AIMS For a better birth...

A personal reflection on the Amos Review Update, December 2025

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By Jo Dagustun, AIMS Volunteer

What was asked for - a fresh pair of eyes

A public ministerial briefing, if you will,

Recognising that the existing programme of work may not be - is not - enough.

Someone new to the field, bringing curiosity and desire to support.

And now with her update that resonates widely, she assures us that the work is underway.

'Nothing new there', some say, unimpressed.

For others, frustration and anger persists: every day is an opportunity for yet more harm.

‘We don’t need to wait for another report to make improvements’.

But then … ‘Thank you’, I say quietly: ‘thank you, keep going, you're doing great’.

Yes, some pointers for the incomer will be vital

From those who’ve long been treading this path.

And that’s the plan: it will be vital that we speak up when the time is right.

But for me, now, it is time to place trust in the process.

A temporary pause, to give way, to appreciate someone new stepping up, taking a turn

To look and learn; to witness; to hear;

To come to understand how and why improvement efforts are so often vulnerable to disruption;

To reflect on the biggest puzzle of all: why is it so difficult to effect wholesale maternity service improvement, to the satisfaction of all?

To come to understand that a high-quality maternity service must be a humanised service, Based on connection, evidence and competence,

Truly listening to women and meeting our needs,

Supporting every woman’s human rights,

Whatever our circumstances or decisions

And then, to offer suggestions for a way forward.

Yes, it's time for a stocktake.

For an extended outsourced policy review.

For a public ministerial briefing.

Let the investigation continue.

Author Bio: Jo Dagustun, mum of four and grandmother of one, has been an AIMS Volunteer since 2017. Jo is a geographer and civil servant by background, and wrote a PhD on women's birth experiences (Learning to birth, mastering the social practice of birth: conceptualising women as skilful and knowledgeable agents). As well as working with others to understand and improve maternity services in the UK, Jo enjoys swimming, reading and crocheting.