



Maternity & Neonatal Bulletin: July 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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New training sessions from the Library & Knowledge Services

Online Patient Information: This session will show you how to find trustworthy, high quality, online patient information to use in leaflets, and to share with patients and their families or carers.

- **Friday 14th August 1:00pm - 1:50pm**
- **Friday 25th September 10:00am - 10.50am**

AI Literacy: This session will take a balanced approach to guide you through confusing jargon and help to explain what AI is, provide cautionary advice and help you to understand how (and if!) it can help you.

- **Wednesday 26th August 10:00am - 11:00am**
- **Wednesday 30th September 10:00am - 11:00am**
- **Wednesday 10th October 10:00am - 11:00am**

Please email ulth.clinical.librarian@nhs.net to book a place on any of our upcoming training sessions. You can view our Training Calendar here: <https://www.nhslincslibrary.uk/training-calendar/>

Monthly highlight

[Beyond 'how can I help?': the Ockenden and Amos maternity reviews and compassionate leadership](#) [blog from the King's Fund]: Last summer, we asserted that just four simple words – 'how can I help?' – capture the essence of compassionate leadership in health and social care. We reflected on the growing reality of moral injury in health and care and made the case that compassion is not an optional extra; it is a necessary condition for delivering high-quality care and supporting a thriving workforce.



Maternity
BMJ Best Practice updates
HELLP syndrome [updated June 2026]
Postpartum haemorrhage [updated June 2026]
UK guidelines
House of Commons Library: Changes to the law on abortion in England and Wales [July 2026]
RCOG: Pre-Eclampsia and Maternal Cardiovascular Function: Insights into Pathophysiology and Care (Scientific Impact Paper No. 79) [August 2026]
RCOG: Care of the Newborn and Cord During the Third Stage of Labour (Scientific Impact Paper No. 78) [July 2026]
RCOG: Placenta Praevia and Placenta Accreta Spectrum: Diagnosis and Management Green-Top Guideline No. 27a [June 2026, 5 th edition]
UK Health Security Agency: Carbon monoxide (CO): antenatal checks algorithm for midwives [updated June 2026]
Reports
The National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation report highlights key areas of concern, identifies barriers to delivering change and sets out a robust package of eight recommendations aimed at delivering long-term systemic and cultural transformation in maternity and neonatal care for the 21st century.
As outlined in NHS England's 10 Point Plan for maternity and neonatal services , all trusts must commit to delivering safe and effective maternity triage. Within three months, each trust should complete a board-level audit to identify any gaps and ensure services are consistently safe, responsive and appropriately resourced. This national maternity triage specification will support local services in achieving this urgent action .
The MBRRACE-UK programme's latest report focuses on UK perinatal deaths of babies born in 2024, finding that rates of baby death continued to decrease in that year.
New analysis of 1.6 million births in England reveals that one in five women use emergency care services in the year after giving birth – with inequalities rooted in deprivation, ethnicity and pre-existing health conditions that often predate pregnancy by years. This report from the Nuffield Trust argues that improving maternity care alone is unlikely to be sufficient, with a need for a genuine life-course approach to women's health.
This guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care sets out practical, practice-focused principles to strengthen continuity between midwifery and health visiting services across pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.
Workforce and education
Mardiah, A. and Anggraeni, M.D., 2026. Effectiveness of virtual reality-based learning in midwifery education: a systematic review. <i>British Journal of Midwifery</i> , 34(6), pp.336-341. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Firth, A., et al. 2026. **Balancing compassion amid constraints: a qualitative study of how system-level conditions shape midwives' wellbeing when supporting asylum-seeking and refugee women's mental health.** *Midwifery*, p.104898. Available here: [Midwifery](#)

Stevenson, K., et al. 2026. **Care Received by Migrant Women Who Died During or After Pregnancy: A National Confidential Case Note Review.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Mental health

