



NSA

Department of Health

POC5 931741

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From Ben Gummer MP
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23 JUL 2015

22 JUL 2015

See Mr Hale: _____

Thank you for your letter of to the Secretary of State for Health about the death of baby Thomas. I am responding as the Minister with responsibility for maternity policy at the Department of Health.

I was so very sorry to hear of baby Thomas' death. The death of a child is always a terrible tragedy and my heart goes out to Thomas' parents. I would be grateful if you would pass my condolences to them.

Your report detailed the terrible sequence of events which led to baby Thomas' birth and injury on 12th April 2015.

You had a number of concerns about the guidance issued by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), which the inquest found to be ambiguous, misleading and potentially open to misinterpretation, giving the example that the RCOG guidance did not provide operational definitions for words such as 'imminent' (vis a vis birth) or 'crowning'.

You also noted that it is difficult for Trusts to change their guidance until and unless there is a change/material improvement in the guidance issued by the RCOG.

While local maternity and neonatal care providers must determine how best to deliver services in their area, in doing so we would expect them to give due regard to RCOG and other professional guidance. To this end, a copy of your report has been sent to the RCOG to make them aware of the concerns you have raised and I understand that they have responded to you directly.

I thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.



BEN GUMMER

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