



Maternity & Neonatal Bulletin

February 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice on Maternity and Neonatal

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Maternity

BMJ Best Practice updates

[Assessment of vaginal bleeding](#)

[Postpartum haemorrhage](#)

[Omphalocele and gastroschisis](#)

International guidelines

American Society of Clinical Oncology: [Management of cancer during pregnancy](#)

European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO) / INCIP: [Guidelines for the management of patients with gynecological cancers during pregnancy](#)

European Society of Gynaecological Oncology: [Resource-stratified guidelines for the management of patients with cervical cancer](#)

Cochrane Reviews

[Methods of induction of labour: a network meta-analysis](#)

For women without previous caesarean section and a mix of women with or without previous caesarean section, there was no clear evidence that any of the IoL methods were more effective than vaginal misoprostol ($\leq 50 \mu\text{g}$) for the outcomes of failure to achieve vaginal delivery within 24 hours, caesarean section due to non-reassuring fetal status, and perinatal death. Nitric oxide donors, osmotic cervical dilators, balloon catheters, and oral misoprostol ($\leq 50 \mu\text{g}$) probably reduce the risk of uterine hyperstimulation with changes in the heartbeat of the baby before birth.



Maternity services

This [report from the National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation](#) sets out the background and changing context in which maternity and neonatal care is provided. It examines six factors that could be contributing to the pressures on the maternity and neonatal system. These are: capacity pressures; culture and leadership; racism and discrimination; poor responses and lack of accountability when things go wrong; the quality of estates; and workforce. The report concludes with next steps.

Workforce & education

According to this [report from Anna Freud](#), more than 500 new professionals are needed within the NHS in England to close the current gap in perinatal mental health care. It estimates that the needs of tens of thousands of people experiencing mild to moderate perinatal mental health difficulties each year are not being sufficiently met. It calls for better integration of services, including the recruitment of more psychological practitioners within universal services - such as maternity and health visiting - to improve support.

This [survey by the NMC](#) of nurses, midwives and nursing associates reveals that over half of respondents (58%) are satisfied in their work – motivated by making a difference to people’s lives. However, the insights gathered also show that only 12% of respondents would recommend the nursing and midwifery professions as a career. It shows examples of harassment, bullying and abuse faced by those working in health and care: 70% of respondents reported experiencing such behaviours in the past year – most commonly from the public but also from managers or other colleagues.

Marks, L.M., Gibbons, J., et al. 2026. **Psychological training and support in navigating the emotional impact of work: a qualitative study.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(1), pp.6-12. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Mental health

Jiang, R., Shu, L., et al. 2026. **Effectiveness of exercise on perinatal depression and anxiety symptoms: A network meta-analysis and dose–response analysis.** *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Keys, J. and Folliard, K., 2026. **Adverse childhood experiences' impact on the perinatal period: a scoping review.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(1), pp.31-41. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Antenatal care

Fernandez Turienzo, C., Burton, S., et al. 2025. **The Impact of Community-Based Midwife Continuity of Care Models for Women Living in Areas of Social Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in the United Kingdom: A Prospective Cohort Study.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Pharmacology

Moradi, M., Grieger, J.A., et al. 2026. **Intrapartum Antibiotic Prophylaxis and Child Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies.** *BJOG*, 133(4), pp.556-567. Available here: [BJOG](#)



Complications

A [major new NIHR-supported national study](#) aims to transform understanding of heart disease in pregnancy, the leading cause of maternal mortality and serious complications in the UK. It accounts for more than one third of pregnancy-related maternal deaths. The **PREG-HEART (PREGnancy, HEART Health and Cardiovascular Disease) study** will create the first UK-wide, direct-to-patient research platform dedicated to heart health in pregnancy. The study is open to pregnant women in the UK who have been diagnosed with a heart condition either before or during pregnancy. In addition, the study will also enrol women without heart disease.

Bullough, S., Dower, M., et al. 2025. **Placental Growth Factor Led Management of the Small for Gestational Age Fetus: Randomised Controlled Feasibility Study.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Falola, A.O., Filby, L., et al. 2026. **Management of isolated abnormal amniotic fluid volume in pregnancy.** *The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist*, 28(1), pp.41-50. Available here: [The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist](#)

Hutchinson, L., Petrosellini, C., et al. 2026. **The management of chronic pain in pregnancy.** *The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist*, 28(1), pp.16-29. Available here: [The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist](#)

Kitmiridou, D., Mitrogiannis, I., et al. 2026. **Retinal imaging in pre-eclamptic pregnancy: systematic review.** *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Available here: [Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#)

Loheit, A.C., Löbner, C., et al. 2026. **Hemodynamics-guided therapy for hypertensive disorders of pregnancy: a systematic review.** *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 313(1), p.43. Available here: [Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics](#)

