BIRTHPLACE MATTERS

A Campaign for Choice with fresh voices from the QE Catchment area and beyond

June 2015
A renewed plea to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Norfolk to

.... permanently and wholly reinstate its homebirth service for women

.... learn from the example of other Trusts, where homebirth is valued as a positive, thriving part of the midwifery services

.... acknowledge and take more seriously the strength of women’s feelings regarding the place they give birth to their babies

This document and all the comments herein, except for the WHO quote, was compiled by Paula Cleary and Anna Culy, between September 2014 and June 2015. Permission has been sought for all quotes.
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Introduction

This third edition of Birthplace Matters was something I had hoped we would never need to compile.

The birth of this document and the ongoing commitment to staying with this cause has been a labour of sorts – and as with any labour, there have been niggles and pains, pacing around, denial, moments of panic, and of course, that moment every mother in transition will know well – the moment when a mother declares ‘I can’t do this!’

Thankfully for me, I have been ‘doulad’ through the process with a whole army of women (and men for that matter) right behind me. Their voices of encouragement have whispered in quiet moments “You CAN do this…. You ARE doing this…. Don’t give up now… Your baby will be here soon”.

There have been entire weeks when I felt so despondent about the situation that I truly wanted to walk away from all this. To go back to being a peacekeeper and a person who in her everyday life, doesn’t need to make waves or ‘fight’ for anything.

But in life, some things really are worth fighting for. The late Sheila Kitzinger’s death was a real wake up call for me. It reminded me that if she could find the courage to speak out for women and say what she had witnessed and felt deep in her bones to be true, then so could any woman, and that I must grow my courage and step up and continue to keep asking for women’s voices to be heard here in the QEH catchment area.

This document has indeed many fresh voices to add to the discussion. Thanks to the hard work of Anna Culy, who was denied a homebirth and who has become an active team member of the Birthplace Matters campaign, an online survey was circulated around with an opportunity to make comments anonymously, some who perhaps until now have felt too frightened to speak out using their real names or job titles, for fear of repercussions. The data analysis that went with this survey has been included in the report for you to read and was compiled by Anna, for which many women, myself included, are extremely grateful.

We have also scanned copies of a paper petition which we have been collecting since last year. These have been collected from all over West Norfolk in a variety
of settings and the one word used over and over again is CHOICE. I was amazed by the overwhelming support from people who were not even homebirth mothers themselves, nor seemed to remotely fit that stereotype often assumed to belong to those of us who prefer to birth at home. No – the breadth of responses coming from ordinary folks of all ages, classes, ethnicities and backgrounds affirmed for me what I have known all along – homebirth is not considered nearly so ‘out there’ as the QE would have us all believe.

In recent weeks news has reached my ears that an MLU is being discussed and I can see how the situation for women in the hospital would be improved with a more ‘home from home’ feel. In many ways this is positive. It is also good that the hospital is helping more women to have an active birth and that there is a normality midwife working in the team.

This is fine and well. But it still does not address the needs of those women who want to give birth in the safety and comfort of their own surroundings, for the variety of reasons a woman may want this. Remember that some women have already experienced birth in hospital and this may have been a traumatic event for them. Denying those women a homebirth is just as daft as forcing all women who would like a hospital birth to have a home birth. Whatever you or I may think is irrelevant – every woman’s choice should matter.

Birth in hospital, however much it might be dressed up as being ‘homely’ still turns a rather private, intimate and natural process into a medical and public event and an inconvenience for the whole family. Many people are more than happy to go along with this. But the whole point of choices is to cater for ALL, not only those that it suits you to cater for.

I would be interested to note how many babies are being born in transit to hospital and how many are BBA’s following the homebirth suspension? And what of the 25% of women who responded in the survey saying that they would consider free birthing?

My task going forwards is very clear to me. Whilst the QE now has a normality midwife, the QE catchment area needs entirely re-educating on normality full stop. Change needs to come from within the system and without. GP’s need to be taught and shown that homebirth is not a minority option for a few dangerous lunatics, but a sensible and realistic option for many ‘types’ of women. Women need to be encouraged and empowered with a message that they are capable and strong. When the people surrounding a birthing woman
feed her messages of confidence in her ability, of her beauty and strength, those women are more likely to find they can access reserves of power they did not know they had in them! For some women, hospital IS the place where they feel safe and can let go of inhibitions and feel strong, but not for others. Choice should be available so ALL women feel safe and strong in the birthplace setting that suits them.

