

## Multiple births should be safer following updated NICE guidance

Tamba, the twins and multiple births association, welcomes the publication today (Wednesday September 4th) by NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence), of updated guidelines for multiple birth pregnancies.

Tamba contributed to the process and welcomes the updated version which the charity believes will result in better birth experiences for mums, and safer outcomes for babies.

Through its pioneering <sup>1</sup>Maternity Engagement Project, Tamba will seek to ensure staff at units across England are supported in adopting the updated guidelines by providing direct support and advice.

Recent research by the charity revealed that only 30% of maternity units were following the NICE guidelines on multiple births.

“There is overwhelming support from the Department of Health, NHS England, Care Quality Commission, Royal Colleges, NHS Improvement and fellow charities to drive this figure up,” says Keith Reed, Tamba CEO. “This is because there is really strong evidence to show, that following NICE guidelines for multiple births works.

“With partner organisations explicitly specifying care should be delivered in this way in NHS contracts, care bundles, inspection frameworks and providing money through the tariff, implementing this guidance is now effectively obligatory.

“This exceptional level of support is due to our Maternity Engagement Project which worked with 30 maternity units over three years and supported them in implementing the guidance. It resulted in fewer emergency c-sections, a drop in neonatal admissions and proved that it could reduce stillbirths.

“We were able to show that if all maternity units in England follow suit, neonatal admissions in multiples could be reduced by 1,308, emergency c-sections by 634, resulting in a saving for the NHS of £8 million. And after five years, across the UK there would be a reduction in stillbirths by 100.”

A key addition to the updated guidelines is a new section on intrapartum care (care which is given as soon as labour starts until the delivery of the placenta) and a new section on birth plans and timing of birth – an area of concern raised in the charity’s recent <sup>2</sup>BeCOME survey (full results of which will be published in February 2020).

Professor Asma Khalil, chair of the maternity engagement steering committee said: “It is also good to see all types of triplet pregnancy being recognised with two different appointment schedules and appointment schedules for monochorionic twins are now in line with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Green Top guidelines and the International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynaecology guideline.”

There is also a new section on preventing preterm births; which doesn’t recommend any particular intervention but will be reviewed as new evidence relating to progesterone becomes available.

**Paul Chrisp, director of the Centre for Guidelines at NICE, said:** “Our updated guideline now includes a section on intrapartum care for women with multiple pregnancies. It provides clear advice on the care women with multiple pregnancies should receive from the onset of labour until delivery has taken place. This will not only improve outcomes for women and their babies but helps support the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan.”

### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> The world-first Maternity Engagement Project began in 2015 and working in 30 maternity units in England aimed to improve care for families of twins, triplets and more. The first three years of the project were funded by the Department of Health and saw fewer neonatal admissions and fewer emergency c-sections in just 12 months. Analysis showed that if all maternity units in England followed Tamba’s maternity engagement project and implemented similar changes, within a year

- neonatal admissions in multiples could be reduced by 1,308
- emergency c-sections could be reduced by 634
- NHS would save £8 million

Whilst funding of the project has ended, Tamba is now embarking on a new model to continue its pioneering work with units. [Click here](#) to read the full report on the project.

<sup>2</sup> In March this year Tamba conducted a survey asking for parents’ views on their maternity care during and after a multiple pregnancy. This was to support important research the charity is conducting into how well mothers and babies are cared for in multiple birth pregnancies and also included a survey with healthcare professionals to get a fuller picture.

### **Notes to Journalists**

For further information on multiple births please contact Alyson Chorley [alysonchorley@tamba.org.uk](mailto:alysonchorley@tamba.org.uk) or [pressoffice@tamba.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@tamba.org.uk) or call 01252 332344 / 07791 383494.

Tamba is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to improving the lives and well-being of families with twins, triplets or more. Representing 20,000 members and 150 local clubs in the UK, Tamba provides help and support to both parents and professionals to meet the unique challenges faced by multiple birth families.

1. For further information, please visit [www.tamba.org.uk](http://www.tamba.org.uk)
2. Follow us on: Twitter [https://twitter.com/tamba\\_twins\\_mb](https://twitter.com/tamba_twins_mb)  
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/twinsandmultiplebirthsassociation>  
Instagram [https://www.instagram.com/tamba\\_uk/](https://www.instagram.com/tamba_uk/)
3. For confidential and emotional support for families with multiples, please call Twinline which is staffed by trained volunteers that are parents of multiples and can offer support on sleeping, feeding, crying, behaviour, discipline, school issues or special needs. It is free to call on 0800 138 0509 and is open Monday to Friday from 10am–1pm and from 7pm–10pm.