

Review of Governance Arrangements in Place to Support Safety within Maternity Services in Northern Ireland

In 2022, RQIA carried out a review of the governance arrangements in place to support safety within Maternity Services in Northern Ireland. The review focused specifically on the effectiveness of Trust governance processes, clinical governance arrangements and focused on the key elements that support safe patient care, including safety culture.

The Review highlights how increasing complexity, compounded by significant staffing shortages, pose considerable challenges for service delivery. Despite these challenges, the Expert Review Team also saw examples of good practice, strong teamwork, and commended the dedication of midwives, doctors and staff in maternity services who work on a daily basis to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care to women and babies.

This review makes 23 recommendations to strengthen the systems and processes that support the delivery of care within HSC maternity services. Key areas for improvement include:

A regional approach to assuring and improving safety within Maternity Services -including the need for a co-produced regional NI Maternity Strategy.

Effective leadership structures and reporting arrangements - to ensure oversight and assurance of quality and safety in services.

Safe Staffing in HSC Maternity Services - to explore ways to improve recruitment and retention of staff, and support staff wellbeing.

Systems for Safe, Effective and Compassionate Care - Improvement of systems in place to support patient safety, multidisciplinary governance and staff training.

Safety Culture - Ensuring governance arrangements are underpinned by a culture of safety, encompassing psychological safety, just culture, and learning culture.

Interfaces with other services - Ensuring arrangements support good communication, safe patient referral / transfer between maternity services and: Primary Care, Emergency Departments and Neonatal Services.

The complete Review report, with detailed findings and all recommendations for improvement is available via RQIA's [Review webpage](#) or by clicking [here](#).

Contact us

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