

Dear Chair,

**Date**

15.09.2022

### **One-off evidence session on black maternal health**

I am writing to you from the NHS Confederation following the one-off session of oral evidence with James Morris MP in his role as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Dr Matthew Jolly from NHSEI and William Vineall which took place on 13<sup>th</sup> July.

**For the attention of Rt Hon  
Caroline Nokes MP**  
Chair of the Women and Equalities  
Select Committee  
[womeqcom@parliament.uk](mailto:womeqcom@parliament.uk)

The [NHS Confederation](#) is the membership body that brings together, supports and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The members we represent employ 1.5 million staff, care for more than 1 million patients a day and control 150 billion of public expenditure. We promote collaboration and partnership working as the key to improving population health, delivering high-quality care and reducing health inequalities.

In addition, the NHS Confederation runs a number of leadership support networks, including the [BME leadership network](#), of which I am a co-facilitator.

I feel compelled to write to you about questions asked of and comments made by Dr Jolly during the evidence session on 13<sup>th</sup> July that went unchallenged. Dr Jolly was asked whether the inequalities in health outcomes for women from ethnic groups were due to genetics or lifestyle.

I would ask the Committee, as part of the inquiry, reflect on how wording of questions and the answers of witnesses might – inadvertently or otherwise – play into particular inaccurate theories or beliefs. With this example, I was concerned that the wording could play in to ‘race science’ theory – which rejects structural racism and discrimination as causes of ethnic health inequalities and instead asserts they can be singularly attributed to genetic differences.

This is clearly an important inquiry and the fact the Committee are undertaking it has, as you know, been welcomed by organisations that work on these issues every day.

I would be grateful for your consideration of these matters and would be happy to provide more detail if that would be helpful. Do contact us via [externalaffairs@nhsconfed.org](mailto:externalaffairs@nhsconfed.org) should you wish to.

Yours sincerely,



**Joan Saddler**  
**Director of Partnerships and Equality**  
**NHS Confederation**