Across the whole of the QE catchment area, women need to be educated and encouraged to think of homebirth as a potentially positive and normal thing and if that message isn’t coming from the Trusts it will have to come by many other means. SHAME ON EVERY SINGLE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IN THE QE CATCHMENT AREA FOR EVER ALLOWING THE SITUATION TO GET SO BAD THAT ONLY 1% OF ITS WOMEN CONSIDERED HOMEBIRTH TO BE AN OPTION FOR THEM. Being fobbed off, talked out of it or discouraged can be the only reason we ever reached the pitiful situation of this questionable 1% uptake, judging by the comments and conversations I have with so many women across the region who report that this was their experience.

What heavily pregnant woman really has the stamina to try or push for something the service has no heart or confidence in? Especially when some women are getting their birth education from such awful programmes as ‘One Born Every Minute’, leaving them at best, resigned to a highly medicalised birth, and at worst, terrified to give birth at all and lacking confidence in their bodies capabilities? When GP’s, midwives or other health professionals affirm that women should ‘put up and shut up’ and stop whining and being so selfish, again and again, then of course women will lose confidence!

It takes guts to go against the grain. Yet that is precisely what pioneers do. What if QE and all the other local healthcare providers got confident again about homebirth as a concept, leading the way to become pioneers? Wouldn’t it be fantastic if instead of being laughed at for being that backwards thinking hospital and county, it became a beacon for others to aspire to? It’s a thought isn’t it?

Paula Cleary,
June, 2015

(With deep gratitude to Anna Culy, and also my husband Pete Cleary for formatting this document)
Birthplace Matters to siblings too!
"By medicalizing birth, i.e. separating a woman from her own environment and surrounding her with strange people using strange machines to do strange things to her in an effort to assist her, the woman's state of mind and body is so altered that her way of carrying through this intimate act must also be altered and the state of the baby born must equally be altered.

The result is that it is no longer possible to know what births would have been like before these manipulations.

Most health care providers no longer know what 'non-medicalized' birth is. The entire modern obstetric and neonatological literature is essentially based on observations of 'medicalized' birth."

How sad that this still remains true after almost 30 years. When will we learn?
Online Survey
Survey conducted online Wednesday 13th May – Sunday 31st May 2015
There were 170 responses from those living within the QE Hospital catchment area

Are you male or female?
Answered: 166    Skipped: 4

Are you ...?
Answered: 169    Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An expectant mother</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning a pregnancy</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously had a baby, whose birth was affected by the homebirth suspension</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A father affected by the homebirth suspension</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A health professional</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>169</td>
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Have you been offered a homebirth or discussed one at any of your midwife appointments?
Answered: 126    Skipped: 44

If the QEH reinstated the homebirth service, would you be considering one now or in the future?
Answered: 131    Skipped: 39
If you are not considering a homebirth, what are your reasons?
Answered: 45    Skipped: 125

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<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about safety</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of access to additional pain relief e.g. epidural</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to medical professionals</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of space at home</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven't considered having a homebirth before</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents:</strong> 45</td>
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If the homebirth service remains unavailable at the QEH, will you be considering any of the following?
Answered: 123    Skipped: 47

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homebirth with an independent midwife</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthing at the QEH</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthing at an alternative hospital/birthing centre</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freebirth (unassisted)</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents:</strong> 123</td>
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</table>
If you want a homebirth, what are your reasons for wanting one?
Answered: 120  Skipped: 50

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<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel safer and more comfortable at home</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have previously given birth very quickly</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have other children and childcare is not easily available</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want the service back because I am a health professional who believes in choice</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am frightened of hospital following a previously bad experience</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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Total Respondents: 120
Here’s what local people want the CCG to know....

The following pages contain the opinions from the ‘Comments’ section of the above online survey, which was open to the public from Wednesday 13th May – Sunday 31st May 2015 and circulated across various online networks in the QE catchment area.

“Anyone who knows about labour knows that the worst thing for a labouring woman is adrenaline, which is produced in large quantities when having to leave the comfort of your own home and travel to a hospital full of unknown faces, noises, medical equipment etc. etc. the list goes on! Unless you really need a hospital birth, it shouldn't be the norm to have to go and give birth in one. Home birthing should be the norm, its nature at its finest.”

