

# 'Attacks' lead father to quit midwife review

By Laura Donnelly  
and Robert Mendick

A GRIEVING father who exposed a baby deaths scandal at an NHS hospital has resigned from a national review of maternity care after claiming he came under attack from midwives.

James Titcombe has left the NHS review because he felt that the views of parents whose babies had been harmed or died on maternity wards were being ignored.

The review, which is looking at standards of maternity care across the country, was set up after a damning inquiry into a series of deaths at Furness General Hospital, part of the Morecambe Bay Foundation Trust, between 2004 and 2013.

Mr Titcombe's son, Joshua, died in 2008, at nine days old, from a serious infection which midwives repeatedly failed to spot and treat. His observation chart went missing and was never found. A coroner later accused midwives of "colluding" in a cover-up.

Mr Titcombe, a former project manager in the nuclear industry, was awarded an OBE for his campaigning and appointed national adviser on patient safety with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). He was invited to join the national review into how to improve maternity care.

It has emerged that Cathy Warwick, chief executive of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), wrote to the chief executive of the CQC asking if he could persuade Mr Titcombe to be less "antagonistic" on his social media.

Mr Titcombe, from Dalton-in-Furness, has been outspoken on Twitter about midwives who have disputed the findings of the Morecambe Bay inquiry.

Midwives have repeatedly hit back at Mr Titcombe on Twitter. One complained that it was "very hard to disagree with a grieving and angry man who blames an entire profession for his loss".



James and Hoa Titcombe and their son Joshua, who died

In his resignation letter, Mr Titcombe said he had felt "considerable pressure when I've commented critically" on the RCM's response into the Morecambe Bay inquiry.

He added: "This has come from a variety of places, including a letter from a panel member to my employer which was sent without my knowledge."

He said the review had failed to examine the "current quality and variation in safety" on maternity wards. "I feel that the balance of the maternity review is weighted towards the professional voice," he wrote.

He told *The Sunday Telegraph*: "It has been disappointing that the chief executive of the Royal College of Midwives saw fit to write a letter behind my back to my boss rather than speak to me directly."

In the letter to the CQC Ms Warwick wrote: "James has been tweeting in a personal capacity, not in his CQC capacity. The debate that has been going on strikes me as being somewhat unconstructive."

Ms Warwick said yesterday: "I am surprised that James is linking the issue of my letter to the CQC to his resignation."