

A family led independent review of maternity and neonatal services in Swansea Bay

A group of families in the Swansea Bay area are announcing their own 'family led' review of Swansea Bay Maternity services on the 8 October 2024. The correspondence received that a campaign group of 70 families have said they were shut out by the review and have lost faith in this current review and how it is being managed. As a result, they now intend to launch their own family-led review.

They intend to take factual accounts and records from families, staff and key stakeholders and publish them alongside statistics gathered by various members over several years. This work will not include any clinical review of patient case notes but family voices and experiences will feature heavily.

The families say they have the full backing of Donna Ockenden, Chair of the Independent Review into maternity and neonatal services at Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust and James Titcombe a prominent campaigner.

Ms Ockenden has told The Independent: "I am absolutely clear that for any review to be credible it must have the trust and confidence of affected families. The Swansea Bay Health Board have failed to achieve this and failed to engage effectively with families. Families who have already been so badly affected have had their harm and distress compounded by the way they have been treated. This is happening because the local Health Board have failed to listen to the concerns of local families. For this situation to have been allowed to happen, for families to be so completely disregarded in 2024 is completely unacceptable."

James Titcombe, who campaigned for a major inquiry into failing at Morecambe Bay Hospital told The Independent: "There is very clearly a need for a fully independent inquiry to examine these events, but this must put the needs, experiences and wishes of the families affected at the absolute front and centre."

Lines to take

- We understand how strongly the families feel about ensuring maternity services in Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) are the best they can be - a goal we also share.
- The independent review into maternity services at SBUHB has been commissioned by the health board to ensure that there is in-depth, holistic analysis/review of maternity services.
- The independent review will look at both clinical and governance matters including complaints, incidents, family feedback, and patient case note reviews.
- We understand that the clinical review of individual cases is underway with families given the option beforehand of opting out if they so wished.
- A self-referral process has been opened up with no time limit attached to it so that any families who want to feed their experiences into the review can do so.
- This is the most appropriate way to examine the service in the whole and ensure that appropriate plans can be put in place to address any findings from the review.
- We would reiterate that users, families and staff experiences of SBUHB's maternity and neonatal services are key to the independent review. It would therefore benefit greatly from their participation and involvement.