

THE MORECAMBE BAY INVESTIGATION

Chaired by Dr Bill Kirkup CBE

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Mr Bernard Horan
The Health and Social Care Information
Centre,
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Dear Mr Horan

ANALYSIS OF ELECTRONIC STAFF RECORD DATA

As you may be aware, on 12 September 2013 the Secretary of State for Health announced an independent investigation into the maternity and neonatal services provided by the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.

Between January 2004 and June 2013 there were a series of maternal and perinatal deaths at the Trust. Several reviews took place during this period. However, these reviews have not given those affected confidence that all of the facts have been heard and all of the underlying issues have been resolved.

One form of evidence that may be pertinent and relevant to the Investigation's terms of reference (enclosed) is information on workforce patterns within the Trust's maternity and neonatal services during the period of investigation.

The Trust comprises 3 acute hospitals: Furness General Hospital; Royal Lancaster Infirmary, and Westmorland General Hospital. Ideally, the Investigation would like access to information on potential workforce issues at the individual site level. However, I understand that for some of the analyses proposed below, establishing national and regional benchmarks against which hospital-level workforce patterns could be compared may be difficult.

Specific questions that the Investigation Chairman and Panel of Expert Advisors wish to address include:

- What was the FTE midwife to birth ratio during the period of investigation, and how does this compare with similar units?

Independent investigation into the management, delivery and outcomes of care provided by the Maternity and Neonatal services of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust from January 2004 – June 2013

- What was the skill mix available during the period of investigation, and was this appropriate for a unit of this size/ patient case mix?
- What were the patterns of staff absence and retention during the period of investigation, and should these have been a cause for concern?
- What was the Trust's expenditure on bank staff and overtime during the period of investigation, and how does this compare with similar units?

I understand that much of the data necessary to address these questions is available to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) back to 2008 via the Electronic Staff Record (ESR). I also understand that prior to 2008 there was an annual NHS workforce census which may be able to provide some intelligence.

The purpose of this letter is therefore to formally request the HSCIC to carry out an analysis of ESR data on behalf of the Investigation.

I would be grateful if you could advise me, in writing, if the HSCIC can agree to this request, and if so, whether there is a standard approach to formalising such requests by means of a Data Sharing Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding.

Should your response be positive and the Investigation can access the data there will, I recognise, need to be further discussions regarding how any data is ultimately reported by the Investigation.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

OONAGH McINTOSH
SECRETARY TO THE INVESTIGATION