“My 3rd child was born very quickly and there is no way we would've gotten to the hospital in time. Knowing the midwife was coming to me eased my concerns about a quick delivery and maybe delivering in the car on the side of the road! My baby arrived within 57 minutes before the second midwife arrived! She was delivered safely and it was an amazing experience. I would definitely opt for a home birth if I was lucky enough to get pregnant again.”

“I was very angry and upset when I was told I could not have my home birth this time. I had 2 lovely home births previously and definitely did not want to go to hospital for my 4th delivery. I worried about it for months, was anxious and very upset. Thankfully after letters and hassling Bury St Edmunds hospital agreed to do my home birth and take over my care. As a human being I should have the right to give birth where I desire and as a taxpayer I think it’s wrong that I was being forced to go into hospital!”

“They managed home birthing in the 1950s but we can't now - where did we go wrong?”
“I have had all 3 of my children at home and think the home birth service is invaluable. This service needs to be offered more freely along with home birthing workshops to properly inform expectant parents of the service and provisions.”

“I found QEH dirty and staff didn’t respect women’s choices, hospitals make me anxious and I have white coat syndrome so my blood pressure shoots up!”

“Home birth should be promoted and enabled. I am the only woman I know who has no complaint or issue at all with any aspect of the maternity care I received during 2 pregnancies each in different parts of the country. Giving birth was the honour for me that I wish all women could experience.”

“I always believed this was a choice and having had an uncomplicated birth first time I felt this would be the best option second time round for all concerned including time and costs for hospital. I would be very disappointed if this choice would be taken away”

“I would feel forced to go to the QEH as we didn’t have the money for a private midwife.”

“Choice is important and the choice of expectant mothers should be respected and the NHS should ensure they have contingency plans in place to provide a home birth service if they do not have enough staff. The NHS is funded by tax payers and should provide a full service to all tax payers.”

“Bring them back as it’s my right to birth where I want.”

“Home birth is a human right. Mothers need support not coercion; so do their babies.”
“I firmly believe that women should have a choice over where they give birth. It's a life changing event and should be treated as such. Research strongly supports good outcomes for mother and baby in homebirths, they are also less likely to need complicated interventions which makes them more financially viable too. It's a service which desperately needs to be reinstated. Thank you for everything you're doing to make this happen!”

“In many cases homebirth offers women the opportunity to have a fulfilling and empowering birth - being in a safe happy place with family and familiarity around them, thus making bonding with babe and post-partum healing easier - this might not be the case so often in hospital birth. Homebirth should be available to every woman everywhere in the UK, and I believe it should become common practice, thus saving hospital beds, and demoralising drugs, epidurals, C-sections, episiotomies and other medical intervention in childbirth.”

“I had my first daughter at home, beautiful experience. When I fell pregnant again I opted for home birth again, only to have the choice taken away after a few weeks. I was mortified and scared. I wrote to the head midwife and my local MP, but to no avail. In the end my second daughter’s birth was fine, I was treated well, put in a private room and pretty much left to give birth with little intervention, just support. But I had to fight for that environment. I should have been allowed my first choice, as should all expectant mothers. It put a dark cloud over what should have been an exciting stress free experience. Good luck!”

“Given that we live in a developed country with rights for woman, it’s disgusting that we are no longer given the choice. It would be much safer and heathier, not to mention saving time and money for the NHS.”

“It is a service that should be offered as women have many reasons for wanting a home birth for me it would be because my labours are spontaneous.”
“Women shouldn't be forced to go to hospital. That's why we pay taxes isn't it? To get a service that serves people. Not serves itself and its own needs.”

“Home birthing is so beautiful and luxuriously wonderful. Please reinstate.”

“Homebirth rocks! It worked brilliantly for me and although I know it's not right for every expectant mother, having the choice is.”

“Women should not be forced to birth in hospital where they are more likely to end up with interventions that they may not want. Birthing at home should be available to all women in the UK.”

“In my opinion better organisation would enable home birth service”

“I feel mothers should be able to be offered this service if previous pregnancies have been trouble free and straight forward.”

“Please reinstate the option to have a home birth in West Norfolk - I believe there will be women whose mental and physical health will suffer without the option to choose where they give birth.”