Chan, J.K.N., et al. 2026. **Maternal and paternal antidepressant use before and during pregnancy and offspring risk of neurodevelopmental disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 13(6), pp.472-484. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Ferrari, A.J., et al. 2026. **The global prevalence of major depressive disorder during the peripartum period: a systematic review and meta-regression.** *The Lancet Psychiatry*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Jones, E., et al. 2026. **Evidence-based behaviour change techniques to aid smoking cessation for pregnant women with mental illness: a systematic review.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Pickles, S., et al. 2026. **Factors impacting non-attendance rates at perinatal mental health services.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(6), pp.306-311. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Zhang, W., et al. 2026. **Associations of physical activity during pregnancy with antenatal and postpartum depression: a systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Antenatal care

Adu-Breda, T.K., et al. 2026. **Internal Consistency of the Hadlock Estimated Fetal Weight Reference: Methodological Analysis.** *BJOG*. p. 1-9. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Normann, A.K., et al. 2026. **Screening tools and programmes for intimate partner violence in antenatal and postpartum healthcare across Europe: a scoping review with quality assessment.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Pharmacology

Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), 2026. **Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Statement: Acetaminophen use during pregnancy.** *Pregnancy*, 2(4), p.e70318. Available here: [Pregnancy](#)

Complications - Cardiology

Vanharen, Y., et al. 2026. **A blueprint of an integrated cardio-obstetric preconception care pathway for women with pre-pregnancy intermediate-to high-risk cardiovascular disease.** *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, p.115213. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net



Complications - Diabetes

Williams, A., et al. 2026. **Bridging the confidence gap in maternity services: midwives and the rollout of diabetes technology.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(6), pp.342-348. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Williams, L. and McGowan, L., 2026. **How yoga affects blood glucose levels in pregnancies affected by gestational diabetes mellitus.** *British Journal of Midwifery*, 34(6), pp.328-334. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Yang, F., et al. 2026. **The Effect of Aerobic Combined With Resistance Exercise Intervention on Patients with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research*, 52(6), p.e70356. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Complications - Haematology

Erez, O., et al. 2026. **DIC in pregnancy: lessons from an international registry of the International Society for Thrombosis and Hemostasis: Communication from the SSC of the ISTH.** *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Miljic, P., et al. 2026. **Management of Women with type 2B von Willebrand Disease During Pregnancy and Postpartum: Guidance from ISTH SSC Subcommittees on von Willebrand Factor and Women's Health Issues in Thrombosis and Haemostasis.** *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis*. Available here: [Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis](#)

Complications - Hypertension

Ackah, J.A., et al. 2026. **Differential impacts of pregnancy-induced hypertension and chronic hypertension on maternal and foetal health outcomes: a systematic review of outcomes and risk factors.** *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Barrett, P., et al. 2026. **Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy and the Long-Term Risk of Maternal Retinal and Ophthalmic Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Novelli, G.P., et al. 2026. **Hemodynamics-guided treatment of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy: systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Complications - Neurovascular

Newnham, A., et al. 2026. **Neurovascular Disorders in Pregnancy: Prevalence, Clinical Assessment and Management—A Review of the Literature.** *The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist*. Available here: [The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist](#)

Complications - Pre-eclampsia

Ani, M. A., et al. 2026. **First Trimester Screening for Preterm Preeclampsia in the United Kingdom: A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis.** *BJOG*. p. 1–10. Available here: [BJOG](#)



Complications - Placenta

Arkorful, J., et al. 2026. **Association Between Lateral Placenta and Adverse Maternal and Perinatal Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Jauniaux, E., et al. 2026. **Placental basal plate with attached myofibers and adverse pregnancy outcomes: A systematic scoping review.** *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*. Available here: [Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica](#)

Complications - Twin pregnancies

Gu, L. and Shen, J., 2026. **Maternal and neonatal outcomes of intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy in twin pregnancies: a systematic review and meta-analysis.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2680355. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Labour & birth

Gouazé, T., et al. 2026. **Predictive models for estimating the duration of labour induction: A systematic review and critical appraisal.** *Midwifery*, 160, p.104884. Available here: [Midwifery](#)

Kovalenko, M., et al. 2026. **Inter-and intra-observer agreement of 2D and 3D transperineal ultrasound of pelvic floor hiatal measurements in the second stage of labor.** *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*. Available here: [Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica](#)

