

ABC pilot: Improving maternity safety to prevent brain injuries in childbirth

17 October 2024

In a significant stride towards improving maternity care, the Government has announced the launch of a new pilot scheme aimed at reducing preventable brain injuries during childbirth.

The pilot is part of the ABC (Avoiding Brain injury in Childbirth) programme being led collaboratively by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives and The Healthcare Improvement Studies Institute, backed by £7.8 million funding from the Department of Health and Social Care.

The initiative will help NHS maternity staff to identify and respond quickly to signs of fetal distress during labour through the use of standardised clinical protocols, innovative tools and multi-professional training. It will also help staff to deal effectively with the obstetric emergency of fetal head impaction, where the baby's head is stuck in the mother's pelvis during a caesarean birth.

The ABC programme is driven by the recognition that birth-related brain injuries not only have lifelong impact on affected families but also represent around 10% of clinical negligence claims against the NHS and equate to more than 50% of the total value of clinical negligence payments. By equipping healthcare professionals with enhanced training and tools, the programme aims to improve overall maternity safety as well as reduce the rising cost of clinical negligence claims.

The pilot, currently being trialled at nine NHS Trusts in England, will be evaluated for its effectiveness in reducing the incidence of preventable injuries. If successful, the scheme could be rolled out nationally by 2025, making it a cornerstone of the government's strategy to improve maternity care.

[More information about the pilot](#) →

Our team

At Browne Jacobson, we are committed to supporting [NHS Trusts](#) and [health care organisations](#) with delivering on their strategy to improve maternity outcomes. Our specialist maternity division can provide advice, support and training to organisations in order to assist with incorporating these recommendations to help reduce the number of incidents and create a safer maternity service. Please do get in touch to discuss how we may be able to help your organisation.

Our maternity resources hub also provides resources and information about our specialist team and includes our contact details.

[Maternity resources hub](#) →

Key contact

Kyleigh Bland

Associate



kyleigh.bländ@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 1029

Related expertise

Services

Clinical negligence

Health and social care disputes

Health and safety

Health law