The Royal College of Midwives

RCM Annual Conference

Motions for debate

The Royal College of Midwives

Keep maternity services public

This meeting wants all women and families to benefit from good quality NHS maternity services, which are characterised by:

- Effective team working and the ability to learn from each other.
- Integration of services across acute and community services.
- Rigorous and effective transfer arrangements.
- Care that is accessible to all women and tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

We therefore oppose any attempt to commercialise NHS maternity services, as we believe this risks fragmenting care and accentuating inequalities in accessing maternity services, without any evidence that such an approach will yield productivity gains or deliver better quality care.

The Royal College of Midwives

This meeting therefore calls upon the administrations in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London to:

- Uphold the principle of a universal and publicly provided National Health Service.
- Continue to increase spending on the NHS over and above the rate of inflation.
- Resist any proposals to commercialise NHS maternity services.
- Recognise the professionalism and dedication of NHS staff by ensuring they receive a fair and equitable pay settlement and maintaining the present NHS pension scheme.
- Increase investment in the training and development of all NHS staff.

Proposed: Corina Casey-Hardman
Seconded:

The Royal College of Midwives

The role of the midwife

Every childbearing woman is entitled to receive midwifery care that is responsive to her individualised needs. In order to achieve this midwives often have to acquire very specialist knowledge and skills. This meeting is however concerned that a disproportionate focus on specialist knowledge and skills could lead to a depletion of midwifery core skills, limit the possibility of all women receiving high quality midwifery care throughout pregnancy , labour and the postnatal period and limit the possibility of developing models of care which improve outcomes and reduce interventions.

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This meeting therefore calls on:

- Higher education institutes to ensure newly qualified midwives have had the opportunity to experience the full spectrum of midwifery practice, from midwife-led care to the management of high-risk labour.
- Employers to value the core of midwifery skills by providing more ongoing learning opportunities for midwives to develop their skills in facilitating normality, as part of a structured programme of CPD.
- Government to invest appropriate resources to ensure that midwives equipped with additional and specialist skills augment, rather than deplete, the core midwifery workforce supporting women throughout the childbearing continuum.

Proposed: Kath Jones OBE
Seconded: Mary Steen

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Supporting student midwives

This meeting believes that employing the right number of student midwives, with the right knowledge and skills and the right type of support is critical to the delivery of accessible, responsive and high quality maternity care. This is also essential if the Government's ambitious recruitment targets for the midwifery workforce in England are to be met.

We note with concern that attrition rates among student midwives remain at an unacceptably high level, that there is a serious shortage of midwife educationalists and that some newly qualified midwives continue to experience difficulties securing permanent employment.

We believe that the Government must act now to bring about an expansion of student midwife numbers, better financial support for students, increased resources for midwifery education and a one-year jobs guarantee for all newly qualified midwives (as currently exists in Scotland).

The Royal College of Midwives

This meeting calls on the Royal College of Midwives to:

- Engage student midwives across the UK in a vigorous, nationwide campaign, to secure these objectives.
- Establish a network of RCM student representatives in higher education institutes across the UK, in order to better engage student midwives in RCM campaigning activities.
- Report back to RCM members on a regular basis as to the campaign's progress.

Proposed: Rachel Hemmings
Seconded: Hayley Osborne