

When the System Fails Mothers

A response to the Independent Investigation into Maternity and Neonatal Services in England
— Interim Report, February 2026

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A damning interim report by Baroness Amos has confirmed what many in our communities have long experienced — England's maternity system is **not working equally for everyone**. Drawing on visits to NHS Trusts and the testimonies of over 170 families, the report reveals serious, systemic failures in care.

Key Findings from the Report

- **Racism & Discrimination** Women from Black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as disabled women and refugees, face unequal treatment and are routinely not listened to.
- **Shocking Stillbirth Disparity** Black babies are **more than twice as likely to be stillborn** as White babies. Neonatal mortality rates are also higher for Black and Asian babies.
- **Bullying Culture** Allegations of bullying within maternity teams are widespread, creating toxic environments that undermine safe care.
- **Undignified Births** Women report being denied basic dignity — inadequate meals, poor hygiene standards, and a lack of compassion at their most vulnerable.
- **Dismissed Concerns** Mothers raising concerns about their own symptoms are regularly ignored or disbelieved by clinical staff.
- **Defensive Responses** When harm occurs, families are too often met with defensiveness and a lack of transparency rather than honesty and accountability.
- **Repeated Recommendations, No Action** The report notes a damaging cycle of recommendations that are never fully implemented — a pattern that must now end.

■ Blossom Group says: *"These findings do not surprise us. They reflect what we hear every week from the families and mothers who walk through our doors. The report finally gives a national voice to what communities like ours have been saying for years."*

Why This Matters to Blossom Group

At Blossom Group, we work daily with the very communities the report is talking about — mothers in East London whose voices, spoken across dozens of languages, carry stories of not being heard, not being believed, and not being treated with the dignity they deserve.

- Language barriers mean a woman in labour cannot always fully communicate her symptoms to clinical staff.

- Cultural differences in expressing pain or distress are frequently misread or dismissed by healthcare teams.
- Years of difficult experiences have built deep mistrust of institutions — many women arrive at hospital already afraid.
- Our communities include refugees, asylum seekers, and women living in poverty who face compounding disadvantages.
- These are not personal failings. They are systemic failures — and this report names them clearly.

■ *"Real change requires trusting the communities closest to the problem. Organisations like Blossom Group are not a nice addition to the conversation — we are essential to it. Our volunteer team speaks 98 languages. We are already doing the work that bridges the gap between families and the system."*

What the Report Calls For — And What We Add

The Report Demands:	Blossom Group Provides:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe staffing & senior clinical oversight • Strong, accountable leadership • Meaningful action on health inequalities • High-quality, impactful staff training • Timely, compassionate investigations that involve families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally sensitive, multilingual community support • Advocacy helping people understand and assert their rights • Safe spaces where experiences are heard and respected • Trusted relationships that prepare people to engage with services • A bridge between marginalised communities and NHS institutions

Our Commitment

Blossom Group stands with every mother and family affected by these failures. We will continue to provide a space where their experiences are heard, respected, and acted upon. If you or someone you know has had a difficult experience during pregnancy or birth, please come and find us. **You do not have to face it alone.**

■ The public Call for Evidence is open until **17 March 2026**.
 We encourage anyone with a story to share to contribute:
matneoinv.org.uk/call-for-evidence

■ *"Families have engaged with this investigation at great emotional cost. They deserve more than incremental change. So do the communities we serve every day at Blossom Group."*