

29 October 2024

## **Suspension of Home Birth Services**

**This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Please provide the information below to help us understand the scale of restrictions to the rights of women and birthing people to choose their place of birth across the UK.**

- 1. Does your Trust operate a home birth service for women and birthing people (regardless of whether such services are offered through a dedicated team or integrated into wider maternity services)?**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust do operate a Home Birth service for women and birthing people.

- 2. If so, are home birth services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week across the whole geographic area overseen by the Trust?**

Home births are offered across the whole geographical area 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

- 3. Has your Trust been able to provide home birth services to women and birthing people 24 hours a day, seven days a week without any suspensions or restrictions to that ability in the last 12 months? Please note in using the terms suspensions or restrictions we include (but are not limited to) restrictions to the days/times when home births can be attended by midwives or not being able to offer a home birth service at all for a period of time. We do not include unforeseen staff shortages on a particular shift here.**

Belfast Trust has been able to provide home birth services to women and birthing people 24 hours per day without any suspension or restrictions in the last 12 months.

- 4. Please include the terms and reason(s) for any suspensions or restrictions in the last 12 months.**

This is not applicable to Belfast Trust.

- 5. Has your Trust been unable to send midwives to attend a home birth due to unforeseen circumstances (such as staff shortages or sickness) on a particular shift in the last 12 months? Please include how many times this has occurred in the last 12 months.**

Belfast Trust has not been subject to this restraint in the past 12 months.

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- 6. How many home births have been attended by midwives in your Trust in the last 12 months, including those resulting in intrapartum and/or postnatal transfer into hospital and those resulting in a baby being born at home with no transfer-in?**

In the past 12 months, Belfast Trust has supported 13 on call rotas for home births, which resulted in seven babies being born at home with no transfer into hospital required.