“I was advised to have one if it was reinstated before I delivered my second child because my first labour was spontaneous. Unfortunately the service was not reinstated before I had my second child and I had another spontaneous labour in an ambulance for the second time, which was stressful. I was in labour 1 hour and 12 minutes so a midwife would have been able to get to me if the homebirth service had been available”
“Choice is so important and a well-supported home birth saves the NHS money and resources”

“Personally homebirth is not for me, however I feel it is important to at least have the choice, I have had friends who have had unplanned homebirths due to quick labours & have been advised that this may be the safest option for them in future labours. Especially for those people that live further away from the hospital so have to factor in travel time & childcare.”

“There should be the option for healthy women to give birth in the environment they feel most comfortable in, with proper support and care. There needs to be more support, more freedom and more choice.”

“I fully support your campaign to get the hospital to reinstate the home birth service because I believe it is a disgrace that women are being forced, through lack of choice, into paying for maternity care that the hospital should provide.”

“Removing the choice to have a home birth is a move that harms the wellbeing of mothers and baby. For some women, no matter how few, it is the difference between a good or bad birth. Removing medical assistance is no different to removing the ambulance service.”

“It is a fundamental right of a woman to have control over her own body, and to seek the support she needs at this very significant life moment, for the choices that are right for her.”

“Home birth is proven to be safe for the majority of pregnant women and should be offered as a choice for ladies with no complications in pregnancy”

“A water birth at home would be my ideal way to have my child”
“Mothers should, and deserve the right to choose where they birth. This has been taking away from me. I cannot afford an independent midwife and I labour too quickly to plan to birth elsewhere. The QE is failing mothers”

“The evidence is clear that homebirth offers the safest option for woman who have already had a baby. By removing this option from your women you are purposefully putting them at an increased risk of unwanted and unnecessary interventions. Why would you do that? Is it legal to remove the safest option for woman?”

“Women should have the choice to give birth in surroundings where they feel most comfortable”

“I wasn't allowed home birth with my first. Ideally I'd have a water birth at home”

“I believe every woman should have a choice on where to give birth whether it be at home or in the hospital. During pregnancy we are told we need to stay relaxed and calm for our baby but if someone doesn't get the choice on where to give birth they cannot.”

“Why women who have had to fork out for their own IM (independent midwife) at this time have not been refunded by the QEH/CCG is unbelievable. These births happened on their watch in their catchment. Women were forced to have to pay thousands of pounds due to their incompetence at keeping the basics of a contractual agreement afloat. Mismanagement and senior level squabbling should not be financed by the average women for a birth they believe in. Payment card schemes are available across the country and are signed off for use in maternity issues like this. I wish QEH had the balls to do something different just as they had them to cancel such an incredible service at a time when it should be growing not disappearing if national guidelines are ever to be followed.”
“In the days of the Iceni Team women were offered real choice in the Swaffham area. All women should have that choice.”

“It's a basic human right that has been taken away from women to make them give birth in hospital only! Disgusted!”

“I believe that women have a choice in where they give birth and by not providing a home birth service the QEH are depriving women of this choice”

“Everyone should be able to make that choice. By removing this service you have taken choices away”

“I had my last baby at the Rosie hospital Cambridge as I was not happy with the maternity services offered at QEH”

“I had my first homebirth in 2011 & it was my best experience. Was very unhappy I had that choice taken away with my following baby in 2014. I felt robbed... I believe if woman were more educated in being more confident in what their bodies can do, they would choose to homebirth more often. Fear seems to be put into women by people talking of their bad experiences in an environment (hospital), that isn’t where they most feel comfortable. NHS should go back to encouraging women TO stay at home to have their babies unless there are complications arising...My community midwives were the best! Because that’s where 'they' want to work in women’s homes, not stuck in hospitals.”

“Both my daughter and son were born at home and I couldn't imagine any other place for their siblings to be born. Hospitals I find distressing and upsetting as it is a place for ill people predominantly so I don't want something I consider natural, healthy and amazing to be in such a place (unless a medical emergency)” “Hospital is there for those that feel more relaxed in a medical environment. But home is statistically safer, easier and cheaper for the NHS. It is the choice that empowers.”
“It may only be 1% that want a homebirth but this option shouldn’t be taken away from them and surely with such a low number there is the training to do this. I believe the number is quite possibly much higher in which case they should be transparent about it and say they can’t cope with the volume. Taking away a human right and choice like this is not fair on future mothers and be able to do home births surely reduces costs like a hospital bed which are all too short! I know people that have waited for nearly 2 days to get a bed due to staff shortages, what’s worst in the long run for you?”