Luo, Z., Li, J., et al. 2026. **Prediction Models for Severe Maternal Outcomes in Non-ICU Settings: Systematic Review.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Mahindra, M.P., Mapindra, M.P., et al. 2026. **Risk Factors and Outcomes Associated With Delayed Villous Maturation in Placenta: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Min, Y. and Yao, Q., 2026. **Risk of recurrent preterm premature rupture of membrane in subsequent pregnancy: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2610066. Available here: [Journal of MFN Medicine](#)

Rondagh, M., Zwinkels, L.C., et al. 2026. **Brain Injury and Neurodevelopmental Outcome in Survivors After Spontaneous Single Fetal Demise in Monochorionic Twins: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 133(4), pp.570-578. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Scott, R., Downes, A., et al. 2026. **Obstetric and Neonatal Outcomes in Pregnancies from a Dedicated Cystic Fibrosis-Maternal Health Service: A Retrospective Study.** *BJOG*, 133(4), pp.690-697. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Suvarna, R. and Shetty, S., 2026. **Effectiveness of continuous glucose monitoring on maternal and neonatal outcomes in gestational diabetes mellitus: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net



Ubom, A.E., Begum, F., et al. 2025. **FIGO good practice recommendations on anemia in pregnancy, to reduce the incidence and impact of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH).** *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 171(3), pp.993-1007. Available here: [International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics](#)

Villalaín, C., Herraiz, I., et al. 2025. **Clinical practice guidance for the management of fetal growth restriction: an expert review.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 38(1), p.2526111. Available here: [Journal of MFN Medicine](#)

Zargarzadeh, N., Rojhani, E., et al. 2026. **Maternal outcomes following prenatal spina bifida repair: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Pregnancy*, 2(1), p.e70230. Available here: [Pregnancy](#)

Labour & birth

Banerjee, A., Glazewska-Hallin, A., et al. 2026. **Risk of recurrent spontaneous preterm birth following preterm full dilatation cesarean delivery.** *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*. Available here: [Acta Obstetric et Gynecologica Scandinavica](#)

Begum, F., Nieto-Calvache, A.J., et al. 2025. **FIGO recommendations on objective measurement of blood loss after birth for early detection of postpartum hemorrhage.** *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 171(3), pp.933-950. Available here: [International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics](#)

Demissie, D.B., Kaura, D.K. and Schreve, K., 2026. **Artificial intelligence technologies in ultrasound-based monitoring of labour progress: a scoping review.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(1), pp.42-50. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Giroux, M., Ramirez, A.C., et al. 2025. **Guideline No. 465: Obstetrical Anal Sphincter Injuries (OASIs) Part II: Long-Term Management and Counselling Regarding Subsequent mode of delivery.** *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, p.103186. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Goadsby, J., Syngelaki, A., et al. 2026. **Scheduled birth at term for the prevention of pre-eclampsia (PREVENT-PE): an open-label randomised controlled trial.** *The Lancet*, 407(10523), pp.67-77. Available here: [The Lancet](#)

Hébert, V., Santesso, N., et al. 2026. **A Comparison of Physiologic Third-Stage Care, Expectant Management, and Oxytocin Prophylaxis in the Prevention of Postpartum Hemorrhage Following Physiologic Labor and Birth: A Systematic Review.** *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*. Available here: [Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health](#)

Makama, M., Ferguson, A., et al. 2026. **Safety and Effectiveness of Uterine Gauze Packing for Refractory Postpartum Haemorrhage: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *BJOG*, 133(4), pp.579-589. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Namutosi, E., Akankwasa, P., et al. 2026. **Accuracy of preinduction transvaginal sonography (TVS) and bishop scores in predicting successful labor induction: a global systematic review and meta-analysis.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2607251. Available here: [The Journal of MFN Medicine](#)

Nijjar, S., Timor-Tritsch, I.E., et al. 2026. **A Core Outcome Set to Guide Future Research on Caesarean Scar Ectopic Pregnancy: COSCAR Consensus Study.** *BJOG*, 133(4), pp.725-738. Available here: [BJOG](#)



Petrecca, A., Gomez, J., et al. 2026. **Uterine closure techniques during cesarean delivery and placenta accreta spectrum incidence in subsequent pregnancies: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Pregnancy*, 2(1), p.e70244. Available here: [Pregnancy](#)

Ubom, A.E., Barnea, E.R., et al. 2025. **FIGO good practice recommendations: Assisted vaginal birth and the second stage of labor.** *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 171(3), pp.970-982. Available here: [International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics](#)

