Key messages
from the surveillance report 2023

In 2019-21, **241 women died** during or up to six weeks after pregnancy among 2,066,997 women giving birth in the UK. **11.7 women** per 100,000 died during pregnancy or up to six weeks after childbirth or the end of pregnancy.

### Causes of women’s deaths

- **COVID-19**: 14% (33 women)
- **Cardiac disease**: 14% (33 women)
- **Blood clots**: 14% (33 women)
- **Mental health conditions**: 10% (25 women)
- **Sepsis**: 10% (23 women)
- **Epilepsy and stroke**: 9% (22 women)
- **Other physical conditions**: 8% (19 women)
- **Bleeding**: 7% (17 women)
- **Pre-eclampsia**: 4% (9 women)
- **Cancer**: 2% (4 women)
- **Other**: 10% (23 women)

When maternal deaths due to COVID-19 are excluded, **10.1 women** per 100,000 died during pregnancy or up to six weeks after childbirth or the end of pregnancy.

### Inequalities in maternal mortality

#### Ethnic group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 women giving birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Living in more deprived areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 women giving birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least deprived</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most deprived</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recognition and management of bleeding

Assess blood loss early and regularly

Don’t rely on a single bedside measurement of clotting or haemoglobin

Consider and exclude concealed bleeding

Pulse rate and blood pressure are typically maintained until 30% of circulating volume is lost

A raised pulse rate or drop in blood pressure should prompt clinical evaluation of blood loss

National recommendation

Manage operating teams for urgent and elective caesarean sections separately

Category 1-3

Category 4
Key messages from the themed mortality enquiry report 2023

Treat pregnant, recently pregnant, and breastfeeding women the same as a non-pregnant person unless there is a very clear reason not to.

Prepare a route for rapid delivery of advice and data on new vaccines and treatments

Tailor care after pregnancy to a woman’s individual needs

Include in medicine and vaccine research

Include in guidance for admission to ECMO* services

*ECMO = Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation

Ensure staff in maternal medicine networks have the skills to care for complex physical, mental and social care needs

Develop training resources to promote shared decision making and counselling on medication use

Equity for pregnant and breastfeeding women