

Template letter to MP.docx

Template letter/email for people to send to their MP

Subject: Urgent- closure of home birth provision at Homerton hospital

Dear **MP NAME**,

*Letters should go to **your** MP.*

Two key MPs are Dame Meg Hillier if you are in Hackney South and Shoreditch where the hospital is located and Stella Creasy if you are in Walthamstow (as many constituents use Homerton).

My name is **INSERT** and I am a constituent living in **AREA**.

I am writing to you with urgent concerns about the abrupt closure of Homerton hospital's home birthing team.

The initial [announcement](#) from Homerton Healthcare acknowledged that this decision results in birthing people "having [their] choice taken away". The reason for the closure is that "following a review of the service" issues have been identified that "need further improvement and assurance".

Whilst it has now been clarified, following pressure from families impacted and local advocates for birthing rights, that the closure is temporary and a prospective date on 9th October given for the service to be reinstated, this does not provide the reassurance that families need.

This suspension was imposed without notice to the women and birthing people who had planned to birth outside of the hospital. Those directly affected by the decision have not been given a full and candid explanation as to why the decision was made, and, in particular, why the decision has been assessed to serve patient interests (as claimed).

To have home birth support pulled away with no notice, without a clear and public explanation, is a serious failure of care and it has caused real distress and disruption to service users at one of the most vulnerable times in these families' lives.

The service should only be suspended if there is a serious risk to patient safety. Given that the Trust has already stated that they intend to reinstate the service within a few weeks it leaves families asking what is the reason for the suspension, as surely a serious issue cannot be resolved within that time. The Trust has said that they have reached out to the people impacted but there is a much wider impact on all service users, knowing that vital parts of the service can be suspended, restricting their birth choices, without any clear explanation.

Here add your own experience, why this matters to you:

- My child was born with support from the Homerton home birthing team and I had the most positive experience, I hate to think that others will be deprived of that.*
- I am pregnant and was meant to be using the home birthing team. Suddenly this choice has been taken away from me. The impact this is having on me is...I am worried that the service will be pulled again when I reach my due date...*
- I work supporting birthing people and am deeply concerned about removing choices... (professionals may also want to cite NICE guidance and data on home birth outcomes but less detail is better for the MP's office).*
- My partner was due to give birth with the Homerton home birth team...*

MP specific content

- Dame Meg Hillier- this is the hospital that serves your constituents. With maternity services being such a big priority for the new Secretary of State to have this happening in your area is really concerning.
- Stella Creasy: Homerton is one of the hospitals that your constituents use. The provision of high quality maternity care, that offers women and birthing people genuine choice is really important. You have been such a champion for women's issues that I hope we can have your support on this.

I am asking that you

- **Write to the Secretary of State to make her aware of this issue.**
- **Write to Trust leaders to ask that they**
 - **Immediately reinstate the service (not waiting until 9th October) .**
 - **That they publish the findings of the review which led them to suspend the service so that families can understand why this has happened and outline in clear terms what 'assurance and improvement process' needs to be undertaken.**
 - **Meet with you, alongside campaigners and women and birthing people who have been impacted to discuss the findings of the review and to outline what lessons can be learnt about how to avoid such abrupt and untransparent communications and the impact it has had on service users.**

Women and birthing people have the right to choose their own birthing experience. Home birth is not controversial and plenty of evidence presents a very safe option for

many service users. [Lancet Review 2020](#) It should be a standard part of care that is offered. For many who choose it, it is such an important part of avoiding birth trauma and feeling safe and secure whilst they are bringing their child into the world.

Best,

NAME

ADDRESS

including your address is important- it shows the MP's office that you are a constituent and then they have to respond.