Pregnancy loss

Picot, C., Piroux, Y., et al. 2026. **Risk of miscarriage after benzodiazepine use during pregnancy: updated systematic review and meta-analysis.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Robinson, K., Due, C., et al. 2025. **Midwifery Continuity of Care in a Subsequent Pregnancy After Perinatal Loss: A Scoping Review of Qualitative Evidence.** *BJOG*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Setty, T., Kastora, S.L., 2026. **Ultrasound features in early pregnancy for predicting abnormal karyotype in first-trimester miscarriage.** *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Available here: [Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#)

Woolner, A.M., Shestopaloff, K. and Heazell, A.E., 2026. **Pregnancy Outcomes After Second Trimester Pregnancy Loss and Termination for Medical Reasons Before 24 Weeks: A Historical Cohort Study [PASTeL-2].** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Postnatal care

Secure parent-infant relationships underpin a baby's emotional regulation, resilience, and healthy development, bringing lifelong benefits. This [report from the Centre for Mental Health](#) explores how specialised, early support from parent-infant teams reduces demand for statutory services, improves child and parent wellbeing, and delivers strong social and economic returns.

This [report from the National Childbirth Trust](#) brings together the voices of 2,000 new and expectant parents to reveal the realities of pregnancy, birth and life with a newborn - and what urgently needs to change. Based on what parents said, the report sets out ten clear recommendations for the NHS and government, including: train, invest and recruit to ensure safe staffing levels; guarantee genuine choice in place of birth and care options; enshrine informed consent and promote birth rights as standard practice; guarantee a postnatal check for every woman or birthing person; and deliver accessible infant feeding support, 365 days a year.

This [report of a survey by Maternity Action, undertaken with Unison](#), finds that despite legal protections, pregnant women and new mothers still face poor treatment, disadvantage and unacceptable risk when they go to work. All the 2,300 respondents were Unison members. Women from across sectors including health (37% of respondents), education (21%), social care (15%) and local government (11%), noted they were put under pressure, denied support, and made to feel like a problem. These problems occurred across all income levels.

Karaca, F.A., Özkan, H. and Apay, S.E., 2026. **Effectiveness of interventions applied to pregnant and postpartum women on postpartum comfort: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net



Infant feeding

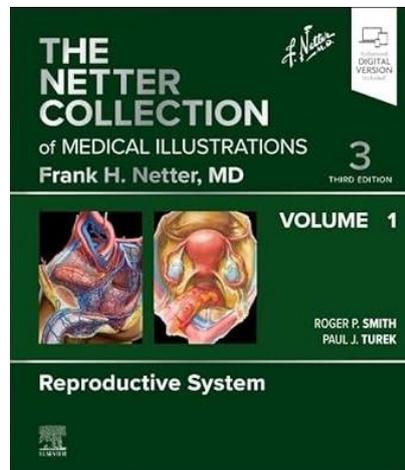
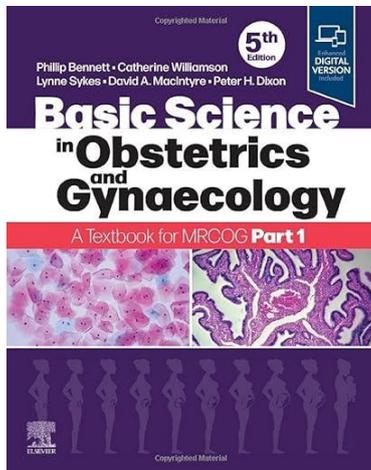
Malekian, M., Irving, M. and Hundley, V.A., 2026. **What factors influence the knowledge and attitudes of UK university students towards breastfeeding?**. *Midwifery*, p.104706. Available here: [Midwifery](#)

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Neonatal

BMJ Best Practice updates

[Omphalocele and gastroschisis](#)

Cochrane Reviews

[Cerebral near-infrared spectroscopy monitoring for prevention of death or neurodevelopmental disability in very preterm infants](#)

Overall, cerebral NIRS monitoring in very preterm infants likely results in little to no benefit for most measured outcomes. Compared with conventional monitoring, cerebral NIRS monitoring in very preterm infants likely results in little to no difference in all-cause mortality at longest follow-up and in major brain injury diagnosed by brain ultrasound prior to discharge, and we are unsure about its effect on major neurodevelopmental disability in children aged 18 to 24 months. Furthermore, NIRS monitoring likely results in little to no difference in the risk of chronic lung disease at 36 weeks' gestational age, proven necrotising enterocolitis prior to discharge, severe retinopathy of prematurity prior to discharge, and severe adverse reactions prior to discharge.

