

Press Release

CAHN Response to National Maternity Investigation Announcement

The Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN) and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Black Health welcome the announcement by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Rt. Hon. Wes Streeting MP, of a rapid national investigation into NHS maternity services. This is a vital and long-overdue step toward addressing the systemic failings that have disproportionately affected and harmed Black women, babies, and families, who continue to experience the worst maternal outcomes in the UK.

While the Black community is most affected, CAHN also recognises the significant risks faced by South Asian and other underserved/ethnic minority groups. These disparities are not new. The data has been available for many years, yet there has been a persistent lack of accountability and meaningful action. This investigation must not become another missed opportunity.

CAHN has consistently advocated for equitable, safe, and culturally competent maternity care. We commend the government's stated commitment to truth, accountability, and co-production with families and experts. However, we stress that this must now translate into urgent, transparent, and sustained change.

Professor Faye Ruddock DL, Chair of CAHN, said:

"This investigation must mark a turning point. For too long, Black mothers and babies, along with other underserved communities, have experienced unacceptable disparities in maternity outcomes. We need action that is bold, inclusive, and rooted in justice. CAHN remains committed to championing the voices of all affected communities to ensure that no family is left behind."

Dr. Paulette Hamilton MP, Chair of the APPG on Black Maternal Health, stated:

"This investigation presents a critical opportunity to confront the deep-rooted inequalities in maternity care. I will hold the government to account to ensure that the voices of Black women and other underserved groups are not only heard but acted upon. We must deliver a maternity system that is safe, compassionate, and equitable for all."

Charles Kwaku-Odoi DL, Chief Executive of CAHN, added:

"We welcome this national review and urge that it centres the lived experiences of Black women and families, as well as South Asian and other underserved communities who are at increased risk of harm. The data has been clear for many years. The real issue has been the lack of accountability. CAHN is committed to working with partners to ensure this leads to real and lasting improvements."

CAHN and APPG Black Health urges all stakeholders to engage with this process and ensure that the outcomes lead to meaningful reform, transparency, and justice in maternal healthcare across the NHS.

About the APPG on Black Health

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Black Health is a cross-party parliamentary group committed to Informing Policy and Practice to Achieve Equity in Healthcare. The group is chaired by Paulette Hamilton MP and secretariat provided by the Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN).

The APPG is committed to engaging with policymakers, healthcare stakeholders, experts, community organisations and other parliamentary groups to drive research, policy recommendations, and reforms. Together, we work to address healthcare disparities and improve health outcomes for Black communities across the UK.

The current work programme of the APPG is Funded by The Health Foundation & Theramex.

About CAHN

The Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN) is a Black-led organisation on a mission to eradicate health inequalities and wider disparities for Black Caribbean and African people in the UK. For information about the organisation please visit <https://www.cahn.org.uk/> Contact us at info@cahn.org.uk

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