

REPORT TO:	NHS SOMERSET INTEGRATED CARE BOARD ICB Board Part A	ENCLOSURE: E
DATE OF MEETING:	25 September 2025	
REPORT TITLE:	Three-month review of temporary closure of the Yeovil District Hospital Special Care Baby Unit and Inpatient Maternity Service	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Shelagh Meldrum, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations	
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR:	Shelagh Meldrum, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations	
PRESENTED BY:	Shelagh Meldrum, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Operations	

PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	SELECT
Approve	To formally receive a report and approve its recommendations, (authorising body/committee for the final decision)	☐
Endorse	To support the recommendation (not the authorising body/committee for the final decision)	☐
Discuss	To discuss, in depth, a report noting its implications	☒
Note	To note, without the need for discussion	☒
Assurance	To assure the Board/Committee that systems and processes are in place, or to advise of a gap along with mitigations	☐

LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (Please select any which are impacted on / relevant to this paper)
☒ Objective 1: Improve the health and wellbeing of the population ☒ Objective 2: Reduce inequalities ☒ Objective 3: Provide the best care and support to children and adults ☐ Objective 4: Strengthen care and support in local communities ☐ Objective 5: Respond well to complex needs ☐ Objective 6: Enable broader social and economic development ☐ Objective 7: Enhance productivity and value for money

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION / ENGAGEMENT
The temporary closure of the YDH Special Care Baby Unit and the inpatient maternity services has been presented and discussed and numerous forums including the ICB Board, the ICB Quality Committee, the System Quality Group and through Rapid Quality Review meetings under National Quality Board Guidance.

REPORT TO COMMITTEE / BOARD
The formal three-month review of the temporary closure of the Yeovil District Hospital Special Care Baby Unit due to safety concerns and the associated temporary closure of inpatient maternity services took place on 14 August 2025. This formal review meeting to hear progress towards re-opening was chaired by Jonathan Higman CEO NHS Somerset and attended by members of the Somerset Foundation Trusts

Executive and senior leadership team, a representative from the Local Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership and a representative from NHS England.

The meeting received a presentation from Leanne Ashmead, Service Group Director for Children, Young People and Families at Somerset NHS Foundation Trust.

The presentation covered:

- The monitoring the impact of the temporary closure
- A summary of the current position
- Paediatrician recruitment progress
- Options explored for potential phased re-opening
- A three-month assessment based on the criteria for safe re-opening
- The journey required to the full re-opening of services

The review heard from the Trust of the activity levels (at the time of the meeting) since the temporary closure took place:

- 90 additional births took place at Musgrove Park Hospital
- 96 additional births took place at Dorset County Hospital
- A small number of additional births took place at both the Royal United Hospital Bath and Salisbury Foundation Trust.
- There had been no increase in the average Home Birth rate

The Trust presented that there had been opportunities identified for improvements in safety and quality of care highlighted by both YDH and MPH staff who are now working much more closely together. The Trust also presented that there had been no incidents identified where the negative outcome had been directly related to the temporary closure.

The Trust presented some examples of positive service user feedback from women and birthing people who would have had their baby at YDH and had their care transferred.

The Trust presented on the impact on staff and those affected and the ongoing communication to those staff.

The Trust presented an overview of the risks around the temporary closure and how these were being mitigated.

The Trust presented some of the positive areas of progress during the temporary closure including:

- Positive feedback from affected YDH booked service users
- The temporary redeployment of staff which amongst other things had led to enhanced multidisciplinary team relationships across Somerset and Dorset.
- The enhanced infant feeding service for Somerset now based at YDH
- The enhanced Somerset-wide home birth team

The Trust presented the challenges faced following the temporary closure including:

- The impact on service users and their families
- Capacity issue on the MPH site including the estate and workforce
- Recognising and acting on the different clinical pathways between Somerset and Dorset
- Supporting impacted staff

The Trust presented their options appraisal of opportunities to consider a phased re-opening of inpatient maternity services including the exploration of the temporary opening of a midwife led birth unit on the YDH site and also the exploration of the temporary opening of a dedicated elective c-section facility at YDH.

With regards the option for the temporary opening of a midwife led birth unit on the YDH site, the Trust presented the work they had undertaken and the recommendation that due to the fact that this option would take up to six months to implement, the mobilisation of this service should not commence currently – this was agreed.

With regards the option of the temporary opening of a dedicated elective c-section facility at YDH the Trust presented the work undertaken and national experience of this type of unit and recommended that due to the significant safety risk this option should be discounted – this was agreed.

The Trust then presented the essential safety criteria for the full re-opening of the Special Care Baby Unit and the associated re-opening of inpatient maternity services, this included:

- The appointment of additional Paediatric Consultants with Neonatal capability
- Improved governance processes
- Improved integration of paediatric teams across the whole Trust
- The completion of a cultural programmes and relevant training
- Stability of neonatal nursing and midwifery teams
- Sufficient medical workforce
- Sufficient allied staffing
- Sustainable, modern and contemporary working practice meeting national standards

The Trust presented progress on recruitment which was positive with a large number of applicants and interviews taking place in the second week of September.

The next steps were discussed including:

- Continued monitoring through the Paediatric Quality Improvement Group and the newly formed Maternity Enhance Oversight Group to be chaired by the ICB Chief Nursing Officer.
- A further formal three-month review in mid-November
- Continued contractual monitoring following the serving of the Contract Performance Notice.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS – KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED (please enter 'N/A' where not applicable)

Reducing Inequalities/Equality & Diversity	A full and dynamic Quality and Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is regularly updated
Quality	Included in report
Safeguarding	Safeguarding has been considered and risks identified and mitigation in place.
Financial/Resource/ Value for Money	Contract mechanisms are in place for financial oversight.
Sustainability	NA
Governance/Legal/ Privacy	NA
Confidentiality	NA
Risk Description	Risks identified and on both the Trust and ICB risk register