

External Review of Maternity Services at the KEMH [October 2025]

Terms of Reference

Background

The King Edward VII Memorial Hospital (KEMH) is a GP-led healthcare facility, responsible for the provision of all primary and secondary healthcare in the Falkland Islands.

On-island pregnancies are managed by GPs with additional postgraduate training in obstetrics, certified by a recognised diploma, or equivalent qualification. This care is supplemented by visiting obstetricians, as well as support and advice from an overseas consultant obstetrician.

The remote location of the KEMH, and the small population being served means that although the KEMH is well-equipped for its scale, it does not have the facilities for specialist neonatal care, and is not equipped to manage pregnancies assessed as ‘high risk’.

Due to the limited resources available in the islands, mothers that are assessed as being at high risk of complications are offered the opportunity to give birth overseas, and must travel overseas by no later than 35 weeks. This referral is ordinarily into the NHS system in the UK, but may, depending on the mother’s nationality and preferences be a different country, or in an emergency to South America. Compliance with overseas referrals is generally high, but patients may refuse this option where it has been recommended.

The overall context of maternity services in the Falkland Islands therefore is one in which risk must be carefully and accurately identified, assessed and evaluated and the then appropriately responded to in order to promote the best possible outcomes in a remote healthcare facility with limits to its resources.

Introduction

In October 2023, a pregnant mother which had to that point been assessed as low risk, was admitted for induction of labour at 41+0 weeks’ gestation. The eventual outcome of the admission was delivery by emergency Caesarean section, with the baby (Aspyn Dottie Hercules) requiring immediate resuscitation. This was followed by transfer to a specialist neonatal unit in Uruguay where Baby Aspyn sadly passed away. Due to the unexpected adverse outcome, an internal Significant Event Analysis was undertaken which highlighted the need for an external, independent review of events. These reviews identified issues with the provision of care that were on balance of probabilities, likely to have been causative in the death of Baby Aspyn, but in addition also identified other areas in which there was a need to up-date and strengthen the provision maternity services.

The external and internal reviews also generated a comprehensive action plan, aimed at improving the safety and quality of maternity care in the Falkland Islands, which the KEMH have been working toward implementing and regularly reviewing.

Further to the above, a Coroner’s Inquest into the circumstances of the death was held in February 2025. The Coroner found failings in the care provided in this case, which related to a failure to provide timely medical intervention in relation to the management of the cardiotocography, and in relation to the transfer to theatre once a decision to perform an emergency Caesarean Section was made. These

failures in the timely provision of basic medical care also resulted in a finding of neglect being added to the Coroner's conclusions.

Following the completion of the Inquest, and it now being over a year since the external report was received, meaning that many of action identified have been progressed, the KEMH have concluded that the next step to ensure that maternity services continue to be improved is to commission a wider review of maternity services.

Independent nature

Although being sponsored and paid for by the Falkland Islands Government (FIG), it is the express objective of this review to be both external and independent of the FIG. No employee of the FIG, current or otherwise should seek to influence the review's findings and written report, other than to correct factual inaccuracies. As laid out below it is an obligation of the reviewer to be both impartial and neutral.

Qualifications and experience of reviewers

In order to provide a holistic overview of the maternity service, both an obstetrician's and a midwife's review is required.

Both professionals should be;

- Registered with their professional body in the UK.
- Have substantial experience at a senior level in their field (10 years plus).
- Have experience of service reviews or inspections.
- Have experience or knowledge of recognised review techniques, such as perinatal mortality review tool (PMRT).
- Have excellent report-writing skills.

Aim

The aim of this external, independent review is to provide KEMH management, the family of Baby Aspy, and the wider community, assurance that the action plan has been rigorously implemented, and to provide a more holistic review of maternity services in the Falkland Islands with recommendations for further improvements.

The review is also intended to provide the opportunity for service user engagement to assist with planning and developing future service provision, as well as identity improvement and development opportunities in addition to those already included in the action plan.

Sponsor

The sponsors of this review are the Director of Health and Social Services and the Chief Medical Officer, who are commissioning the review on behalf of the KEMH, and the FIG.