[Macrolides for the prevention of bronchopulmonary dysplasia in preterm neonates](#)

The use of macrolides, specifically azithromycin, for the prevention of BPD in very preterm infants at high risk of developing BPD, may result in little to no difference in BPD at 36 weeks' PMA, defined as requiring oxygen or respiratory support at 36 weeks' PMA. They may result in a slight reduction in death before discharge and a reduction in gastrointestinal upset. There may be little to no difference between groups in hepatic dysfunction, prolonged QTc and cardiac arrhythmias, or pyloric stenosis. Importantly, azithromycin may reduce the use of postnatal steroids to prevent or treat BPD prior to discharge.

UK reports

The [National Child Mortality Database \(NCMD\) has published a thematic report](#) on the deaths of children who were born to parents who are blood related, which shows an increased risk of death from genetic conditions. Based on data from April 2019 to March 2023 (to ensure that most deaths had been reviewed by a Child Death Overview Panel), it found that 7% of all child deaths (all causes) are of children who died and whose parents were related, with regional variation.

Recently published research

Alsabri, M., Abady, E., et al. 2025. **Diagnostic accuracy of real-time point-of-care tracheal ultrasonography for the confirmation of proper endotracheal tube placement in neonatal acute care settings: a systematic review and diagnostic test accuracy meta-analysis.** *Journal of Perinatology*, pp.1-7. Available here: [Journal of Perinatology](#)

Bennett, S., 2026. **Vitamin supplements in neonates.** *Journal of Prescribing Practice*, 8(1), pp.20-21. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Bennett, S., 2026. **Vitamin supplements in neonates: answers.** *Journal of Prescribing Practice*, 8(1), pp.42-42. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Burnett, A., Axford, et al. 2026. **Predicting long-term neurodevelopmental outcomes for children born very preterm: a systematic review.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and*



Neonatal Edition, 111(2), pp.F169-F176. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Chen, Z., Jiang, Z., et al. 2026. **Azithromycin for eradication of Ureaplasma and prevention of bronchopulmonary dysplasia in preterm infants: a meta-analysis.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(2), pp.F102-F108. Available here: [ADC Fetal and Neonatal Edition](#)

Edwards, H.B., Sillero-Rejon, C., et al. 2026. **Implementation of national guidelines on antenatal magnesium sulfate for neonatal neuroprotection: extended evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the National PReCePT Programme in England.** *BMJ Quality & Safety*, 35(2), pp.95-105. Available here: [BMJ Quality & Safety](#)

Foster, M.E., Raj, et al. 2026. **Delivery room cuddles for preterm infants in maternity centres of the UK: a national survey of practice.** *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 10(1), p.e003782. Available here: [BMJ Paediatrics Open](#)

Kaluarachchi, D.C., Katheria, A., et al. 2026. **Prophylactic surfactant therapy in the era of less invasive surfactant delivery.** *Journal of Perinatology*, 46(1), pp.1-5. Available here: [Journal of Perinatology](#)

Kwok, T.N.C., Sur, A., et al. 2026. **Transition off respiratory support for very preterm infants with bronchopulmonary dysplasia: an observational study of national audit data in England and Wales.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(2), pp.F131-F136. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Laughon, M.M., Thomas, S.M., et al. 2025. **Expectant management vs medication for patent ductus arteriosus in preterm infants: the PDA randomized clinical trial.** *JAMA*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Mitchell, T., Andrzejewska, I., et al. 2026. **Parent and practitioner experiences of opt-out consent in neonatal intensive care: a mixed methods study within a trial.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(2), pp.F162-F168. Available here: [ADC Fetal and Neonatal Edition](#)

Ng, H.C.D., Harris, C., et al. 2026. **Does whole-body in-utero MRI in those with suspected fetal abnormalities improve antenatal care? A single-centre retrospective cohort study.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(2), pp.F155-F161. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Smedbäck, V., Björklund, L.J., et al. 2026. **Early Prophylactic Hydrocortisone and Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia-Free Survival in Extremely Preterm Infants.** *JAMA Network Open*, 9(2), p.e2560146. Available here: [JAMA Network Open](#)

Wang, H., Jia, D., et al. 2025. **The influencing factors of neonatal extubation failure: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Pediatrics & Neonatology*. Available here: [Pediatrics & Neonatology](#)

Xiao, X., Bai, Y., et al. 2026. **Effectiveness of Nursing Intervention on Maternal Mental Health Symptoms Among Patients Admitted to Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: A Meta-Analysis.** *Nursing in Critical Care*, 31(2), p.e70351. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary@nhs.net

Zuo, Y., Wang, Y., et al. 2025. **Exploring the experiences of neonatal parents for neonatal palliative care: a meta-synthesis of qualitative research.** *BMC Palliative Care*. Available



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[Remington and Klein's Infectious Diseases of the Fetus and Newborn Infant](#)

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