

## **PE1839/B**

Petitioner submission of 11 December 2020

NHS Highland were aware that a number of issues continue to be raised by the population of Caithness as a direct consequence of changes to the maternity services model in the area in 2016, NHS Highland sought to gather information on the specific concerns being expressed in order to determine any actions required to address them. They requested an independent facilitator to research Caithness mothers experiences of maternity services and identified a number of issues such as:

- Emergency Transfers
- Influences
- Information
- Communication
- Impact on Women
- Impact on Families
- Accommodation for Husbands/Partners/Families
- Breast Feeding
- Ante and Post-natal Care
- Wider Support
- The Service Model.

This survey gives further insight and first hand evidence for the remote and rural maternity issues highlighted to the Petitions Committee. Centralisation of maternity services when there is a distance of over 100 miles has a significant negative effect on perinatal mental health for mothers, unborn babies that can be affected by the stress hormones while in the womb, distress of children being separated from their main caregiver while mother and father are in Raigmore, reduction of breastfeeding rates affecting bonding and health for both mother and baby, the only option of planned geographical induction or elective c-section as mothers are scared about being in labour on the A9 and they also cannot wait around Inverness to give birth. All of these issues and more are told by the mothers in this independent survey.

<https://caithnesshealth.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/caithness-maternity-focus-group-report-final-1.pdf>