Scope of review

- To review, critique and assess progress against the 42-point action tracker compiled in respect of the previous external and internal reviews, and;

- Where necessary, and where it is assessed that any action with the action tracker has not been completed to clearly indicate to what extent implementation has occurred and indicate what further work is required to complete the action.
- Provide an objective and balanced assessment of the overall current status of the maternity service in the KEMH.
- Consider all lines of enquiry through the lens of five key questions;
 - Is it safe?
 - Is it effective?
 - Is it caring?
 - Is it responsive to people's needs?
 - Is it well-led?
- To specifically critically review;
 1. Existing policies, procedures and guidance in respect of the maternity service.
 2. The current strategy of the KEMH in respect to how maternity services are provided.
 3. The governance structure/ framework for maternity services.
 4. The adequacy of current arrangements in relation to current equipment, resources and service support.
 5. The adequacy of current arrangements in relation to staffing and skill mix.
 6. The adequacy of current arrangements in relation to record keeping and documentation.
 7. The adequacy of current arrangements in respect of training and development.
 8. The adequacy of current arrangements in relation to reporting and investigating incidents and significant event analyses.
 9. The adequacy of current arrangements in relation overseas obstetric advice, support and referral.
- To review any significant event analyses conducted in the last two years, and provide an assessment of their quality and findings.
- To provide the opportunity for input from service users to help inform recommendations for future service improvement and development. This to include;
 - The opportunity for service users to provide feedback to inspectors via e-mail in advance of the inspection. The identity of any individuals who share feedback via this route will not be shared with the KEMH unless in circumstances where serious safety or safeguarding concerns are raised which may place a professional or moral obligation on the inspection team to report the issue further where it is assessed that not doing so would place an individual or individuals at serious risk.
 - Arrange meetings with service users who provide feedback, at the discretion of the inspection team.
- To make recommendations for future improvement and development of maternity services.
- All recommendations must consider the unique environment of the Falkland Islands, and be realistic and achievable in a small-island setting with clear limitations as to resources.
- Provide senior management and MLAs with an initial overview of the key findings prior to departing the islands.
- Produce a comprehensive report of the review, including findings and recommendations that can be made publicly available.

Obligations

The KEMH will:

- Provide all required documentation for the review in a timely manner, including the sending of documents in advance of the in-person visit where appropriate.
- Answer all questions asked of it by the reviewer in a full, candid and open manner.
- Ensure key members of staff are available when the review occurs.
- Act upon any significant concerns which are raised.
- Ensure an action plan is drawn up on receipt of the external report, or what the existing action plan is modified. This will then be approved and be reported on in the open section of the HMSC in timely manner.

The reviewers will:

- Remain impartial and neutral throughout.
- Provide a factual and balanced report, using professional judgement to recognise elements of good practice that should be promoted and preserved in addition to making recommendations for improvement.
- Raise any significant concerns that emerge, and ensure they are satisfied that they are being appropriately acted upon.
- Conduct further investigations in relation to any matter within the included terms of reference they deem appropriate.

Resources

The KEMH will provide the necessary budget to cover the cost of the review.

Logistics

The KEMH will arrange and pay for the flights, transfers and accommodation of the reviewers. The KEMH will provide any necessary administrative support.

Timelines

The review is scheduled to occur over 5 working days, commencing on 7th October 2025.

Outcomes

The following outcomes are expected;

- Written, publicly available report.
- Published action plan, developed on KEMH on receipt of the report.
- Ongoing work and monitoring of the action plan.
- Recommendation as to future review.

Agreement

I confirm the acceptance of the above Terms and Reference, including agreeing to the deliverables indicated.

Dr Sophia Stone, Consultant Obstetrician and Maternal Medicine MBBS MD FRCOG MAcadMED DHMSA

Signature

Date:

Heather Woods, Specialist Lead Midwife RM MSc Advanced Practice

Signature

Date:

Document prepared by John Woollacott, Director of Health and Social Services

Approved to be published by the Health and Medical Services Committee, 23rd July 2025