

## COVER SHEET

<b>Meeting and Date of meeting</b>	<i>Trust Board 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025</i>	
<b>Title of paper</b>	<i>Provision of Maternity &amp; Gynaecology Services</i>	
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	<b>Position</b>	<i>Director Surgery &amp; Clinical Services</i>
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<b>This paper sits within the Trust Board role of:</b>	Accountability	
<b>This paper is presented for:</b>	Assurance	
<b>Links Trust Corporate Objectives</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unscheduled Care Transformation and Reform
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Improved Access to Services
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on developing services provided in the Community
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ensure Safe Services while delivering financial recovery
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strengthen Financial and Governance Systems
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital Readiness
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainability of Our Estate
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Embedding Our Co-production Approach
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Delivery of Year 3 of Our People Framework



*The report author will complete this report cover sheet fully. The Accountable Director must satisfy themselves that the cover sheet is accurate and fully reflects the report. The expectation is that the Accountable Director has read and agreed the content (cover sheet and report).*

*Its purpose is to provide the Trust Board/Committee with a clear summary of the report/paper being presented, how it impacts on the people we serve and the key matters for attention and the ask of the Trust Board/Committee*

### **1. Reason for Presentation of Paper / Report**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the provision of Maternity and Gynaecology services and to update on the development of a sustainable safe model.

### **2. Detailed summary of paper contents:**

The Maternity & Gynaecology specialities in the Southern Trust, like others regionally and nationally, has been increasingly challenged by workforce issues, both medical and midwifery staffing, rising demand and associated pressures across both hospital sites.

From summer 2024, staffing levels, predominantly midwifery, necessitated increased diverts between the two hospital sites due to sickness and absences. Measures to mitigate risk to women have been implemented and are ongoing.

The Trust has established a Project Structure to facilitate the development of options for a future plan to deliver safe, sustainable, high-quality Maternity and Gynaecology services for women across the Southern Trust. Work on this has commenced.

### **3. Areas of improvement/achievement:**

- Immediate action plan developed to stabilise current services – 37 actions.
- 32 actions completed and closed – no risk to delivering the remaining 5 actions
- No patient diverts due to staffing since 27 January 2025.
- Process for active assessment and escalation of daily operational business - daily sitrep circulated to nominated staff and SPPG
- Engagement with wide range of stakeholders including staff, commissioners, and senior management to agree next steps.
- Project structure agreed and project on Future Service Model for Maternity Provision has commenced.
- Securing of three external and independent experts (management, midwifery and obstetric) to provide advice, support, check and challenge to the process.

<b>4. Areas of concern/risk/challenge:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient cover at Consultant level on Daisy Hill Site means increased reliance on locums both in and out of hours.</li> <li>• 3 vacant posts at Consultant level within the Trust (2 DHH &amp; 1 CAH)</li> <li>• Reduction in ability to continue some provision of maternity and gynaecology services due to medical workforce needing to focus delivery of service on obstetric care.</li> <li>• Increased waiting times for gynaecology patients due to reduction in gynae patient assessment and treatment.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Impact on Statutory Duties: Provide details on the impact of the following and how.</b>	
<b><i>Financial Impact</i></b>	<b><i>Safety and Quality Impact</i></b>
<i>Risk assessment has been undertaken 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and identified as high risk.</i>	Yes, there are Quality, Safety or Experience Impacts
<b>6. Risk Assessment (Risk level and state if a risk assessment be completed)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Risk assessment has been undertaken 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and identified as high risk.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>7. Other Business Intelligence/data (If appropriate)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work alongside the PHA to understand patient demand capacity and impacts along with consequences of patient flow and pathways.</i></li> <li>• <i>Undertake demand modelling to support evidence based model.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>8. Impact: Provide details on the impact of the following and how. If this is N/A you should explain why this is an appropriate response.</b>	
<b>Corporate Risk Register</b>	Provision of Maternity & Gynaecology Service is on the Corporate Risk Register
<b>Board Assurance Framework</b>	<i>Senior Leadership Team Risk and Assurance Governance committee</i>
<b>Equality and Human Rights</b>	Equality Assessment will be undertaken as review of services progresses.

## 1.0 Introduction

This paper has been developed to provide an update to Trust Board on the current provision of Maternity and Gynaecology services and the immediate actions taken to date to stabilise the service. A further update is included on work to date regarding the review on future provision of Maternity and Gynaecology services for the Southern Trust population.

