

# Supporting staff to support women who wish to birth significantly outside clinical recommendations

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May 2024



# Context

Increasing number of women requesting care outside recommendations, in particular provision of labour care at home. UK wide issue.

Requests are wide ranging and involving various levels of risks for women and midwives, .

Conversations happening at the level of the NMC and Chief Midwifery Officers (UK wide) but no official position or guidance on managing/supporting these requests

# Wider maternity care context

- ✓ Enhanced attention into maternity services, especially in England
- ✓ Decades of increased interventions in maternity without improved outcomes
- ✓ Birth Trauma Parliament inquiry
- ✓ Women's increasing complex needs (medical/obstetric).
- ✓ Reasons why women choose to free birth
- ✓ The difficulty is greater when supporting women who request some care but not all, and care outwith normal settings or delivery provision



# Considerations

- **Childbirth is a transformative experience, both physically and emotionally**
- Complexity and flexibility
- To provide woman-centred and safe care, it is essential that
  - We understand the reasons why women make these choices,
  - We maintain open lines of communication. Always

# **DEVELOPMENT OF A REFERENCE FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT WOMEN WHO WANT TO BIRTH SIGNIFICANTLY OUTSIDE OF CLINICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Purpose:**

to outline a set of principles for midwives and obstetricians to support women who want to birth significantly outside of clinical recommendations.

# Development of the framework

Due to the professional challenges that these type of birth preferences pose for midwives and obstetricians, advice has been sought from various stakeholders:

- ✓ NMC
- ✓ CMidO
- ✓ RCM
- ✓ MiDS group
- ✓ BirthRights
- ✓ The Central Legal Office for NHSL
- ✓ Dr Claire Feeley
- ✓ Set up of local MDT to develop Reference Framework
- ✓ Presented to MiDS meeting in March 2024
- ✓ Consultation with women (April 2024)



# Reference framework

It is made up of :

- Aims
- Overarching principles
- Key working principles
- Identification of some examples when we would not be able to provide care to women
- Referral pathway

## Aims of the framework:

1. To ensure practitioners are and feel supported in the care they provide to women who choose to birth outside clinical recommendations.
2. To establish the minimum level of engagement we would expect from women and pregnant people who use our services so that we can provide meaningful and safe care.



# Future work

- Incorporate feedback from service users into final draft of the framework
- Engagement sessions with doulas and Pregnancy and Parenting Centre Edinburgh
  - Plan is for collaborative workshop between midwives and doulas
- Patient Experience Team
- Start work with MiDs on developing a national tool

# Alignment with strategy ambitions

1. Reinvigorating the workforce
2. People feel valued, respected and supported.
3. Deliver excellence in safe, high-quality care
4. Maximise the professional contribution of nurses and midwives
5. Deliver excellent, person-centred compassionate care