PRESS RELEASE - immediate

The Gold Standard Albany Midwifery Practice shown by independent researchers to have outstanding outcomes for mothers and babies:

A team of researchers from the University of Technology, Sydney, and King's College, London, showed that using the 'Albany Model of Care' improved outcomes substantially while reducing perinatal mortality.


The Albany Midwives (a group of 7 midwives) worked in an area of high social deprivation in South London for the full 12 and a half years between 1997 and 2009. They looked after all the women referred to them (over 2,500) whether or not they had straightforward or complex pregnancies.

The midwives provided continuity of carer and nearly all the women were able to get to know and trust one or two named midwives who then looked after them during pregnancy, labour, birth and postnatally. AIMS has been calling for the Albany model of care to be brought in for all women for many years, as results from research on continuity of midwifery care show excellent outcomes and this way of working is preferred by both by mothers and midwives when they have experienced it working successfully.

The results from this new research are outstandingly good. Almost 80% of women had spontaneous vaginal births; nearly 44% of women gave birth at home; the caesarean section rate was 16%; nearly 75% of women were exclusively breastfeeding their babies a month after birth; the preterm birth and perinatal mortality rate was lower than in the rest of the UK over the same period.
This is especially important because 57% of the women looked after by the Albany Midwifery Practice were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities and a third of the women were single. These women and their babies have been frequently shown to have poorer outcomes when cared for within usual maternity services models.

Note: The national statistics for home births were less than 3% and the caesarean section rates were over 26%.

This practice was closed in 2009 by King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust after safety concerns were raised. Mothers were left bereft without their midwives, and the midwives were equally distressed at being forced to stop supporting the women booked with them. There were several big demonstrations against the closure, led by the 'Albany Mums' and supported by AIMS. The longest practising midwife, Becky Reed was initially suspended and then referred to the Nursing and Midwifery Council but, after a three year long investigation, was completely exonerated.

The Albany Midwifery Practice provided care in exactly the way successive Government policy has strongly recommended since 1993. The research which has just been published lends even more weight to the huge benefits of this model of care – consistently more health and social benefits and less damage to women and babies, no matter what their circumstances.

We want Albany's everywhere, for ALL women.


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