## 2.0 Update on Immediate Actions

The Trust's midwifery and medical obstetric teams continue to provide a full range of antenatal, delivery and post-natal services across the Trust. In order ensure these services are safely provided across both hospital sites (and in the community) the Trust drafted an "immediate action plan" consisting of 37 actions. In November 2024, a Directors Oversight Group was set up to oversee this work. This group has met on 7 occasions and of the last meeting on 20 March 2025, 32 actions have been implemented and closed. The outcomes to date include:

- Daily Assessment and escalation plan
- Forward review and safety assessment with early intervention to prevent requirement for a temporary divert
- Reduction in number of "diverts" required from one site to the other site (last divert 27 January 2025)
- A SOP for risk management and risk stratification indicating recommended pathways for maternity pathways antenatal care as well as birthing location.
- Business Continuity Plan (in respect of workforce challenges) has been finalised and shared with SPPG for comment
- Successful midwife recruitment
- A waiting list for midwife posts is now in place and the Division are liaising with BSO to continue with a rolling advert to build on the current waiting list.
- Medical rotas covered up to June 2025
- The engagement of 2 obstetricians who had retired from the Southern Trust providing support for both in and out of hours cover.
- Completed training needs analysis for obstetricians (consultant & middle grade doctors)
- Completed training needs analysis for midwives
- EPS rate for midwives was reviewed in early March 25.

There are currently no concerns regarding the delivery of the remaining 5 actions.

### 2.1 Risks and Issues

The immediate action plan addresses the immediate challenges and while there has been success in the recruitment of one further consultant there is still a shortfall in the number of consultants available. Recruitment and retention of medical staff remains a high priority and unless medical recruitment is successful, it is likely that the current

workforce and immediate action plan can only sustain the services in their current form for an interim period. It is for this reason that it is imperative the Trust completes its forward planning for a robust, safe and sustainably service model for the future.

Sickness levels for the midwifery workforce on the DHH site have reduced from 14% to 10%; this remains a challenge for the service. The sickness level on the CAH site remains at 5%. In January 2025, 10 new midwives were recruited and commenced working in the Trust. Several work life balance requests have been received which may impact on the capacity for service provision. The Service continues to monitor and review midwifery staffing levels.

### **3.0 Future Service Model for Maternity and Gynaecology Service Provision**

The aim of the project is to take forward a review of the Maternity and Gynaecology service provision and identified options for the future provision of robust, safe and sustainable maternity and gynaecology services across Southern Trust.

Since the last Trust Board update, the Project Structure has been amended (attached as Appendix 1). There is a Project Steering Group chaired by Director of Transformation and Improvement. The Steering group meet monthly and will oversee the work of the Future Service Planning Project Team and other working groups to deliver the following:

- A service model with the aim to provide safe, sustainable, high-quality care for the population we serve.
- A model which is compliant with professional practice standards and evidence-based practice.
- Identify, monitor, and mitigate key risks.
- Ensure Policies and strategies are being implemented as intended.
- Ensure continuous improvement is taking place.

#### **3.1 Project Working Groups**

An update on the work of the Future Service Model for Maternity and Gynaecology Service is as follows:

##### **Medical Workforce Review Working Group**

- Four engagement workshops have taken place with the Maternity and Gynaecology Consultants and SAS doctors. One workshop was held with the CAH Consultants, one with the DHH Consultants with a third workshop involving all Consultants. An additional workshop was held with SAS doctors from across the Trust. All four workshops were well attended, and the focus was on challenges faced, opportunities for the service and recruitment and retention of staff.
- The Medical Workforce working group, which is co-chaired by Dr Stephen Austin and Mairead McAlinden, has met and an action plan has been developed.

- Terms of Reference have been reviewed and updated to reflect feedback from members and chairs.

### **Midwifery Workforce Review Working Group**

- A Midwifery Workshop took place on Monday 3 March and was attended by approximately 22 midwives and Maternity Support Workers from across the service. A further workshop is scheduled for the DHH site.
- The Midwifery & Nursing workforce working group is chaired by Dawn Ferguson and co-chaired by Elizabeth Bannon
- A Working Group will be established with membership to be finalised. Terms of reference will be drafted and agreed. This working group will review the current midwifery workforce to identify gaps in service provision, demography of workforce, skill mix and other activity taken forward across the service. The birth rate plus (BR+) staffing recommendations will be considered.

### **Data and Information Working Group**

- The Data and Information Working group is established and terms of reference agreed. This group is chaired by Andrea Turbitt.
- Several meetings have taken place, and a working paper has been developed which provides detailed data on the service including data regarding Theatre Utilisation and Paediatric Services. Work continues to further understand the data and provide rationale with discussion with all specialties. A final paper will be forwarded to the Project Team for approval.

### **Future Service Model Drafting Group**

- This group will be established once all evidence has been gathered to inform the way forward and develop a service model. This group will be chaired by Andrea Turbitt.

### **Continuity Planning**

- A group has been established to ensure that there is a continuity model detailed and that this can be implemented if required. A detailed continuity plan has been shared with SPPG for comment and once received the Continuity plan will be finalised.

### **Service User Reference Group**

- Meetings have taken place with the PPI team and an advertisement has been circulated on social media inviting Service Users to get involved in the Service Review.

## **3.2 Project Risks**

The Risk Register is a live document and is being monitored and evaluated during the project, with range of mitigations in place:

- Recruitment and retention of staff

- Patient safety
- Impact on other Specialties
- Workforce impacts
- Public and political objections
- Impact of staff absences

#### **4.0 Engagement**

The Trust will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, SPPG, and senior management to agree the next appropriate steps.

