

19 February 2026

Dear Colleagues,

As we have done in previous years, we are writing to provide advance notice of the forthcoming publication of the Maternity (Perinatal) Incentive Scheme (MIS) Year 8, expected to be published on 31 March 2026, and to support Trusts in preparing for implementation ahead of this.

As the scheme has undergone a substantial refresh this year in line with system priorities and feedback, we are providing this briefing prior to publication so that Trust Boards and perinatal leadership teams have early awareness of the Year 8 direction, themes and structural changes.

As in previous years, the detailed Year 8 Core Standards and Supplementary Guidance will be published on the NHS Resolution website once launched. The [FutureNHS MIS workspace](#) will be refreshed to reflect the updated scheme, and a new audit tool will be available. An online national launch event for all Trusts will take place on 23 April 2026 to share information around the scheme and the support available, and registration details can be found [here](#). We encourage all organisations and those working with the MIS to attend.

This correspondence is intended to provide an overview only. Please do not contact the MIS team with queries ahead of the anticipated full publication on 31 March.

Overview of the MIS Year 8 Development

Year 8 represents a significant shift in how MIS functions. It responds directly to the findings of our MIS evaluation, national inquiries, system feedback, and Trust-level learning from previous years. The refreshed scheme focuses on:

- Greater focus on outcomes, and the assurance of these, rather than processes
- Flexibility for local implementation, recognising that Trusts deliver safe care to meet the needs of their local population in diverse ways
- A single, coherent set of six safety actions, replacing the previous ten, promoting greater join-up via themes and across professions
- Increased Trust flexibility while emphasising Board accountability

This represents a reduction in prescribed process, combined with a greater emphasis on demonstrating the outcomes and improvements that matter most for women, babies and staff.

[Advise / Resolve / Learn](#)

Year 8 provides a bridge between the established MIS model and an approach that is more flexible, proportionate and focused on outcomes. It affords organisations more flexibility and accountability for focusing on the priorities that are specific to their organisation, and which matter most to women and families. This refreshed MIS is underpinned by a set of agreed priorities, developed among the system partners and service user voice representatives on our Collaborative Advisory Group.

The revised standards for Year 8 have been developed and agreed collaboratively with our Collaborative Advisory Group (CAG) which includes NHS Resolution, NHS England, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), Royal College of Midwives (RCM), Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries (MBRRACE-UK), Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA), College of Operating Department Practitioners (CODP), the Neonatal Clinical Reference Group (CRG), The British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM), the Neonatal Nursing Association (NNA), the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Maternity and Newborn Safety Investigation Programme (MNSI), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and a group of service user representatives.

The Year 8 documents have also been shaped through external review with input from a wide range of provider Trusts including midwifery and neonatal leaders, obstetricians, neonatologists, governance and assurance leads, and service user representatives, alongside extensive feedback from regional maternity teams. We are sincerely grateful for the time and insight colleagues have contributed. Their input has helped refine the structure, clarify areas of ambiguity, and ensure the scheme reflects the realities of maternity and neonatal services.

Summary of Key Changes in Year 8

A streamlined set of six Core Safety Actions

The Year 8 Safety Actions have been designed to be clearer, more meaningful and less duplicative. Each follows an **Outcome / Why / What** structure, instead of long lists of technical requirements.

Trusts will have greater freedom to determine **how** the minimum standards are delivered locally, but Boards must be able to demonstrate:

- Assurance of safety outcomes
- Clear linkage between learning, action and improvement
- Effective governance and escalation
- Embedded service user voice
- The capacity, capability and readiness of maternity and neonatal teams

Separate **supplementary guidance** will provide examples of “what good looks like” rather than mandating specific approaches. This reflects practices which might be expected to be already established in high-performing Trusts.

Strengthened expectations for Trust Boards

Year 8 provides much clearer expectations around:

- The Executive Board's role in oversight, scrutiny, and approval of the final MIS declaration
- The relationship between the Quality Governance Committee (or equivalent) and the Trust Board
- The expectation that maternity and neonatal safety is monitored through a consistent governance cycle, aligned with the Perinatal Quality Oversight Model (PQOM)

Boards must be assured not only of compliance, but of the quality, impact and sustainability of local maternity and neonatal safety systems, with all evidence retained.

