

Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) Guidance

The Health and Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) have this week confirmed that they are changing their approach to maternity and national investigations with a view to minimising the impact on Trusts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current position

The HSIB investigate maternity incidents that meet the Each Baby Counts criteria (the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists' national quality improvement programme) or its own defined criteria to reduce the number of babies to die or are left severely disabled following full term labour.

Eligible babies include all term babies (at least 37+0 completed weeks of gestation) born following labour who have one of the below outcomes:

- i. Intrapartum stillbirth
- ii. Early neonatal death within first week of life
- iii. Severe brain injury where the baby:
 - Was diagnosed with grade III hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy;
 - Was therapeutically cooled (active cooling only),
 - Had deceased central tone and was comatose and had seizures of any kind.

HSIB also investigate direct or indirect maternal deaths of women while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy. The full HSIB Maternity Directions 2018 can be accessed [here](#).

Updated Guidance

As of 6 April 2020, HSIB will no longer routinely investigate maternity events involving cooled babies where there is *"no apparent neurological injury confirmed following therapy."* Publication of learning and safety reports will also be paused until further notice however, any serious patient safety concerns will be escalated accordingly. The HSIB have also enabled and supported many of its own staff to return to the frontline.

What does this mean for you?

Essentially, it's "business as usual" as Trusts should continue to refer all maternity events as set out in the 2018 Directions. However, the new measures should assist at least in part, in terms of lessening the burden on maternity clinicians during the COVID-19 pandemic.