



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Zina Etheridge  
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6 September 2024

Dear Zina,

I hope you are well. I am writing to you in relation to NHS North East London's review of maternity and neonatal services in our region.

As you may be aware, back in 2022 I met with Matthew Trainer and the senior nursing team from BHRUT to discuss the withdrawal of the Maternity Continuity of Care service model from Havering. As I highlighted at the time, I was contacted by a number of residents expressing their concern at the loss of this hugely valuable and highly regarded service.

Almost all of the residents who contacted me at the time shared their stories and experiences, highlighting the exceptional care that the team provided to them, both during and after their pregnancies. Without exception, those who wrote to me highlighted how their experiences had been much more positive due to the expert knowledge and care provided by the MCoC service.

The decision to withdraw the service was taken following the publication of the Ockenden report and was primarily a question of capacity, with an MCoC model serving fewer people per midwife compared to a community midwifery model. This is referenced in paragraph 5.7 in NHS NEL's case for change report.

As I understand it, an MCoC service has always been the ambition for our local NHS team. In a letter dated 16 May 2022 [enclosed], Matthew Trainer stated:

*"Once our staffing is at safe levels, we will resume MCoC."*

And, *"We discussed the evidence base for MCoC. This link takes you to the 2021/22 NHS planning guidance, which sets out the objective of making MCoC the default model by March 2023"*

As the consultation is running, I wanted to take the opportunity to once again make the case for re-instating the MCoC service model here in Havering. The service should be seen as the gold standard for maternity care in our region. The benefits of such a team are well documented, not only in the overwhelming feedback from my residents and correspondence with Matthew Trainer, but it is also identified as an important model in addressing health inequalities on page 36 of your case for change report:

*"Additionally, the future model of care must prioritise and direct services to result in action to address health inequalities. This might include ensuring workforce models and continuity of carer effectively support the most vulnerable pregnant women"*

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I would therefore urge NHS NEL to consider the introduction of measures which would see the re-introduction of an MCoC service model here in Havering.

In addition to the above, I have enclosed correspondence from my residents within this email who wished to share some additional feedback with you as part of this process. Some details have been removed to preserve their anonymity. I would be grateful if these could be addressed.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

*Julia Lopez MP*

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster