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To: CCG Clinical Leaders and  
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Dear colleague,

## **LETTER INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO BECOME A MATERNITY CHOICE AND PERSONALISATION PIONEER**

The National Maternity Review published its final report on 23 February, setting out recommendations for the future shape of modern, high quality and sustainable maternity services across the NHS in England. Following this major report we are today announcing a programme of pioneer sites to develop and test ways of improving choice and personalisation in maternity services, representing the first phase of implementing the Review's recommendations.

The NHS Five Year Forward View committed to a number of actions to secure maternity services that are high quality and sustainable for future generations. NHS England commissioned a national review of maternity services to assess the evidence from the UK and overseas on how care can be improved for women, babies and their families. The Review's report highlights a number of areas where improvements are needed in terms of safety, quality and choice. NHS England is establishing programmes of work to address each of these areas, commencing initially with a rapid programme of pioneers to improve choice and personalisation in maternity services.

The National Maternity Review tells us, based on evidence, that not enough women are being offered choice about their maternity care. Too often women's choices are bounded by locality and they are being offered limited, or no choice, over the type of care they receive. Opportunities have been limited for new maternity providers to offer their services for the NHS and bring innovation in response to what women want.

### **Maternity Choice and Personalisation Pioneers**

We are therefore seeking to work with a small number of pioneer sites – including an urban and a more rural or mixed geography - to improve women's experiences of maternity care, offering women more choice and increasingly personalised services, whilst ensuring safer care. We expect pioneers to be made up of clusters of two or

more adjacent CCGs with whom we will work to co-develop and implement ways of improving the offer, take up and operation of choice and personalisation in maternity services, for rapid national roll-out. Where appropriate, CCGs might wish to collaborate in clusters that reflect the footprints of the Sustainability and Transformation Plans, although this is not a requirement for becoming a maternity choice and personalisation pioneer.

Key elements of pioneers' work will be:

1. **Widening choice across CCG boundaries** - clusters of CCGs working together to establish service specifications and accredit new providers to offer maternity services across their combined localities, offering women more choice of providers to meet their needs and preferences.
2. **Empowering women to take control** - developing and implementing arrangements for women to take control when deciding who provides the services they wish to access (see Annex B).
3. **Enabling women to make decisions** – developing and implementing additional ways of enabling women, from all sections of society, to make decisions and choices about their maternity care.

Expressions of interest should include a vision for change and explain the relationships and arrangements that are, or will be put, in place to take this work forward at pace over the next 18 months. In their expressions of interest, prospective pioneers should articulate:

**Leadership and partnership working:**

- Effective joint leadership with other CCG partners committed to a shared vision of improving maternity services.
- Clearly identified delivery partners, including GPs, independent maternity service practices, and NHS providers, and mechanisms to facilitate joint working.
- Commitment to work with women and families in the local area to shape services around their needs.

**Enthusiasm to test new approaches and share learning:**

- Enthusiasm to co-develop and test new approaches, particularly in support of accreditation of new providers across CCG boundaries and introduction of arrangements to empower and enable women to take control.
- Willingness to take forward wider recommendations of the National Maternity Review to drive change.
- Readiness to engage with other sites, and with national bodies, to share learning.

### **Governance and resources**

- A proposed joint governance structure with other CCG partners to oversee and drive the work of the pioneer.
- An outline of how progress would be evaluated during the lifetime of the pioneer.
- Dedicated resources to enable rapid delivery.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel including a senior clinician, commissioner and NHS England choice policy expert.

### **NHS England support**

From their launch date, each pioneer will have one full time pioneer project manager from NHS England, whose role will involve:

- being the main point of contact and conduit between the pioneer and relevant policy and support teams in NHS England;
- helping the pioneer identify the areas and issues in which it needs NHS England support, and when that support needs to be activated;
- providing the pioneer with project management expertise, including programme planning, risk management, and reporting; and
- building and maintaining effective relationships with counterparts in the other pioneers, to support cohesive programme management across the pioneers.

NHS England will offer all pioneers direct policy and implementation support to develop their new approaches. This is likely to include work to develop:

- new service specifications and the accreditation of new providers across the locality;
- arrangements to empower women to take control, to raise women's awareness and enable their take up of the opportunities they should be offered to personalise and choose their maternity care;
- revised clinical governance arrangements across the locality, including to take account of any new providers joining the maternity network;
- new referral protocols and other arrangements to support choice at different points along the maternity pathway;
- guidance and support tools for health professionals to aid improved choice conversations;
- new safety protocols, including the transfer of women and sharing of their information between providers including in urgent or emergency cases;
- improved information on NHS Choices about maternity services across the pioneer locality;
- increased utilisation of the NHS Electronic Referral System; and
- local guidance and information for GPs, providers and women about the new arrangements across the locality.

We aim to have pioneer sites in operation by **June 2016** and expect them to run for 18 months, with on-going in-year evaluation designed to facilitate rapid learning between pioneers and for national replication.

Clusters of CCGs wishing to become pioneers should send their expressions of interest using the attached form by **13 April 2016** to [england.maternitypioneers@nhs.net](mailto:england.maternitypioneers@nhs.net)

Please use the same email address if you have any queries, or would like to speak to a member of the NHS England team, in advance of submitting your expression of interest.

Pioneers will provide a real opportunity to make rapid progress in improving personalisation and choice in local maternity services to better meet women's needs and preferences, and to generate learning that can be adopted quickly across the NHS in England. We hope you will express your interest in being part of this important initiative.

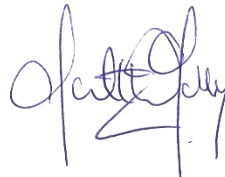
With best wishes,



**Baroness Julia Cumberlege**  
Independent Chair of the  
National Maternity Review



**Jacqueline Dunkley- Bent**  
Head of Maternity  
NHS England



**Dr Matthew Jolly**  
National Clinical Director for Maternity  
Review and Women's Health  
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**James Sanderson**  
Director of Personalisation and Choice  
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*Other formats of this document are available on request. Please send your request to [england.maternitypioneers@nhs.net](mailto:england.maternitypioneers@nhs.net)*