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Baby Loss:

The death of a baby is a devastating experience. I sympathise profoundly with anyone who is affected. I pay tribute to members of the Baby Loss Awareness Alliance, including the charity Stillbirth and Neonatal Death (Sands), who work together to drive through change and improvements in bereavement care on a national basis.

Baby Loss Awareness Week takes place between 9 – 15 October. This important annual event provides a vital opportunity to raise awareness of the suffering of parents and families who have lost a child, and to consider ways to improve the care and support following a bereavement or miscarriage.

I recognise concerns about maternity safety across England. Three major inquiries since 2015 have found serious failings that have led to mothers and babies being harmed and even dying because of poor care. A fourth inquiry is under way. The Care Quality Commission's annual report into maternity services concludes the quality of care has deteriorated in recent years.

Failures in maternity care can have a devastating impact on women, their babies and their families. No woman should ever face going into hospital to give birth not knowing whether she and her baby will come out alive.

Several reports – including the Ockenden and Kirkup reviews - have made recommendations to Government to improve maternity care and to ensure patient safety is a priority. The Opposition has urged the Government to ensure lessons are learned, to accept all recommendations, and to ensure the NHS has the workforce it needs to provide the care that women and their babies need.

Strong leadership, challenging poor workplace culture, safe staffing, and access to training are all key to improving safety; we must work to ensure this is in place right across the health service.

Women, families and their babies deserve to be given the best standard of care to ensure the best possible outcomes.

We must build an NHS fit for the future - providing it with the staff, technology, resources, and reform it needs to improve maternity care, address inequalities in maternal and neonatal outcomes, and ensure all patients get the support they need.

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