

Over 200 new cases in baby death inquiry

Neil Johnston Midlands Correspondent

More families have come forward with accusations against an NHS trust at whose hospitals dozens of babies are feared to have died or suffered serious harm.

Days after oversight of the Shrewsbury and Telford hospital trust in Shropshire was placed in the hands of outside bodies, it said yesterday that 215 families had reported concerns about the care they had received. The allegations stretch back over decades.

The trust is the subject of an independent review over a series of baby deaths and will have to hand over hundreds of files relating to stillbirths,

maternal and neonatal deaths, and babies who suffered significant harm.

NHS Improvement will match the records with names of families who have come forward with concerns. More than 100 cases of death or serious harm were already being investigated.

Now the trust has said that in addition to those who have approached the inquiry, 91 families have come forward directly to the trust, including 36 who said their babies had died and 22 who alleged that their children had suffered permanent harm. The cases cover a 44-year period from 1973 to 2017.

Concerns were first raised about the Shropshire maternity unit in 2009 after Kate Stanton-Davies died six hours

after her birth. A report found that her death was avoidable.

An initial investigation into 23 incidents was ordered by Jeremy Hunt last year, when he was health secretary, after families said that babies were put at risk by a culture that promoted natural birth over safety.

Kathy McLean, from NHS Improvement, which is overseeing the review led by the midwifery adviser Donna Ockenden, said: "Every possible case has and will be taken into account... to help ensure that lessons are learnt."

The trust said: "Where there is any suggestion of fresh material or evidence, the trust has appointed external reviewers to examine the case notes."

1 Tues 15. 11. 2018