their report later this month. We are also waiting to hear from the Secretary of State about the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's report on the Health for north east London programme and hope to hear shortly about this too.

I will update you further at that time, but please do not hesitate to get in touch before then if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Heather Mullin
Chief executive
NHS outer north east London