“We had a terrible experience first time round but obviously mainly for my wife. I was marginalised in hospital and felt unable to help my wife. She was very ill after the birth. I want to support her right to choose where she gives birth and how.”

“I am a mother who in the QEH catchment area due 13th September 2015. If there is any chance of me being assisted in a homebirth please let me know” (Details supplied)

“Whilst I am unable to have a homebirth myself, and I don’t think homebirth should be necessarily classed as a right, I do think that when possible, it should be made available as it is often a far better experience than hospital”

“My experience at QEH was awful. Instead of empowerment I received unprofessional attitude and was practically forced drugs. When it came to being hooked up for an epidural that I said I didn’t want, I had been saying for the last half hour that I needed to push and finally couldn’t stop myself. I had been fully dilated for ages!”

“Even though I myself would not want a homebirth I believe choice should be available for others”
“QEH offers an appalling service to new mums. I see hundreds of new mums and not many of them praise the service they receive on labour midwives before fantastic but not when in labour.... Most tell other mums to go to N&N or Addenbrookes as standard of care in these hospitals is perceived to be and has been for many much better”

“Please contact me if you would like any further views or information on my birth stories... (email address supplied)

“GP’s need convincing that there will be a choice for expectant mothers and not just told what will happen and automatically arrange hospital appointments”

“I have filled in this survey because I feel strongly about this issue. I live in the Norwich area now, but had my first home birth at Snettisham, in the KL area.”

“I am an independent midwife, and my business is actually benefitting from the QEH’s lack of a homebirth service. However, I fully support your campaign to get the hospital to reinstate the homebirth service because I believe it is a disgrace that women are being forced, through lack of choice, into paying for maternity care that the hospital should provide”

“There should be an option for healthy women to give birth in the environment they feel most comfortable in, with proper support and care. There should also be a change in allowing people to train as midwives part-time or at the local hospital alongside trained midwives to help make provision for this care and to create sufficient midwives for all women to have consistent care – I would have trained myself but the only option was full-time away from home and numbers on the course were limited also, which prevents me from following this path. There needs to be more support, more freedom, and more choice”
"I work as a doula and am saddened on behalf of local women who feel there is no choice to birth at home"

"I was really pleased with the help and support I received from the community midwives when I had my homebirths. The birth I had in hospital was awful, I firmly believe all women should have a choice"

"I am a community midwife who is currently working within the area. We are building statistics to show how many of our women wanted a homebirth and who are now choosing to go to a different unit such as one with a maternity-led unit to prove it is greater than 1%"

"The care directly after birth was awful at QEH. My husband was sent home immediately after birth and, as I’d had an emergency c-section, I could’ve done with somebody with me all night to pass me my baby and support me. The midwives made me feel like I was a burden."

"I am not personally affected, but believe women should have the choice. Although I appreciate times are hard and resources are precious and if the money can be used elsewhere in the NHS then it is not a bad thing. The NHS is an amazing service and we are very lucky and should appreciate it more"

"Choice is important and this survey might not pick up everyone who wants a homebirth"

"I would like a homebirth as I am keen on it being a family experience where my other children and parents/grandparents can also come and go freely as experience as little or as much of the birth as they choose"

"I think homebirth should be an option for anyone who has no reason to expect a problematic birth"
“I want to give birth in private and at mine and my babies’ own pace with experienced midwives not dependent on hospital shift patterns and handovers”

“My first birth was uncomplicated and would feel happy and comfortable at home”

“(I would like to give birth at home)... so I can definitely be in a birthing pool with a midwife not stuck on Castle Acre abandoned for hours on end”

“I was told on my first pregnancy that the option of homebirth was not available. Due to my first birth experience I was not going to be told no again and was willing to give birth alone at home – fortunately a midwife came to my aid just after the 2\textsuperscript{nd} birth. Literally minutes after I delivered my own baby”

“My husband works in Peterborough and I live 30 minutes away from QEH and give birth quickly”

“I do not want to give birth unassisted in the back seat of a car. There is no midwife-led birthing unit as an alternative to the obstetric unit. There are more interventions in obstetric units than home birth or MLUs”

“I had no issues during my pregnancy and was really disappointed that I couldn't have a home birth.”

