

Editorials

The Morecambe Bay Investigation report was published on Tuesday 3 March 2015, and we wanted to take this opportunity to update you on how the Trust will address the findings in the report.

As a Trust, we welcome the Morecambe Bay Investigation report and believe that it is the definitive picture of what happened. We fully accept and acknowledge the criticisms in the report, and the recommendations made by Dr Bill Kirkup and his Panel of experts.

We said this in our statement at the time of publication but feel it is important to repeat it here – this Trust made some very serious mistakes in the way it cared for mothers and their babies. More than that, the same mistakes were repeated, and there was a lack of openness from the Trust in acknowledging to families what had happened. We believe that this report vindicates these families.

For these reasons, on behalf of the Trust, we apologise unreservedly to the families concerned. We are deeply sorry that so many people have suffered as a result of these mistakes. It is our duty to ensure that lessons are learned and that we do everything we possibly can to make sure nothing like this happens again.

The report notes that concerns over clinical practice were confined to Furness General Hospital, and concludes that significant progress is being made at this maternity unit. Whilst we welcome this recognition of improvement, we will not be complacent.

The report has made 44 recommendations – 18 of which are for the Trust to address.

On Thursday 12 March, the Trust Board held an Extraordinary Meeting to formally receive the report and discuss its findings. This was also an opportunity for us, as a Board, to discuss the recommendations, and the creation and implementation of an action plan.

We will be working with staff and our stakeholders in the creation and delivery of the action plan, and of course, once it's completed, we will share it widely with everyone.

We appreciate that not everyone will have had the time to read the report in full yet, however we would urge you to do so. You can read the Investigation's statement and download the full report from the Investigation's website on the link below:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/morecambe-bay-investigation>.

Pearse Butler
Chair

Jackie Daniel
Chief Executive

Dr David Walker
Medical Director

The Chatham House Rule

When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

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The Royal Institute for international Affairs, as it is now known, had its origins at the Paris peace conferences which set the political map after World War I. It is fitting that as we celebrate a year of articles relating to the 2 cataclysmic conflicts of the 20th century we consider its role and its relationship to our own professional discussions. Based in Chatham House in London the Institute has hosted cold war foes, and played a major part in the diplomatic negotiations around the break up of the old British Empire and the formation of the Commonwealth. Its work is arguably never more important than it is today.

Chatham House provides a secure, nonjudgmental environment in which protagonists can express their different views in confidence and with anonymity preserved. The famous, but oft misquoted 'rule' which bears its name obliges participants to respect that convention and name no names.

What the Chatham House rule does **not** do is to censor or gag discussion or impose sanctions on those who speak outside the meeting. On the contrary, it specifically provides for the dissemination of the **content** of the discussions, while guaranteeing the anonymity of those who have contributed to them. In such an environment implacable enemies can be reconciled to each other and do deals without fear of retaliation.

I have now attended two important medical meetings where the 'Rule' has been invoked. It is clearly not the right rule for the purpose. We live in a public domain in which everything we do is scrutinised and we are colleagues and occasionally friends with a common aim, to provide safe and effective services across our patch. Honest communication is part of that effectiveness.

Andrew Severn, Editor