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Elizabeth Prochaska
Birthrights Chair
Birthrights
Union House
111 New Union Street
Coventry
CV1 2NT

12th February 2020

Dear Ms Prochaska,

Oxford University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (the "Trust") policy in respect of the provision of caesarean section at maternal request

I write further to the above and following receipt of your letter dated 17 January 2020, in which you raised concerns regarding the responsiveness of the Trust to the issues raised.

On behalf of the Trust I apologise for the delay in providing you with a substantive response. Whilst this is regrettable, I wish to assure you that this has not arisen as a result of apathy and inaction by the Trust. There has been ongoing discussion and consultation with senior staff members regarding the provision of caesarean sections at maternal request at the Trust. This is a complex and multifaceted issue involving a significant body of staff which has taken a great deal of time.

As an organisation the Trust is committed to offering the highest possible standard of care to all of its patients. The OUH is the only provider within the Local Maternity System that offers care to women with complex healthcare needs. These include women whose babies require Level 3 neonatal intensive care, women with complex medical co-morbidities and women with abnormally invasive placenta (placenta accreta). All of the women in these groups mostly require caesarean birth. This involves making difficult decisions regarding access to services in order to best serve the patient population as a whole.

The Trust has an established pathway in place for caesarean sections at maternal requests. I understand that details of this pathway have previously been provided to you via your solicitors. Women with such requests are referred, by way of direct referral, to another consultant to meet this request. A referral is only made following all supportive measures taking place to assess risks and advise on recommended approach to delivery. At present, these referrals are made to Gloucester Hospital. The system is well organised and is regularly used by women who report that they are satisfied with the care that they receive.

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From the Chair's Office
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust is in the process of updating its guidance leaflet to patients regarding maternal request caesarean sections. A copy of this letter will be provided to your solicitors shortly.

The Trust remains committed to engaging constructively with you regarding this issue and considers that the most productive way to do so is to arrange a meeting to discuss this further in person. It is clear that both organisations share the interests of the women in question, and that working collaboratively is the best way of achieving this common goal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Montgomery". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery
Chair, Oxford University Hospitals NHSFT