Updated requirements for cross-professional workforce planning

Year 8 integrates workforce expectations across midwifery, obstetrics, anaesthetics, neonatology, and perioperative teams (including trained anaesthetic assistants). Trusts must demonstrate funded establishments aligned to BR+, neonatal nursing and BAPM standards, alongside annual Caesarean birth capacity mapping and governance oversight of maternity and neonatal interdependencies.

Enhanced training requirements

Training expectations have been strengthened and re-focused to align with the BAPM Neonatal Airway Safety Standard, Avoiding Brain-injury in Childbirth (ABC) implementation preparation, and national MDT learning themes.

Two training compliance checkpoints are required each MIS year:

- **30 November** (mandatory), and
- **one other Trust-selected checkpoint**, declared in advance.

The principles around which staff groups are required to be included in training calculations, and exception rules, have been clarified to ensure equity and consistency across Trusts, including new and rotational staff, and those on long-term leave.

Stronger learning and investigation expectations

Learning from the Perinatal Mortality Review Tool (PMRT), MNSI, Early Notification Scheme (EN), Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), NHS Resolution claims scorecard and Maternity Outcome Signal System (MOSS) is brought together under a single Safety Action, with clearer expectations around:

- Notification timeliness
- External reviewer involvement
- Meaningful engagement of families
- Quarterly thematic learning reports to the Executive Board
- Demonstration of learning-into-action, including equity considerations

This aims to ensure genuine learning impact rather than procedural compliance.

Updated expectations around Service User Voice and Equity

The role of the Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP) has been a major focus of feedback from providers, regional leaders and ICBs.

Year 8 reflects the reality that:

- MNVP commissioning models vary significantly across the country, and
- MNVP infrastructure does not sit under Trust control or MIS governance.

For this reason, Year 8 does not mandate the presence of a fully commissioned MNVP in order to meet the Safety Action. However, key expectations remain unchanged:

- Trusts must continue to ensure that service user voice is embedded in safety, improvement and decision-making.
- Where an MNVP exists, the MNVP Lead remains the gold-standard partner for independent service user representation.
- Where MNVP capacity is limited or absent, Trusts must take responsibility for ensuring that service user voices - particularly from underserved groups - are captured systematically and influence local priorities and improvement plans.

Trusts will be required to progress local work ensuring that women and families, including those who may require translation, interpreting support, or reasonable adjustments, are supported to understand their care, options, and decisions at key points in the perinatal journey. They must use demographic data to understand their local population and demonstrate that the voices of women and families from different demographic groups, are actively captured and used to shape priorities within the service.

Care Bundles – SBLCB v3.2 and Maternal Care Bundle (MCB)

Trusts must report to Boards quarterly updating on overall progress on SBLCB v3.2 with oversight of all elements, and a focus on progressing locally agreed priorities. They must agree a Board-approved plan to implement the national Maternal Care Bundle in collaboration with all relevant services by March 2027, alongside a governance-approved neonatal pulse oximetry guideline.

Governance changes

Alongside strengthened Board-level oversight, there is now greater clarity on governance arrangements and organisational responsibilities. Trusts will be required to demonstrate that they have implemented the MOSS in accordance with NHSE guidance and can provide evidence to support this.

Key Dates for Trusts

3 March 2026	Final submission date for MIS year 7
31 March 2026	Expected publication of full MIS Year 8 core standards and separate supplemental guidance
23 April 2026	National MIS Year 8 launch event (online) – registration link
2 March 2027	Final submission date for MIS year 8

Year 7 Feedback Survey

To support ongoing refinement of the scheme with a focus on the way that our team support you, we are inviting trusts to complete a short survey on your year 7 MIS experience, including any suggestions, and reflections on the resources available.

Please submit your response using this [MIS Year 7 feedback survey link](#)

We thank you for your continued commitment to improving maternity and neonatal safety. We recognise the significant operational pressures on services, and it is our intention that Year 8 supports Trusts in focusing on the core elements of safe, effective care, informed by learning and supported through clear, proportionate assurance.

PRIVATE: CONFIDENTIAL

We look forward to working with you over the coming months and to engaging with your teams during the national launch event on **23 April 2026**.

The MIS Team
NHS Resolution