

Our Ref: TC/dc

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Dear Chief Constable Byrne

After our clinicians reported an increased number of neonatal deaths occurring in the period January 2015-June 2016 (13 in this period compared to 2-3 in the previous 5 years), we have conducted an extensive review of services including an invited review from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and a case review by an independent expert. No single factor has been identified by these reviews; however, there are 4 cases in which a cause for collapse and/or death cannot be ascertained which the independent expert tells us is unusual.

We have taken steps, including a re-designation of the unit so that it looks after less sick babies to protect patients and staff, and there have been no further unexpected deaths since July 2016.

However, as a result of continuing concerns about the unexplained deaths, a meeting took place on 28 April 2017 with members of the Pan-Cheshire Child Death Overview Panel, and on the advice of T/Detective Chief Superintendent Nigel Wenham, who serves on that panel, I am writing formally requesting that Cheshire Police conduct a forensic investigation into the circumstances surrounding the deaths with a view to excluding any unnatural causes.

With best wishes.

**PD**

**Tony Chambers**  
Chief Executive

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cc Ian Harvey, Medical Director  
cc Nigel Wenham – T/Detective Chief Superintendent