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PRESS RELEASE

Patients First has further evidence that all is not well in parts of the maternity services; as it continues to support whistleblowing midwives in England; and renews the call for an inquiry into whistleblowing.

We are concerned that there are quite a lot of highly skilled midwives out there who have left or been pushed out of the service because they raised concerns about patient safety. We call for them to be reinstated.

These midwives describe working in a system driven by excessive bureaucracy entirely lacking of, and contradictory to, the required patient-centeredness which is the hallmark of quality maternity care and best outcomes.

The Francis Report found evidence of a negative culture and poor standards which extended into the maternity services.

The current investigations into maternity care at Morecambe Bay arose from attempts to sideline accountability and cover up the truth; and the awful distress and irreparable loss to families and clinicians alike.

Lead Midwife Elsie Gayle says

” The NAO report is yet another indicator that all is not well in maternity services.

We need to understand what is driving these astronomical negligence costs and staff shortages.

‘Birthrate Plus’ benchmarks the maternity workforce for quality services.

However, very few units manage to achieve this recommendation, and we need to understand why. Mothers and babies are entitled to quality care based on truth, openness and transparency throughout the entirety of the maternity systems. “

**Patients First calls for a forensic examination into:**

* **the ‘significant and unexplained variations in performance’ in maternity care findings by the NAO.**
* **the unacceptably high clinical negligence payments in the NHS**
* **the treatment of midwives who are whistleblowers as part of a bigger investigation into the experiences of whistleblowers [[1]](#footnote-1)**

NMC registrants are required to speak out when care quality is jeopardised, and they are unable to work safely. They also have a duty to care for themselves whilst caring for others.

Midwives need to be supported by accountable, robust systems and processes to facilitate delivery of excellent care.

Kim Holt says, “when patient care falls below unacceptable levels we need to develop solutions and places for concerned staff to take those concerns.”

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*Patients First is a campaign group that is lobbying for an open and transparent NHS. As such the overriding goal is to protect patients and to reduce death and harm in the NHS.*

*We actively challenge the culture of defensiveness and resistance to learn from mistakes which exists in many parts of the NHS.*

*We can give advice to staff who feel that wrongdoing or severe risks to patient safety exist.*

See also call for an inquiry into whistleblowing

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/letters/article3914881.ece>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3915201.ece>

1. Holt, K., & Johnstone, D (2013). "Time for truth and reconciliation in the NHS." Health Service Journal. <http://m.hsj.co.uk/5060343.article.>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)