



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Baroness Merron
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Women's Health and Maternity*

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Mr Phil Regan
Senior Policy and Research Officer
The Traveller Movement
By email to: policyandresearch@travellermovement.org.uk

2 October 2026

Dear Mr Regan,

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 July to the then Secretary of State about the national maternity and neonatal investigation. I am replying as the Minister for Women's Health and Mental Health. I am sorry that you have not received a more timely reply and thank you for your patience.

I appreciate your concerns.

We recognise that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities face significant and unique disadvantages in maternity and neonatal services. We are committed to addressing all forms of racism and discrimination against all communities, and I would like to assure you that this is not limited to any one group.

Baroness Amos found that racism, discrimination and structural inequalities are embedded throughout the maternity and neonatal system, with profound implications for outcomes and the quality-of-care women and babies receive, which also has a significant impact on staff wellbeing and the safety culture of the workplace. She also found that women and families are not being listened to, there is a lack of accountability when things go wrong, and racism and discrimination are driving inequalities in outcomes. She found a system that is fragmented, overly complex and too slow to learn.

Discrimination against people from GRT backgrounds and other disadvantaged backgrounds was highlighted in the investigation's interim report, with reference to limited data on outcomes for these groups. Additionally, discrimination against GRT communities was discussed in the individual local NHS trust reports, following direct communication with families in the investigation, and published alongside the Baroness Amos's report.

Addressing the inequalities that exist across maternity and neonatal services is fundamental to ensuring that all women and babies receive safe, personalised and compassionate care. We know that this includes taking action before women reach maternity care and after they go home. It also includes working to improve women's experiences as well as outcomes.

We are delivering a new anti-discrimination programme, which aims to ensure that all service users and their families will receive care, and all staff experience a work environment free from discrimination and racism, resulting in a better culture within the NHS. All NHS trusts will have started the programme by the end of the year, with completion by the end of 2027.

The programme is a longer-term culture change programme, which will equip leaders and frontline staff to use tried and tested approaches to tackle discriminatory practices. It will aim to ensure women, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, experience a service free from racism and discrimination.

The National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce, which is chaired by the Secretary of State, will translate the recommendations from Baroness Amos's investigation and Donna Ockenden's independent review into maternity services at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, into a single, national action plan. This will drive systemic and sustained improvement across maternity and neonatal care.

We will publish the action plan by the end of the year. Once published, the Taskforce will hold the system to account for implementing the action plan, and improving outcomes and experiences for women, babies, families and staff.

I hope this reply is helpful.

All good wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gillian', with a stylized flourish underneath.

BARONESS MERRON