“I got much better care from my community care midwife than from hospital staff”
“I would have certainly used this service as it was my wish for homebirth for my two children”

“I think home is the safest and cleanest place for me to give birth”

“Giving birth is just as natural as the conception, why the urge to lift it to a clinical procedure is beyond me. Being at home gives the mother control, comfort in her own surroundings, allows family to be involved, and furthermore saves the NHS bed spaces, limits the risk of hospital infection and most importantly allows family to be a family from the start”

“I feel it is a really good and better option for those without health complications, and I feel that women should have the choice and also the support for homebirth. It is far nicer to be able to rest at home after birth than in the unrelaxing environment of a hospital, and if there are other children, the family can be a family rather than juggling care and being separated”

“I had my first child age 39, very quick and straightforward. The midwife said she’d seldom seen such a strong womb, and joked to my husband ‘your wife should do this for a living!’ I tried to arrange a homebirth for my second child, three years later, but this cause so much stress (because of reluctant health professionals) that I ended up in hospital anyway, with forceps…”

“Last time I felt my mental health was used to trap me in hospital longer than needed. I was waiting for a psychiatric review for several days and was forgotten several times. I have a social phobia and was left away from my partner in a place that caused me a great deal of stress for longer than necessary”

“I am very surprised the national guidelines are not mentioned here as a reason – it is now guidelines that after first pregnancies the best place for women without issues is home birth”
“I believe every woman has a choice as to where she can give birth”

“Because many of my family are homebirths, and I’d like this option, it would be nice to say to my future children where they were born”

“I have considered an independent midwife but am concerned about the cost of this”

“I will certainly not be birthing in an environment that gives dirty bedding and takes away all confidence in my own body when I need it most!”

“Mothers should not be forced into debt or to move in order to be able to give birth at home but many will do this if it is the only way to avoid being institutionalised against their will”

“Birthing at a family members home who lives out of the area”

“I plan to call an ambulance and deliver at home”

“I will probably give birth in an ambulance again. Or if it was too quick then at home but with no midwife until emergency services get to me”

“I cannot afford an independent midwife!”

“I will be attending a different hospital for support and using an alternative address to have the homebirth”
“Not interested personally – but I would support any young woman who wished to consider these alternatives”

“I would go to a birthing centre but there was none close enough to make it a realistic option. My hospital birth experience was invasive, clinical, neglectful, frightening and led to extensive birth trauma. It’s not something I would repeat if I had a choice”

“If I were to have more children I would most definitely want to have the option of a home birth. Having experienced both hospital and home births I would always choose home over hospital in the future”

“I have written a letter to request help to have a homebirth but am unsure where to send it”

“If I was to have another baby I would like the option of a homebirth”

“I would expect to have a homebirth wherever I lived in the country and would only consider going to hospital if my or my baby’s life depended on it”

“I worry for my daughters that they may be deprived of what is a human right; the right to give birth at home”

“It is essential and lawful that women are given this choice. The management and subsequent medicalisation of childbirth has been a dangerous deviation in many cases and led to the erosion of confidence in this natural process”

“I don’t plan to have any more children but consider that the option to have a homebirth is essential for the mental and physical wellbeing of mothers to be.”
“I am desperate for a homebirth!”

“As a doula, I see the tension and anxiety created by the lack of choice for homebirth”

“My mother had a homebirth and she said she was far more relaxed and in control”

“I am not planning any more children but I know a lot of people that would prefer a homebirth”

“I would feel safer labouring at home with the intention of staying there for the birth unless something happened to require transfer to hospital”

“I would not choose to have my baby in hospital so no service is a big problem for me and I would like to work at QEH (midwife) but feel this suspension is unfair and I could not work for a trust that didn’t offer this service”

“I dearly would like to stay at home for my birth”

“I said I wanted a home birth and was told I was not able to. This is my third and final baby and I feel very disappointed not to be able to have the birth experience I want for my last child”

“Was told I could not have one, (due 13th June 2015). Sent letters and Bury St. Edmunds will do me a homebirth. 2 previous births were home births via Kings Lynn Hospital”

“Homebirth option was not available but told this very late in pregnancy. Caused undue worry”
“I had to repeat four times to my GP that I wanted to book for a homebirth. She kept ‘mis-hearing’ me”

“Fortunately I am between QEH and N&N, had previous homebirth with N&N, and will do the same this time as N&N has better facilities and homebirth service.”

