

## **Results of the Birth Trauma Survey 2023**

### **Introduction**

Theo Clarke MP, Chair of the APPG for Birth Trauma, together with Mumsnet, an online forum for mothers, conducted a survey on Birth Trauma from 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 to 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023. A total of 1,042 women responded. The key results are presented below.

### **Results**

**More than half of women (53%) say they are less likely to have more children because of their experience**

**The majority of women experience birth trauma:**

79% of women experienced birth trauma, with 53% experiencing physical trauma and 71% experiencing psychological or emotional trauma.

72% of women said that their trauma took more than a year to resolve or was still ongoing.

**Women who experience birth trauma are not being appropriately supported by staff:**

86% of women who experienced birth trauma agreed that healthcare providers (HCP) are desensitised to birth trauma

84% of women who experienced birth trauma felt HCP do not do all they could to treat women with birth trauma appropriately, and 75% feel they don't do everything they could to prevent birth trauma occurring

46% of those who experienced birth trauma said HCP used language 'which implied I was a failure or to blame'.

Only a third (34%) said that HCP used language that was comforting or reassuring.

65% of women who had experienced birth trauma previously said it was not acknowledged by staff.

**Women do not receive enough information ahead of birth:**

58% of women who had a c-section said they did not receive enough information ahead of time.

84% of women who experienced tearing said they did not receive enough information about birth injuries ahead of time.

**Experience during labour:**

64% of women said they experienced a lack of compassion from HCP during labour, and more than a third (35%) said they experienced inappropriate language.

A third of women (32%) said they experienced a lack of note taking, and 32% also said their notes were not passed on between shifts.

45% said there was a lack of support for partners.

43% of women felt unsafe during their birth experience.

**Postnatal care is not up to scratch and some women are not receiving the basic checks they're entitled to after birth - even when they have experienced trauma:**

19% of women were not offered 6 week check by GP (as per the GP contract)

Of those that had a 6 week check, only 37% of GPs covered both mental and physical health. But 78% of women experienced struggles with mental health postnatally.

62% would describe the mental health care and advice they received from healthcare professionals in the weeks after birth as poor or very poor.

60% of those who experienced tearing did not have a telephone check with a specialist midwife at day 7-10

Nearly a fifth (18%) of women who experienced tears were not offered a home visit within 2 weeks of the birth with a health visitor.

49% of women felt unsafe during postnatal care.

**Percentage of women who say the following would have improved their experience:**

More staff: 75%

Being listened to by HCP: 84%

Appropriate/timely pain relief: 69%

A post birth service specifically for the mother: 92%

A post birth toolkit for physical/ mental health to include partners where appropriate: 88%

A protocol to recognise the signs of birth trauma in hospital settings: 87%

Trauma informed care throughout birth and post-natal care: 88%

Post birth debrief as standard: 89%

Better postnatal support: 89%