

The Rt Honourable Boris Johnson,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA.

Dear Prime Minister,

**SAVE LIVES - AND THE NHS MONEY: REINSTATE THE MATERNITY SAFETY
TRAINING FUND**

On behalf of Baby Lifeline – a charity which has been established for 39 years and is committed to supporting the safe care of pregnant women and newborn babies across the UK – we write to ask the Government **to reinstate the Maternity Safety Training Fund as a matter of urgency.**

When the £8.1m Maternity Safety Training Fund was released in 2016 it gave over 30,000 maternity healthcare professionals access to training that they would not otherwise have had. Independent evaluation showed that the fund had an overwhelmingly positive impact, though it was not continued beyond its first year.

The UK is a safe place for women to give birth, but improvements need to be made to ensure every maternity experience is as safe as possible. Poor maternity care can result in avoidable deaths and injuries to mothers and babies across the UK, costing billions of pounds to the National Health Service in resultant litigation costs. Baby deaths and injuries investigated by national bodies are reported to have been avoidable with different care in many cases.

The cost of these tragedies to the wider NHS is high - with clinical negligence in maternity contributing to about half of the value of all claims received every year, despite only representing 10% of the number

Presidents: Dr Bill Kirkup CBE - Dame Lorna Muirhead DBE SRN SCM MTD Past Lord Lieutenant for Merseyside and Past President of the Royal College of Midwives

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Company Secretary: Tim Ledger BA (Hons) Solicitor Chief Executive: Judy Ledger RGN Hons MA

of claims. **The value of maternity claims received in 2018/19 was £2.5 billion - around £7 million a day – and individual claims can be worth tens of millions of pounds.**

Of course, these financial costs say nothing of the toll on families whose baby died or was harmed, or a mother who received life-changing injuries or never came home.

Based on current birth and perinatal mortality rates, we can expect to see 2,400 stillbirths, 1,680 neonatal deaths, and 1,560 cases of brain injury caused by oxygen deprivation each year in England.

Despite maternity training being a central recommendation in confidential enquiries and reports, research into NHS organisations – the findings of which can be found in our [‘Mind The Gap’ report](#) – uncovered major inconsistencies in maternity training, with some trusts investing more than £370,000 a year, and others as little as £1,000. There was also little or no standardisation in terms of attendance, prioritisation, or assessment of the training delivered.

By reintroducing dedicated funding for maternity training, the government can hopefully achieve its national ambition to halve the rates of stillbirth, neonatal death, and brain injury by 2025. Whilst it is evident that a robust plan for training should have been put in place when this ambition was first announced, it is not too late to act.

We cannot continue to fail families and NHS health professionals by reporting the problems without investing in the recommended solutions.

This is why we are appealing for the **Maternity Safety Training Fund to be reinstated as part of the 2020 Budget.**

We are calling for:

- **The immediate reinstatement of the Maternity Safety Training Fund**

It is crucial that a commitment is made to ensure that this is an **ongoing resource** for NHS trusts, and not simply a ‘one-off’ cash injection. Failing to do so will reduce the efficacy and efficiency of the intervention immeasurably. The **absolute minimum** value of the fund should be **£19m per year**: £7m to cover the direct costs of training and £12m to allow trusts to ‘backfill’ the workforce when training is taking place. If backfilling is not financially supported, then it will be far more difficult to provide the necessary levels of training.

- **Funding to be based on the specific needs of each individual NHS organisation.**

Considerations should include the size of the organisation's maternity workforce, and a comprehensive review of training needs determined by a multi-professional Training Needs Analysis. Every professional group should be considered and involved in what they determine their combined and individual training priorities to be.

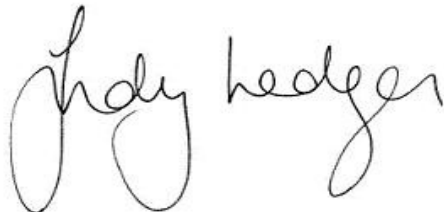
- **Rigorous independent annual audits of maternity training carried out**

This must happen to ensure that all funds are being utilised as intended and will allow effective evaluation of the impact.

CPD training within the health service has historically been undervalued when compared with other sectors. As well as preventing avoidable tragedies, appropriate investment will result in better retention rates and will improve the morale and general wellbeing of our NHS workforce.

The cost of inaction, both financial and human, far outweighs the cost of adequate training. Please commit to making the change now.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Ledger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Judy Ledger RGN Hons MA

Founder and Chief Executive

Baby Lifeline Ltd

Signatories

Professor Sir Cyril Chantler GBE

Vice Chair

National Maternity Review

Mr Charles Cox OBE

Consultant Obstetrician and Co-founder

Managing Obstetric Emergencies and Trauma (MOET)

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Baroness Cumberlege CBE, DL

Chair

National Maternity Review

Sir Robert Francis QC

Chair

Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry

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Morecambe Bay Investigation

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Consultant Neonatologist and Education

Lead for Digital Learning

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust

Nadine Montgomery

Patron

Birthrights

Mr Edward Morris

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Donna Ockenden

Chair

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust Maternity Review

Louise Page

President

British Intrapartum Care Society (BICSoc)

John Pickles

Chair

Clinical Human Factors Group

Dr Felicity Plaat

President

Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association (OAA)

Rachel Power

Chief Executive

The Patients Association

Tim Smith

Executive Director

Baby Lifeline Training

Amanda Stevens

Chief Executive

Hudgell Solicitors

Angela Style

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Maureen Tredwell

Co-founder

The Birth Trauma Association

Peter Walsh

Chief Executive

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

Gill Walton

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Royal College of Midwives (RCM)

Signatories

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Jack Cork, Premier League Footballer and Baby Lifeline Ambassador

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Chriss Doyle, Air Paramedic and Midwife, Helimed79, Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance

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Josephine Enright, Comedian, Actress, and Writer

Hilary Farrow, Quality Improvement Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber Clinical Network

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Charlene Francois, Expert Midwife, Born Medical Consultancy Limited

Rachael Garrett, Safety and Governance Lead Midwife, Kent and Medway Local Maternity System

Rebecca Goldsmith, Maternity Quality and Safety Lead Midwife, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

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Tennyson Idama, Clinical Director and Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Whiston Hospital

Katrina Jamieson, Group Financial Controller, Dixons Carphone

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Kim Thomas, Chief Executive, Birth Trauma
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Suzanne White, Partner, Head of Clinical
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Dave Willetts, Singer, and Baby Lifeline Patron

Dianne Wilton MBE, Patron, Baby Lifeline