Mappa, I., et al. 2026. **Role of myometrial relaxants (acute tocolytics) in intrauterine fetal resuscitation at term: why, when, what, How, and why-not?.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2698356. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Medford, E., et al. 2026. **Objective Cervical Stiffness Assessment Using the Pregnotia System Prior to Induction of Labour: The CASPAR Feasibility Cohort Study.** *BJOG*. Available here: [BJOG](#)

Oltean, I.I., et al. 2026. **Severe maternal and neonatal morbidity or mortality in forceps versus cesarean birth in the second stage of labor: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*. Available here: [International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics](#)

Pathak, S., et al. 2026. **Delivery-room escalation, risk factors, and early neonatal outcomes among term infants with a low 5-minute Apgar score in a regional Australian hospital: a case-control study.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2677979. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Reeve, N., et al. 2026. **Mode of birth and risk of death or severe intraventricular hemorrhage in very preterm infants: a national cohort and emulated target trial (the PRECIOUS (PREterm caesarean/vaginal birth and IVH/OUTcomeS) study).** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2708471. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Şen, S. and Şen, F.G., 2026. **Platelet-rich plasma for wound healing and scar formation after cesarean section: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials.** *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. Available on request:



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van der Wal, E.C., et al. 2026. **Is perinatal outcome of planned vaginal birth in multiple pregnancy influenced by using epidural analgesia: a systematic review.** *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Postnatal care

Fang, S., et al. 2026. **Impact of advanced wound care methods on obstetric patients: a meta-analysis.** *Journal of Wound Care*, 35(6), pp.545-552. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Pregnancy loss

da Palma Correia, A.F. and do Couto Antunes, M.S., 2026. **Hope as a therapeutic resource in pregnancy after loss: operationalising woman-centred support in midwifery care.** *Midwifery*, 160, p.104889. Available here: [Midwifery](#)

Heazell, A.E.P., et al. 2026. **Updating unanswered questions for stillbirth research: refresh of the UK Stillbirth Priority Setting Partnership.** *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Available here: [Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#)

Infant Feeding

Di Chiara, M. and Terrin, G., 2026. **Colostrum is enough, the pacifier is not the enemy, and the pump can wait: a narrative review of common misconceptions affecting early breastfeeding in healthy term neonates.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2671562. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)



Neonatal

BMJ Best Practice updates

[Omphalocele and gastroschisis](#) [updated June 2026]

Cochrane reviews

[Prophylactic versus selective use of surfactant for preventing morbidity and mortality in preterm infants at risk of respiratory distress syndrome](#)

[Venepuncture versus heel lance for blood sampling in term neonates](#)

Reports

The [National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation](#) report highlights key areas of concern, identifies barriers to delivering change and sets out a robust package of eight recommendations aimed at delivering long-term systemic and cultural transformation in maternity and neonatal care for the 21st century.

As outlined in [NHS England's 10 Point Plan for maternity and neonatal services](#), all trusts must commit to delivering safe and effective maternity triage. Within three months, each trust should complete a board-level audit to identify any gaps and ensure services are consistently safe, responsive and appropriately resourced. This [national maternity triage specification will support local services in achieving this urgent action](#).

The [MBRRACE-UK programme's latest report](#) focuses on UK perinatal deaths of babies born in 2024, finding that rates of baby death continued to decrease in that year.

This [report from Bliss](#) reveals inequity related to ethnicity and socioeconomic deprivation is present throughout the whole of a baby's neonatal journey. It brings presents evidence that shows how minoritised ethnicity and social deprivation contribute to a double-disadvantage: babies are more likely to be admitted to neonatal care and more likely to have worse outcomes – including a higher risk of death – because of their demographics and circumstances.

