

PRESS RELEASE

12 DECEMBER 2025

HANDCUFFED PREGNANT WOMEN PRISONERS

SIX MONTHS ON LAWYERS FOR SHACKLED PREGNANT WOMEN PRISONERS WARN OF “WHITEWASH” AS GOVERNMENT STALLS INVESTIGATION

It has been six months since Prisons Minister Lord Timpson commissioned an independent investigation into the barbaric practice of handcuffing pregnant women during antenatal appointment, intimate examinations and labour.

Yet, despite the urgency of the issue, the Ministry of Justice has failed to confirm that the investigation will involve the victims in a meaningful and effective way. Bhatt Murphy has been notified that the Terms of Reference will be provided next week.

Bhatt Murphy acts for a group of pregnant women prisoners who were handcuffed during intimate examinations, ante natal appointments and labour, including to male officers.

The firm has written pre action correspondence to the Secretary of State for Justice arguing that the investigation must be independent, must allow for oral evidence, appropriate scrutiny of both systemic policy failures and individual misconduct.

Jane Ryan Partner at Bhatt Murphy, said:

"Lord Timpson wrote to the Justice Select Committee in June promising action. We fear the Ministry of Justice will water down the investigation into a tick-box exercise.

Let me be clear: an investigation that does not listen to the women who were shackled is not an investigation—it is a whitewash. We are calling on the Secretary of State for Justice to confirm my clients will be able to ask questions, consider all documents and ensure that the investigation respects the victims' rights. The women we represent have waited long enough to know how they will be able to participate in an effective and meaningful investigation to ensure lessons are learned."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Bhatt Murphy [press release 20 June 2025](#)
- Bhatt Murphy [press release 19 February 2025](#)
- Jane Ryan and Renata Sweeney act for the women affected and should be approached for any further comment or information on the case on 020 7729 1115 or j.ryan@bhattmurphy.co.uk or r.sweeney@bhattmurphy.co.uk