



Councillors Colin Hutchinson and Liz Smaje
**Co-Chairs Calderdale and Kirklees
Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

16 October 2024

Kerry Reede Field, Director of Midwifery
Talib Yaseen, Chief Nursing Officer
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
By e-mail

Dear Ms Field and Mr Yaseen,

RE: CALDERDALE AND KIRKLEES JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

On 25 June 2024, the Calderdale and Kirklees Joint Health Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the reopening of the Bronte Birthing Centre in Dewsbury. At this meeting, representatives from Mid Yorkshire Hospital NHS Trust (Mid-Yorks) were requested to provide a follow-up report and attend a discussion at the Committees next meeting, which took place at Halifax Town Hall on 15 October 2024. A full brief of discussion points, along with a formal appointment was provided to Mid-Yorks by officers of Calderdale Council and Kirklees Council via e-mail.

The Committee was disappointed to find that no representatives from Mid-Yorks were in attendance at the meeting to answer the Committee's questions on the report provided. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to remind Mid-Yorks of The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 No. 218, Part 4, Regulation 27 (1)

'a local authority may require any member or employee of a responsible person to attend before the authority to answer such questions as appear to the authority to be necessary for discharging its relevant functions'

and in relation to Joint Health Scrutiny Committees, Regulation 30 (5) (c)

'require a member or employee of a responsible person to attend before it under regulation 27 to answer questions in connection with the consultation'

Several questions regarding the Bronte Birthing Centre remain outstanding, and you are requested to provide a response to the Committee by 31 October 2024. Please note that in the interests of transparency this letter and your subsequent response will be published on the Calderdale Council and Kirklees Council websites.

Q1. Please provide an explanation of the difficulties encountered in directing a representative from Mid-Yorks to attend the meeting of the Committee on 15 October 2024. The Committee recognised apologies were received, but a substitute was not nominated. Had the Committee been aware of the difficulties in providing a representative, alternative arrangements could have been made to accommodate this.

Q2. Provide further explanation regarding the bar chart which appears in your report, and on page 15 of the agenda pack, particularly in relation to the vastly differing figures for June 2024 and August 2024.

Q3. Why is the number of admissions to the birth centre are so high compared to the number of births?

Q4 Why are there are minimal births taking place at the Bronte Birthing Centre and how success is being measure considering the low number?

Q5. Regarding transfer services, the Committee would like to understand how this works in practice.

Q6. In relation to the sustainability of the Bronte Birthing Centre, given the 56 births that have taken place, how does this correlate with the staffing required, the revised maternity strategy and plans to expand the service?

Q7. How will the staffing model remain robust, considering the local and national difficulty in the recruitment and retention of midwives?

Q8. Has the criteria for giving birth at the birth centre changed over the period of time the centre has been open?

Q9. Is the picture at Bronte Birthing Centre similar to comparable birthing units across the country?

Q10. When will the birthing centre be operating to full capacity, and what is the anticipated demand at this time?

Q11. Given that the reopening of the Bronte Birth Centre has not been widely publicised, is the Trust receiving a realistic picture of interest in using the Centre?

Q12. Has the opening of the birthing centre had an impact on the demand for home births i.e. have these reduced or have numbers remained static?

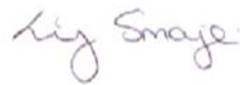
The Committee look forward to receiving a formal response from the Trust, no later than 31 October 2024.

Please send your response to executive.governance@kirklees.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Councillor Colin Hutchinson
Co-Chair



Councillor Liz Smaje
Co-Chair

Cc

Keith Ramsay, Chair – Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust