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From Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP & Professor Dame Jane Dacre

03 June 2021

Email to:

Dear Nadine,

Thank you for your letter of 25 May 2021.

We are pleased to hear that you and the Department remain supportive of the Health and Social Care Committee's Expert Panel's scrutiny role and [evaluation of the Government's commitments in the area of the maternity services in England](#).

Although we are disappointed that you have declined the offer to meet with Expert Panel members to discuss their preliminary findings, we welcome your commitment to engage with the Panel's evaluation as the Health and Social Care Committee take this work forward. In particular, the Committee will publish the Expert Panel's report and also utilise, where appropriate, the Expert Panel's findings as part of its own inquiry into [the safety of maternity services in England](#). We look forward to receiving your reflections and comments as part of the Government's responses to the Expert Panel's and Committee's forthcoming reports, within the usual two-month timeframe.

As you will be aware, Expert Panel members met with Department and NHS England and Improvement officials on 29 April 2021. During this meeting, Department officials agreed to provide specific information to support the Expert Panel's work (set out further below). As it has now been over a month since this meeting, it is unfortunate that the Expert Panel has still not received this information by the agreed deadline. This information will be critical to ensuring the Panel is able to appropriately account for the work the Department has and is doing in its final report.

Information DHSC Officials agreed to provide during meeting of 29 April 2021:

Department of Health and Social Care officials agreed to provide:

- 1) two documents relating to the development and purpose of the bespoke definition of "brain injury" developed in 2017. This includes the BMA paper cited by Department officials during the meeting.
- 2) the Department / NHS Public Board papers, along with relevant documentation, relating to the funding, methodology and timeline for the creation of a new obstetric workforce tool (equivalent of BirthRate Plus).
- 3) available information on attrition rates and analysis relating to all midwifery and obstetric staff in England.
- 4) a summary of available data relating to the outcomes and impact of commitments 1, 2 and

4 under evaluation by the Expert Panel¹ for service users from ethnic minority backgrounds; lower socio-economic backgrounds; and for service users with disabilities. And to provide available data from Imperial College London relating to 2018/2019 brain injuries for service users from ethnic minority backgrounds; lower socio-economic backgrounds; and for service users with disabilities.

5) a full and detailed breakdown of funding and spending arrangements relating to all four of the commitments under evaluation,² and to clarify the sources of the funding and whether the funding is a reallocation of existing budgets or new money.

The Expert Panel will be unnecessarily limited in providing effective and fully informed analysis to the Health and Social Care Committee if it does not receive accurate and comprehensive information held by the Department of Health and Social Care and its associated bodies. As improving maternity services remains a key priority for both the Committee and Expert Panel, we expect this information to be provided by 7 June 2021.

We are grateful for your and the Department's support with the Expert Panel's work.

Yours,

**Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee**

**Professor Dame Jane Dacre
Chair, Expert Panel – Health
and Social Care Committee**

¹ See p.2 onwards: [Joint letter from Rt Jeremy Hunt MP \(Chair, Health & Social Care Committee\) and Professor Dame Jane Dacre \(Chair, Health & Social Care Committee's Expert Panel\) to Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP \(Secretary of State for Health & Social Care\) \[16 March 2021\]](#)

² *Ibid.*