

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales

National Review of Maternity Services 2019-20

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

In its 2019-20 operational plan, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) committed to a programme of national reviews which included maternity services. Our decision to undertake this review was based on a number of concerns relating to the pressures around maternity services in Wales, including the issues identified during HIW's inspection of maternity services in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital in the former Cwm Taf University Health Board in October 2018¹.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Royal College of Midwives were commissioned by Welsh Government in October 2018 to carry out an independent review of the patient care provided by the former Cwm Taf University Health Board². This followed serious concerns that initially came to light as a consequence of the under reporting of serious incidents in maternity services. The report published in April 2019 raised a number of significant concerns around staffing, processes and the underlying culture in maternity services which have compromised care. This resulted in the maternity services in the health board being placed in special measures in April 2019.

Following its publication and given the seriousness of this situation, the Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething AM, required health boards to consider their own services in the context of the recommendations of the report and to provide immediate assurances in this regard.

Welsh Government is working with heads of midwifery, clinical directors and user led maternity service liaison committees to ensure that the learning from this report informs the actions for Wales in the development of a new five year vision for maternity services³.

¹ <https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/210119royalglamorganmaternityen.pdf>

² Since 1 April 2019, Cwm Taf University Health Board became Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board following the incorporation of the Bridgend area within the health board.

³ <https://gov.wales/written-statement-publication-maternity-care-wales-5-year-vision-future>

In April 2017, under a new model for clinical supervision, the health boards took responsibility for the supervision of midwives practicing in Wales (previously undertaken by the Local Supervising Authority for Midwives). Since this change, there has not been a national overview of the delivery of midwifery supervision across Wales. Therefore, an independent review of maternity services is now timely.

HIW's national maternity review will provide a national picture of the quality and safety of NHS maternity services across Wales. This work will provide public assurance and help to improve services for women and their families.

Scope and methodology

Our national review will explore:

- The experiences of women, their partners and families.

It will also explore the extent to which health boards across Wales:

- Provide safe and effective maternity services
- Understand the strengths and areas for improvement within their maternity services.

The journey from early pregnancy to birth and following the birth is an important time for both the mother and the baby and is often complex. We will listen to the accounts of women, their partners and families to gain their opinion of the services they received before giving birth and the support provided after the birth whether these have been low risk or high risk pregnancies and births. The national review will collect evidence in a number of ways over the next year.

Phase I (June to December 2019) will consider the evidence and any themes that emerge from a programme of unannounced inspections of maternity units across Wales. The focus will be on the care provided in maternity units⁴ up to the point of discharge plus some aspects of antenatal care provided in the community.

The inspection teams will consist of:

- At least one HIW inspector
- At least one midwife peer reviewer
- One obstetrician peer reviewer
- One lay reviewer.

HIW will tailor its approach to review the care provided within stand-alone midwifery led units (home from home units) which are not permanently staffed.

⁴ Home from home units, free standing midwife led units, alongside midwife-led units and obstetric units

In the autumn 2019, HIW will launch a national maternity survey, developed with input from the Community Health Council. The survey will gather the experiences of maternity services from a broad range of women, their partners and families across Wales. The survey will cover experiences during pregnancy, birth (whether at home or in a maternity unit), and after the birth.

The survey will be published on HIW's website and a variety of communication tools and channels will be used to raise awareness of how people can take part in the survey, including seldom-heard from groups.

A separate national survey will be launched to capture the views of multi-disciplinary staff working in maternity services. This will also be published on HIW's website and shared with each health board in Wales for dissemination to staff.

Phase II (January to March 2020) will be informed by the work undertaken during Phase I. This will involve interviews with key personnel within each health board regarding the quality safety and governance of maternity services. We will also seek face-to-face engagement with women to understand their experiences in greater detail.

Work by other organisations

As part of our scoping for the review, we will identify and liaise with other organisations who have recently conducted or plan to conduct work in relation to maternity services.

HIW will work with a range of stakeholders, including the Community Health Councils and third sector organisations, in order to engage with women, their partners and families to understand their experiences of maternity services across Wales.

HIW will liaise with these stakeholders at key intervals throughout the review to share plans and ensure any joint working opportunities are explored to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and to share findings following completion of fieldwork.

Planning

HIW will establish a maternity stakeholder reference group to inform the review. The Terms of Reference for the stakeholder reference group once finalised will be made available on [HIW's website](#).

HIW will also form an advisory panel which will consist of a small team of obstetricians, anaesthetists and midwives whose role will be to provide additional support and advice to HIW's internal project board on the day to day implementation of the review. The Terms of Reference, when once finalised will be made available on [HIW's website](#).

To inform the review, HIW has gathered intelligence relating to maternity services across Wales. This work includes:

- A range of information, data and national audits regarding maternity services across Wales, including any concerns intelligence held by HIW and the Welsh Government
- Information provided by each health board to the Welsh Government regarding the safety of maternity services, following the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Royal College of Midwives report on maternity services at the former Cwm Taf University Health Board
- Maternity information and self-assessments from each health board requested by HIW.

Timescales

The following table includes estimated project timeline for the review.

Task	Timing
Researching and scoping	May 2019 – June 2019
Local Health Board self-assessment	June 2019
Planning of fieldwork	January 2019 – June 2019
Fieldwork Phase I	June 2019 – December 2019
Fieldwork Phase II	January 2020 – March 2020
Report publication and engagement	Summer 2020

Analysis and reporting

A report will be produced following each maternity inspection between June and December 2019. In line with HIW's inspection processes, any urgent concerns will be raised immediately with the health boards and the Welsh Government⁵.

If we identify areas for improvement, health boards will be required to complete an improvement plan which describes how the service will address the findings. All inspection reports will be published on HIW's website three months after the date of inspection. Health boards will receive a draft inspection report to check for factual accuracy, prior to its publication.

The review will conclude with the publication of a national maternity services report in summer 2020. The final report will highlight key themes and recommendations identified from our fieldwork. The report may make recommendations for health boards and Welsh Government to consider and act on.

⁵ Further details on how HIW inspects the NHS can be found on our website https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/170328inspectnhsen_0.pdf

Publication and engagement

All the reports will be published on HIW's website and a communication strategy will be developed to enhance exposure.

A dedicated webpage for the maternity review will be created on [HIW's website](#) with updates on the key findings from the review. We will also use different communications tools and channels to raise awareness of how people can take part in the national survey and engagement activities. Following the publication of the final national report, follow-up, engagement and learning events will be considered.