



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Maria Caulfield MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health & Social Care*

*39 Victoria Street
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By email to:

Caroline Nokes, Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee

21 March 2023

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 February 2023 regarding the Women and Equalities Committee's work on black maternal health.

I am glad that the information you have received thus far has been helpful. As you know, maternity safety is a key priority for me. I am very supportive of the Committee's work and welcome your continued support and engagement on this important topic. I have addressed each of your questions in turn.

You asked for details of the taskforce's meeting. The last meeting was on 18 July 2022. It will meet again in April 2023.

You also enquired about agreed actions/recommendations resulting from previous meetings. The taskforce met three times in 2022. The sessions provided an opportunity to bring experts together to discuss the issues and the direct actions to develop. We facilitated a valuable discussion around the role of primary care in the pre-conception health of women and provided organisations such as Birthrights UK and the Muslim Women's Network with the opportunity to present their research and understanding of women's experience of maternity care.

Whilst we were able to facilitate an important conversation and share learning across the public, voluntary and academic sectors, we acknowledge we have much more to do and will be reconvening the group with a revised approach. I am happy to update you further following the next sequence of meetings.

Following your letter of 4 August 2022, you asked if there are further updates on the development of the Maternal Morbidity Indicator. The Policy Research Unit in Maternal and Neonatal Health and Care at the University of Oxford have developed the Maternal Morbidity Indicator, and are undertaking further work relating to the indicator:

1. Assessing disparities in maternal morbidity outcomes. This work is almost complete and will be sent to the DHSC for 28 day review shortly
2. A new project recently agreed with the oversight group is to adapt the morbidity indicator to be able to use it to assess the impact of the new Maternal Medicine Networks – this work is only just starting and will not be complete until the end of the year.



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I would like to take this opportunity to highlight further work that the NHS is undertaking to ensure a more diverse workforce through the Getting to Equity Programme, which provides an evidence-based framework for Chief Nurses and Directors of Midwifery to promote the careers of aspiring ethnic minority nurses and midwives. The RCOG are striving to ensure racism and bias is eliminated within obstetrics and gynaecology and women's health more widely through their Race Equality Taskforce. This group has provided a key platform for discussion and collaboration to understand and address racism, bias and health inequities.

I hope this letter has addressed your questions. I look forward to reading the Committee's report and recommendations in due course and remain grateful for your support on this important agenda.

Kind regards,

MARIA CAULFIELD MP

MINISTER OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY