

More Midwives Campaign

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

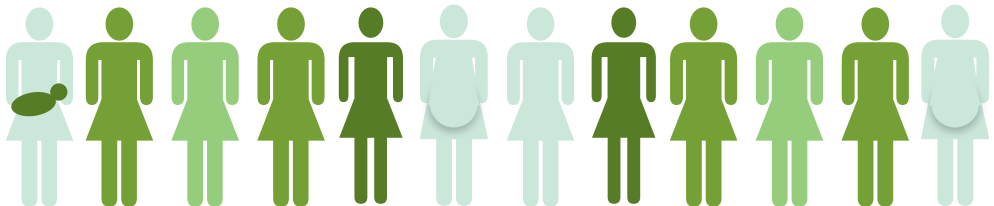


The WI More Midwives campaign calls for investment in the employment, retention and training of midwives.

The policies for good maternity care are already in place. Women have been promised choice about where to give birth, one-to-one care in labour, and a named midwife they can contact at any time.

So what is the problem? It's simple: there are not enough midwives to deliver this high quality care.

"I saw numerous midwives, I was having to repeat myself and they didn't have time to listen."



With the NCT, we surveyed 5,500 mostly first-time mothers to

Why we need more midwives

The birthrate in England and Wales has skyrocketed over the last ten years, and whilst there are a record number of midwives in post, there still aren't enough.

Maternity care is a journey, and all too often, there are points along the way where women are let down, left uninformed, and disempowered. It's the midwifery professionals who make quality care happen and ensure that the strong government policy and clinical guidance that's already in place are a reality for every single mother's care. The latest research on midwives' employment found four out of five NHS Trusts in England did not employ enough midwives. This is at odds with the thousands of newly-qualified midwives who enter the job market for the first time and find that maternity units often aren't hiring. The Royal College of Midwives is also worried that staff morale is falling. The latest NHS staff survey shows half of midwives do not feel they are delivering the care that they aspire to.

Mums' stories

With the NCT, we surveyed 5,500, mostly first-time mothers to find out how the midwifery shortage really affected them. Most had a great experience, but many were left disappointed or frightened at times. Despite government promises of one midwife to care for a woman throughout her maternity journey, 88% of women had not previously met any of the midwives who cared for them during labour. 60% of women wanted more postnatal support. And 13% of women did not receive 1:1 care in labour.



"I had one midwife for my labour but she had to keep leaving me for other patients."

"The birthing centre was closed on my due date!"



find out how the midwives shortage really affected them



The campaign so far

Since the WI has been campaigning on this issue, there has been a renewed focus on maternity staffing in the NHS.

The NFWI has been able to use its unique research – reported by the BBC and national newspapers - to further bolster this focus.

Welsh Health Boards presented their achievements in implementing the Welsh Maternity Strategy to the Public Accounts Committee in December 2013, after they and the government were criticised by the Committee for a lack of urgency and direction earlier in the year. Boards have made some improvements but ongoing reconfiguration of local services has made implementing the Strategy a challenge.

In December 2013, The National Audit Office completed its research into NHS maternity spending in England. It found unacceptable variation in standards of care and in spending, and took the

MPs used WI research to challenge the head of the NHS



government to task for not having a clear plan for getting more midwives in place to deliver its policy goals, like 1:1 care in labour. The following month, MPs on the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee used our research to challenge the head of NHS England about maternity care.

Health Education England kept the number of midwifery training places at a record high, noting the need to get as many new midwives as possible available to employers as the workforce ages. Training places in Wales also increased. The RCM in Wales is confident that the number of midwives in Wales today is enough, which is cause for celebration but not complacency.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) began work on safe staffing levels for hospitals and in

March 2014 began its work on midwives. The NFWI contributed to their consultation. NICE also reaffirmed its guidance to maternity providers to ensure women have real choices about where to give birth, and to promote midwife-led care to low-risk women. The NFWI, NCT, the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, and the Royal College of Midwives welcomed this advice, but again all stressed that more midwives must be employed by NHS Trusts and Boards to ensure the guidance is put into practice.

Meanwhile, WI members across the country have contacted their MPs and written to their local Clinical Commissioning Groups to call for urgent action. This has all taken place over the backdrop of the biggest reorganisation of the NHS in England in its history, and many local battles to save services.

The NFWI contributed to guidance on safe staffing levels

What you can do

Meet your MP or AM

Tell your MP or AM about the WI's More Midwives campaign. Ask them to pass your views on to government by writing to Dr Dan Poulter MP, Minister in the Department of Health (UK) or Mark Drakeford AM, Minister for Health and Social Services (Wales), to share the experiences of women. Ask them to write to your local NHS Trust in England or local Health Board in Wales, and press them for detail about what steps they are taking to improve maternity care for women.

Contact your new Clinical Commissioning Group

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have taken over the commissioning of maternity care in England. It's up to them to make sure that the needs of local communities are taken into

account when planning and maintaining services. Let them know about our research and how more midwives will benefit women. Pop 'find my CCG' into your search engine to find your local CCG, or ask your GP.

Influence local health groups

There are 152 Local Healthwatch organisations across England that will collect the experiences that people have of care to help improve local services. They will then feed views and any recommendations to the national consumer champion, Healthwatch England to then act on at a national level. Each local Healthwatch has its own website and contact details, and they are asking for your stories, and holding public meetings. Visit www.healthwatch.co.uk or call 03000 68 3000 to get in touch with yours.

MoreMidwives



“The world need midwives
now more than ever”

- UN Women

Find out more about what's going on in your area

Invite a local midwife along to talk to your WI about the needs of midwives and mothers in your local area and how WI campaigning can help.

Raise awareness

We're using the hashtag #MoreMidwives to talk about the campaign on Twitter, so ask your members to boost awareness of the campaign and share their experiences and views about the need for more midwives on social media channels like Twitter and Facebook.





Contact us:

The National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI)
Public Affairs Department, 104 New Kings Road London, SW6 4LY
Tel: 020 7371 9300 ext 212, www.theWI.org.uk/campaigns, publicaffairs@nfwl.org.uk
NFWI-Wales
19 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HA, Tel: 02920 221 712
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