

Report for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee September 2026 from HOSC representative Cllr Dilys Neill

The last HOSC meeting at GCC was on 14th July 2026. Most of the meeting was devoted to maternity services following the publication of the Amos and Ockendon reports. Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was one of 12 Trusts reviewed by Baroness Amos. Her recommendations together with those from the Ockendon report into maternity services in Nottingham were summarised in an NHS report resulting in ten urgent actions for Trusts and systems to prioritise now, drawing from Amos and Ockenden:

- Listening to women and families - Martha's Rule (patients and relatives are always entitled to a second opinion)
- Real-time outcomes, experience and audit data at Board level;
- Dual Board-level accountability between Medical Director and Chief Nurse;
- 'Amos into action' staff listening exercise;
- Addressing inequalities in maternity and neonatal services;
- Ensuring 24/7 safety and responsiveness of maternity and neonatal services;
- Review of homebirth services;
- Responding to incidents, complaints and concerns with humanity, candour and trauma-informed practice;
- Delivering safe and effective triage in maternity;
- Post-death care.

GHNHSFT has responded to all these.

There has been success in recruiting more midwives, but many of them are newly trained and would not be ready to deal with a home birth without support. The Trust are keen to reopen midlife led units in Cheltenham and Stroud while also supporting home births. Clearly, the number of women needing intra-partum care varies over time and the plan to make most efficient use of midwives is that there will be a team who could be called in to Cheltenham, Stroud or to a home birth as required rather than having fully staffed units at both peripheral units. Gloucester will remain the main unit with a full complement of midwives.

There is a recognition that women from more deprived social backgrounds and ethnic minorities have a higher incidence of complications including stillbirth and maternal and neonatal deaths, and the way in which antenatal care is delivered to these communities needs to be addressed.

Report for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee September 2026 from HOSC representative Cllr Dilys Neill

We were also told that there has been a significant surge in ambulance call out and attendance in the emergency department during the very hot weather. It was suggested that in future, a review of seasonal pressures would be needed year round and not just in the winter.

There continues to be a very high demand for primary care services, above pre pandemic levels. However, the community pharmacy service performance remains strong, with an increasing number of patients choosing “Pharmacy first.

There has been a reduction in the percentage of patients waiting for more than 18 weeks for an appointment following referral. Some diagnostic service provision remains a challenge, especially endoscopy and echocardiography.

Future topics in the work plan include palliative care and community hospitals.