

Title: Wye Valley Trust: suspension of home birth services

Meeting: Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 27 April 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide the committee with the background to the recent decision of Wye Valley NHS Trust to suspend its home birth service.

Background

1. Following suspension of the home birth service in February 2026, the committee requested representatives of the trust attend scrutiny to explain the reasons behind the decision, and to provide assurance that the trust intended to reinstate the service.

Meeting objectives

2. To scrutinise the decision to suspend the home birth service, and to seek assurance that the trust would reinstate the service in due course.

Report information

3. Following an inquest held for the death of a mother and baby in Manchester during a homebirth the coroner identified several failings with note that there is currently no national guidance resulting in different models and no clear expectation around practice, training or competence. In response to this the coroner issued a Prevention of Future Deaths Report. [Jennifer Cahill and Agnes Cahill - Prevention of future deaths report - 2025-0559](#).
4. In addition to this NHS England contacted all maternity services and requested that each service review their provision for providing a homebirth service identifying several key areas:
 - a. The operational running of the service –particular focus on being able to provide a 24-hour service supporting appropriate rest periods for staff.
 - b. Care planning and risk assessment – a pathway in place that ensures multi-disciplinary team working and good oversight to support dynamic risk assessment

- c. Governance and oversight – oversight of whole organisation with audit programme and a review of outcomes
5. On 5th February, following an initial review of the service, the Waye Valley NHS Trust board made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend the homebirth service because of the reducing number of homebirths and the difficulty for staff to maintain their intrapartum skills. In addition, changes to the neonatal life support guidance for pre - hospital resuscitation indicated that the procurement of equipment was indicated and further training of staff recommended.
 6. A briefing from the trust regarding the suspension of services is attached as Appendix 1.

Consultees

7. None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Wye Valley Trust suspension of home birth services

Background papers and resources

None identified.