

# Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign



## SSTHC Press Release October 6/10/2022

All who are active in the SSTHC would like to say we are so sad to hear the news from the inquest into the death of baby Charlotte Warkcup and our heartfelt condolences go out to her mother, father, grandparents and all the family.

We feel very strongly that this tragic case was fully avoidable. We know the staff are dedicated and hard working, but we also know that this stand alone birthing unit was also set up to fail with lack of immediate consultant obstetric cover. This is the responsibility of the architects of the down grading of our full maternity services whether they be in government, or in authority in the regional and Trust bodies. They are the ones responsible because they knew the risks and were told of this by the midwives and by many others besides us. We have been told of other deaths but they have never been reported, or confirmed by our enquiries. The architects of the “path to excellence”, who claimed that this was not a cost cutting exercise, lied to us, lied to the midwives and many experts and to the people of South Tyneside by claiming that maternity service would be more “safe and sustainable” as a stand alone Midwife-led maternity service. Prior to the downgrading in 2019 we had one of the best and innovative obstetric hospitals and community midwives service in the north east that was well staffed with the back up of a special care baby unit and children's consultant led A&E and was almost always fully resourced. We think that the senior architects of these plans in the Trust and the regional health authorities should resign immediately and the MLBU should only be re-opened as a safe and sustainable service with FULL obstetric back up at our hospital in South Tyneside. This is what SSTHC has been calling for since these plans were unveiled 6 years ago. This will not bring baby Charlotte back but her legacy should be a safe and sustainable maternity services in both locations of South Tyneside and Sunderland.

### **For Information:**

SSTHC wrote to Ken Bremner MBE Chief Executive of South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS FT and David Hambleton Chief Executive of South Tyneside CCG both architects of the down grading of what was one of the best full obstetric led Maternity services in the North East at South Tyneside hospital to a stand alone Midwife-led birthing unit because we had heard then of incidents and babies that had already died because of the delayed transfer to Sunderland Royal where there was serious complications. This was one of the questions we put to them in January 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 and the reply given on March 2 2020.

**What are the impacts on mothers that attend South Tyneside maternity, or A&E when there are complications because there is no longer an obstetric consultant directly on call or on duty at South Tyneside and patients will have to wait for an ambulance which is a huge risk to mother and child. We raised this in our consultation response document that the new service would be less safe and less sustainable. Have any incidents occurred where mother or baby has been put at risk?”**

Reply March 2 2020:

“We are pleased to report that we have had no incidents where mother and/or baby have been put at risk since we implemented the new clinical service model for maternity services across South Tyneside and Sunderland on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019.”

Full letter attached

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