

Meeting Name:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	14 November 2024
Report title:	Southwark Maternity Commission
Ward(s) or groups affected:	Residents who are planning pregnancies, families, children and young people
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	Not applicable
From:	Liz Brutus Assistant Director / Consultant in Public Health Southwark Council Layla Glover Senior Public Health Programme Manager Southwark Council

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the findings of the Southwark Maternity Commission report and its ten recommendations and agree to take on the oversight of this work which includes a five-year action plan involving a range of local partners including Southwark residents.
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board receive an annual update on the progress of the Southwark Maternity Commission, a fuller three year interim review of progress in September 2027 and a final five year evaluation of progress in September 2029.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Southwark Maternity Commission (SMC) was set up to assess and address inequalities in maternity care, particularly for families from a minority ethnic and/or socially disadvantaged background.
4. Over the course of nine months, from January to September 2024, SMC engaged with over 750 local residents, voluntary and community sector representatives, local maternity care service providers and local workforce.
5. It did so through engagement including six public meetings, extensive community engagement and stakeholder workshops.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The Southwark Maternity Commission identified five overarching themes:
 1. Tackling discrimination and better supporting women with specific needs.
 2. Making sure women are listened to and supported to speak up, whatever their language or background.
 3. Providing women with the right information at the right time in the right way.
 4. Joining up council and NHS services better around women's needs, and making sure care is consistent across borough borders.
 5. Supporting the workforce to remain in their roles and be able to give compassionate and kind care for all mothers.
7. These themes and the findings of the Commission were used to develop ten recommendations. The first three are asks of central government, while the remaining seven are targeted towards the local maternity system, voluntary and community sector organisations and Southwark Council.

The ten recommendations are:

1. Leadership in addressing racism that leads to unequal maternal health
 2. Develop a new national way of reporting maternal health
 3. Review the maternity workforce
 4. Evaluate the fairness of maternity services
 5. Listen to and empower families
 6. Preparation and support before pregnancy
 7. Give parents the right information, at the right time, in the right way
 8. Create a joined-up approach to families' needs between the NHS, southeast London boroughs, and voluntary and community sector
 9. Southwark Council to review their role in maternity care
 10. Review how feedback is dealt with.
8. An action plan is being developed by the Public Health Division within the Council, based on these recommendations, which will be finalised by April 2025. The action plan will then be implemented over the following two and a half years, with a view to all actions taking place by September 2029.

Policy framework implications

9. The Commission findings should be considered within the context of other local plans and policies designed to reduce inequalities and improve health and wellbeing in the borough.
10. The Commission should also inform and build upon existing plans of the South East London Integrated Care System's Local Maternity and Neonatal System.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

11. The report involved extensive engagement with residents, trust partners, and local voluntary and community sector organisations in its development. These community members will continue to be involved as the action plan is developed and implemented.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

12. A primary aim of the Southwark Maternity Commission was to assess inequalities in maternity care. Based on national data, this took a particular focus on women from a minority ethnic and/or socially disadvantaged background. The report takes into account how different communities are affected by poor maternal and infant outcomes.
13. This includes the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, along with considerations of how multiple characteristics may intersect to exacerbate inequalities.
14. The report recommendations and the subsequent action plan will aim to reduce the inequalities identified.

Health impact statement

15. The Southwark Maternity Commission was initiated to assess the inequalities in maternity health outcomes in the borough. Implementation of the report's recommendations should have a positive impact on maternal health and consequently infant health.

Climate change implications

16. There are no direct implications on climate change arising from this work.

Resource implications

17. The Southwark Maternity Commission to this point has been led by the Public Health Division on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing. It has required cross-council collaboration with other departments such as Communications and Community Engagement, Public Affairs, and the Constitutional team.
18. It is likely that full implementation of the recommendations will have resource implications, particularly for NHS partners who bear a large proportion of the responsibility for the recommended actions over the five years. Early response from the SEL LMNS (presented on 17 Oct 2024) welcomed the Commission's report and acknowledged the alignment with various existing or planned SEL LMNS activities with Commission recommendations. Furthermore, Southwark Stands Together welcomed the report and offered support of partnership working from various teams across Southwark Council.

Consultation

19. The Southwark Maternity Commission action plan will be co-produced and overseen by key partners across Southwark Council, NHS, VCS and residents. It is envisaged that each recommendation area will have its own sub- working group, which will receive oversight from a strategic steering group overseen by the Southwark Health & wellbeing Board.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The Southwark Maternity Commission: Recommendations to tackle the inequalities in pregnancy and childbirth experienced by families in Southwark (2024)	Public Health Division, Children & Adults Department	Megan Velzian Megan.velzian@southwark.gov.uk

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	The Southwark Maternity Commission: Recommendations to tackle the inequalities in pregnancy and childbirth experienced by families in Southwark

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Liz Brutus	
Report Author	Megan Velzian & Clodagh Cox	
Version	Final	
Dated	September 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Resources	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	1 November 2024	