Recently published research

Anumba, D.O., et al. 2026. **Critical care level admissions and transfers of preterm births in England.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2698353. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Barton, H.E., et al. 2026. **Impact of Kaiser permanente early-onset sepsis risk calculator implementation in hospitals, England: pre-post intervention cohort analysis.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*. Available here: [Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition](#)

Brown, K.N., et al. 2026. **Quality improvement: enhancing antibiotic stewardship for suspected early onset neonatal infection by refining use of the Kaiser Permanente screening tool and using a CRP threshold of 20 mg/L.** *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 10(1), p.e004654. Available here: [BMJ Paediatrics Open](#)

Calvert, A., et al. 2026. **Preterm infants: immunity and immunisation.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(4), pp.F303-F309. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net



Grieser, K., et al. 2026. **Use of a breakaway vascular access device to preserve peripherally inserted central catheter integrity in a neonate.** *British Journal of Nursing*, 35(11), pp.592-594. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Gritsay, E., et al. 2026. **Postnatally acquired cytomegalovirus infection in preterm infants: an update on diagnosis, management and outcomes.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Hamouda, N., et al. 2026. **Effect of different feeding approaches on growth, neonatal morbidities, mortality and neurodevelopmental outcome in preterm infants: a systematic review and network meta-analysis.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(4), pp.F352-F359. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

King, B.C., et al. 2026. **Modeling Oxygen Saturation Targets, Mortality, and Retinopathy Among Extremely Preterm Infants.** *JAMA Network Open*, 9(7), p.e2624727. Available here: [JAMA Network Open](#)

Mappa, I., et al. 2026. **Role of myometrial relaxants (acute tocolytics) in intrauterine fetal resuscitation at term: why, when, what, How, and why-not?.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2698356. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Nezafat Maldonado, B., et al. 2026. **Term neonatal admissions for hypoglycaemia in England and Wales, 2012–2020: a population-based study using the National Neonatal Research Database.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(4), pp.F367-F375. Available here: [Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition](#)

Pathak, S., et al. 2026. **Delivery-room escalation, risk factors, and early neonatal outcomes among term infants with a low 5-minute Apgar score in a regional Australian hospital: a case–control study.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2677979. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Ponnusamy, V., et al. 2026. **Feasibility and acceptability of a novel forehead-mounted wireless heart rate monitoring device in preterm infants: a prospective multicenter observational cohort study.** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2698904. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Reeve, N., et al. 2026. **Mode of birth and risk of death or severe intraventricular hemorrhage in very preterm infants: a national cohort and emulated target trial (the PRECIOUS (PREterm caesarean/vaginal birth and IVH/OUTcomeS) study).** *The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, 39(1), p.2708471. Available here: [The Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine](#)

Schaeffer, E.K., et al. 2026. **Femoral nerve palsy in brace treatment for developmental dysplasia of the hip: incidence and outcomes in a prospective international cohort.** *The Bone & Joint Journal*, 108(6), pp.840-846. Available here: [The Bone & Joint Journal](#)

Sharland, G., 2026. **Prenatal diagnosis and management of congenital heart disease.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 111(7), pp.580-582. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Sun, Z., et al. 2026. **Associations between neonatal brain structure and neurodevelopmental outcomes following very preterm birth.** *Journal of Perinatology*, pp.1-8. Available here: [Journal of Perinatology](#)



Turley, J., et al. 2026. **Parental experiences of decision-making in the grey zones of neonatal intensive care: a multicentre mixed methodology phenomenological study.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(4), pp.F360-F366. Available on request: ulth.nhslincslibrary.request@nhs.net

Wang, J., et al. 2026. **The latest research progress of ultrasound technology in the diagnosis of neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis: A review.** *Medicine*, 105(23), p.e49235. Available here: [Medicine](#)

Westwood, M., et al. 2026. **Newborn screening for severe combined immunodeficiency in the NHS newborn blood spot screening programme: a systematic review.** *Health Technology Assessment*, 30(45), p.1. Available here: [Health Technology Assessment](#)

Young, A.N., et al. 2026. **Current knowledge and future perspectives on management and prevention of group B streptococcus in neonates and young infants.** *Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition*, 111(4), pp.F310-F315. Available here: [Archives of Disease in Childhood-Fetal and Neonatal Edition](#)