The Trust has identified several key immediate actions to support engagement with key stakeholders regarding this emerging issue. This has and will include:

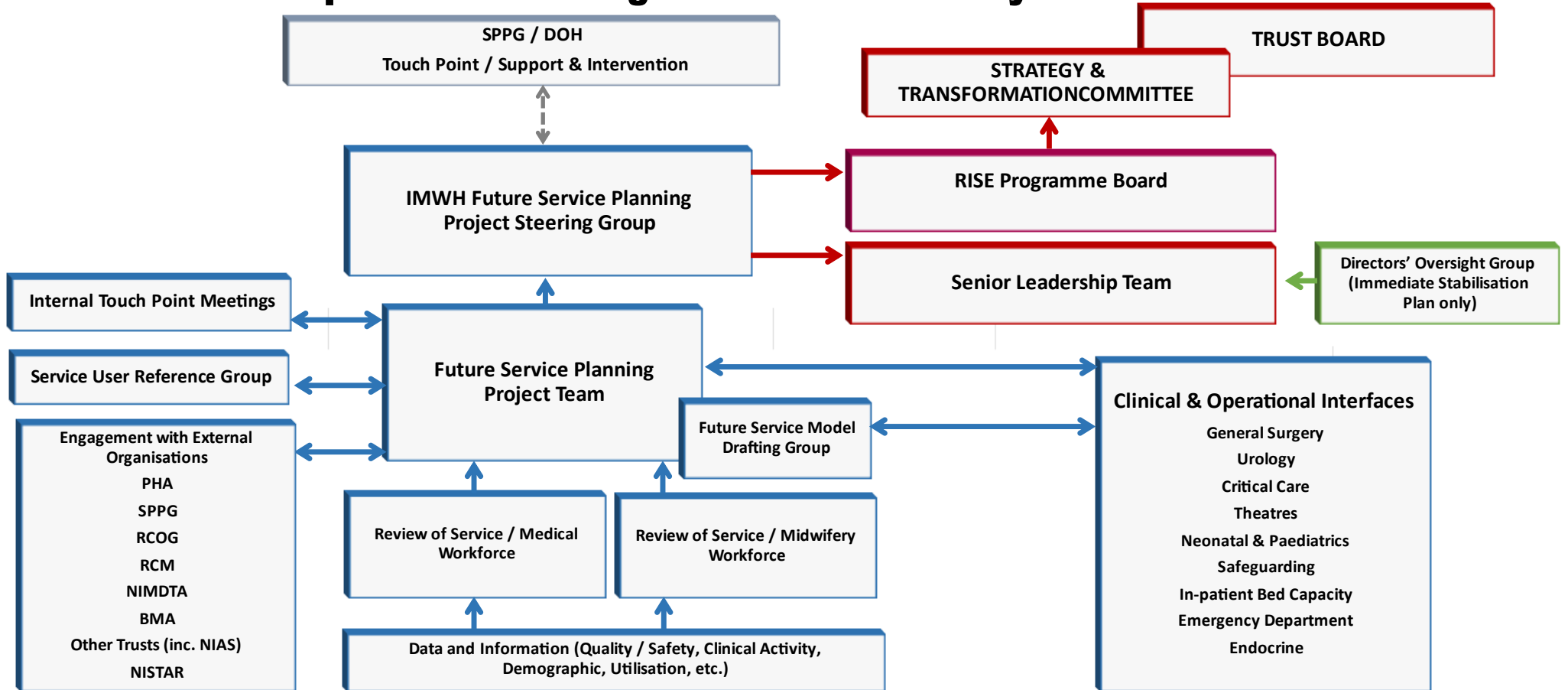
- Support to Maternity & Gynaecology staff on both sites – including formal meetings and briefings alongside informal discussions with senior management team as and when required. This also includes proactive HR support for staff in addition to individual requests.
- A fortnightly email update to all Maternity & Gynaecology staff.
- Meetings and discussions with Staff side and Trade Union representatives.
- Ongoing engagement with SLT and Trust Board to ensure up to date on emerging issues, plans, mitigations, and actions.
- Updates to broader staff group as required e.g. through Chat with CEX/Southern-i.
- Briefing interested external stakeholders e.g. DHH Future Group, Maternity Voices Partnership.
- Ongoing discussions with PHA, SPPG and DOH colleagues alongside discussions with other Trusts.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

The Trust welcomes the ongoing engagement and involvement from the Trust Board, Department, SPPG and PHA colleagues on the issues outlined above, with the expectation of gaining a shared understanding and support to take necessary actions to safely delivery services to the Southern Trust population.

# Integrated Maternity & Women's Health (IMWH) Future Service Planning

## Operational Oversight and Accountability Framework



IMWH Future Service Planning Operational and Accountability Framework- 06/02/25