



HEALTHCARE SAFETY
INVESTIGATION BRANCH

WWW.HSIB.ORG.UK

THE HSIB INVESTIGATION

Family information

A referral has been made to Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) to undertake an investigation as part of the national maternity safety strategy.

We recognise that this may be a difficult time for you and those close to you, and we are grateful for your time in speaking with us. By sharing your experience with us you will inform our investigation and help us to see where improvements can be made for the benefit of others.

Investigations won't take place without your agreement. How you would like to be involved is your choice and you can change your mind at any point.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT OUR MATERNITY INVESTIGATIONS

What is HSIB?

Operational since April 2017, we carry out independent investigations across the NHS in England. Our focus is on system change rather than apportioning individual blame, and we aim to drive improvements at a national level. We are hosted by NHS Improvement and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care; however, we act independently from trusts, NHS regulators and other organisations.

Why is HSIB carrying out maternity investigations?

HSIB is carrying out thorough and independent investigations to improve safety in maternity in accordance with our Directions from the Department of Health and Social Care. We will set out the facts of what happened in each case and make recommendations. We can also combine the findings from our reports and draw out wider learning.

Why is HSIB investigating what happened to my baby/family member?

Our directions instruct HSIB to investigate all term babies (at least 37+0 completed weeks of gestation) born following labour, who have one of the below outcomes:

- **Intrapartum stillbirth.** Where the baby was thought to be alive at the start of labour but was born with no signs of life.

- **Early neonatal death.** When the baby died within the first week of life (0-6 days) of any cause.
- Potentially severe brain injury diagnosed in the first seven days of life, when the baby:
 - was diagnosed with grade III hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy (HIE).
 - was therapeutically cooled (active cooling only).
 - had decreased central tone and was comatose and had seizures of any kind.

We don't investigate babies whose outcome was the result of congenital anomalies.

THE DEFINITION OF LABOUR INCLUDES:

- Any labour diagnosed by a health professional, including the latent phase of labour at less than 4 cm cervical dilatation.
- When the woman called the unit to report any concerns of being in labour, for example (but not limited to) abdominal pains, contractions or suspected ruptured membranes.
- Induction of labour.
- When the baby was thought to be alive following suspected or confirmed pre-labour rupture of membranes.

In line with our Directions we do not investigate neonatal cases where the mother has not laboured. For example, a caesarean section which was performed before the mother had started contracting or ruptured her membranes.

We will also investigate direct or indirect maternal deaths of women while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy.

Direct deaths include those resulting from obstetric complications of the pregnant state (pregnancy, labour and postpartum), from interventions, omissions, incorrect treatment or from a chain of events resulting from any of the above.

Indirect deaths include those from previous existing disease or disease that developed during pregnancy and which was not the result of direct obstetric causes, but which was aggravated by the physiological effects of pregnancy in the perinatal period (during or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy).

We may investigate some maternal deaths which do not entirely fit within the two above categories.

Our Directions exclude the investigation of cases where suicide is the cause of death.

What if I do not want to take part in the investigation?

We want and value your consent to undertake an investigation into the care provided. If you do not want to give your consent, or you do not consider you are able to decide currently, please do not hesitate to tell a member of staff. If you change your mind at a later date, we can talk through how we would approach the investigation.

Who are the maternity investigation team?

The investigations are carried out by HSIB staff who are trained in investigation with a range of backgrounds and expertise.

What will the maternity investigation report look like?

The investigation report will include the terms of reference, which will form the focus of the investigation. We will discuss these jointly with you. It will also set out the process of investigation, the evidence gathered and recommendations for improvement both at an organisational and national level. You will have the opportunity to read and comment on the draft report before it is finalised.

Who will be responsible for making sure the recommendations are put in place?

Safety recommendations will be addressed to those that HSIB consider are best placed to take them forward. This could be at a local level (the Trust) or national level (e.g. Royal Colleges or regulators).

Who will see the final reports?

The final reports are anonymised and shared with you, the staff involved and any other relevant organisations. In addition, key areas of learning will be published on our website.

What happens if I don't want to have an HSIB investigation?

Without your agreement we are not able to investigate and the responsibility for conducting any investigation returns to the Trust.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE INVESTIGATION TEAM

- The investigating team will speak to key people involved. This is usually done through face-to-face interviews. If you would find it easier to be involved in a different way (e.g. in writing or telephone), we will discuss different options with you, including additional support you may need.
- The team will include individuals who are specifically trained to work with families. You will be given specific details of which member of the investigation team will be your dedicated contact and how you can contact them or get a message to them.
- Our investigators work Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and will try to respond to messages the same day, during these times. If your named investigator is away for any reason, we will provide you with an alternative contact.
- Our investigators will do everything they can to put you at ease during the contact they have with you. They can be flexible on when and where to meet and will try to make the contact work in a way that is right for you. For example, you might want to nominate another person to speak for you at times if you feel unable to do so yourself.
- The investigator will keep you updated throughout the investigation.
- When the investigation is finished, the investigator will contact you to get your feedback on the draft report.

- Thorough investigations take time. The investigation team will be able to tell you approximately how long the investigation process might take.
- Once the final report is completed, you'll receive a copy which includes all our safety recommendations.

WHAT WE WILL NEED FROM YOU

- We would ask for your assistance in telling us what has happened, so we have a full understanding of all the facts. We understand it may be a difficult time and we will do all we can to support you and advise you of sources of additional support you could access.

- We will discuss with you the times and locations that are best for us to contact you.
- As the investigators will want the investigation to be as thorough as possible, it means there might be a need to speak to you (or a nominated person) on more than one occasion. If contact details change (e.g. new phone number), it is important the investigators are notified of this change.

FIND OUT MORE

Email: enquiries@hsib.org.uk

Website: www.hsib.org.uk

YOUR INVESTIGATOR NAME/S AND CONTACT DETAILS

INVESTIGATOR NAME		
TELEPHONE NUMBER		
EMAIL		

Please speak with your investigator if any of your family require this leaflet in different languages or formats. For more information about HSIB please visit our website; www.hsib.org.uk