“It is a parents right to choose where to give birth. I am definitely more relaxed at home which leads to an easier labour and birth for both mother and baby. Also the QEH’s rules on induction/epidurals and water births are ridiculous, especially for disabled mothers”

“I had 2 children born at home under QEH care in 2002 and 2004. The choice I made was the right one for our family and I had two straightforward births. The cost to QEH of my not birthing in hospital would have significant. In addition my own home was safer in terms of iatrogenic interventions and disease. This service should be available for all women who request it as per the NICE guidelines.”

“I requested a homebirth in 2013 for a June 2014 EDD but was told there was no service available. The only way we could have a homebirth was to do so with an IM or unattended”

“Strongly discouraged from homebirth by GP who simply said that it was not possible, this was at the confirmation of pregnancy stage. GP would not and did not want to discuss further, surprisingly the GP in question was female and also a mother herself!”
“I had my baby in 2010, a homebirth aided by this service. I am enormously glad to have benefitted from it before its suspension and feel desperately sad for women who are not granted that right”

“I am an experienced mother of both hospital and home birth. My hospital birth was so horrendous and damaging to both myself and my baby’s wellbeing, I insisted 2nd time around on a homebirth. My second birth was a magical and extremely different experience from that of my first. I therefore feel very strongly that women should be given the choice”

“I have previously given birth in an NHS hospital which turned out to be needlessly traumatic due to lack of care in a busy hospital where the labour ward was full when I arrived!”

“I have had five successful homebirths and would have been devastated if this option had been removed”
Petition

The following petition has been in the process of being collated since October 2014, from all over the QEH catchment area. It contains the names and addresses of every person who spoke out. They are from a broad demographic, and it was a pleasure to talk to every single person. Some had very much more to say than could be fitted on one small sheet of paper, and many were shocked, saddened and angry, in spite of not being mothers themselves.

The people who filled in this petition are not the same people who filled in the online survey.

Whether people themselves wanted a homebirth or not, they were vocal about the fact that every woman who wants one should have the right to make that decision for herself – not have it made for her by others.

It was interesting to note that many older women we spoke to had given birth at home and still spoke of it so many years later with a glint in their eye. I wonder if the same could be said in 50 years time by those women who were forced into hospital by the QE homebirth removal?
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<td>To much control</td>
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<td>Mother have rights</td>
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Petition to reinstate the homobirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

18th October 2014
Petition to reinstate the homedbirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

18th October 2014

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| able to be | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| do other | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
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| feel the | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
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| give birth | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| choose where to | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| move to the right | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
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| feel the women | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| give birth | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| choose where to | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| move to the right | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| freedom | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL
| feel the women should | C. Dainty | 25 Dickson KL

By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20,000 words of support for the reinstatement of a homedbirth service here in Norfolk.
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louise Kent</td>
<td>7 Geesell Way, Poplar, E12 9NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Burn</td>
<td>24 Cameron Close, E15 1SP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>17 St Edmunds Close, E3 7EN</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Alister</td>
<td>17 High St, Westcliff</td>
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<td>Hayley Nudds</td>
<td>15 Purfleet St, E15 1AL</td>
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<td>Muriel</td>
<td>1026 SDS, 17 High St, Westcliff</td>
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**Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn**

By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20,000 words of support for the reinstatement of a homebirth service here in Norfolk.

Women should have choice - should have the choice!

Midwives are crucial to the process. History matters.

Choice is crucial!
Petition to reinstate the homemirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

35 The Downs
N3 1DX
Cherry Willows
Beeston
E3

32, Kings Green
Pe3 6EF
Chandos Park
14 Church Rd

Mr S. Norgate
8 Shirley Green

Mrs J. Mace

Dear County Council Team,

I am concerned for the situation at the homemaker's service at QEH. My comment below explains my concern.

Affordability at the homemaker's service is quite high and the bill of £37 per week is quite high.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Comments (optional):

Coping NHS service in the area is not as good as it could be. The choice of service is quite limited and the service does not meet the needs of the patients.

[Signature]

First line of address/postcode:

Name:

Petition to reinstate the homemirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn.

18th October 2014
Petition to Reinstate the Homobirth Service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

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<tr>
<td>Tally Dillon</td>
<td>4 Newclose Hunterton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerrie Toll</td>
<td>29 Ranworth Kings Lynn</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need to be more support for mums wanting for home births away.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Hayman</td>
<td>71 Wheel Common Rd Tottenhill Kings Lynn Norfolk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disgrace this should not have been taken away.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Peony</td>
<td>12 Bell Meadors PL3 8AX</td>
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Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

Name

First line of address/Postcode

Signature

Comments (optional)

By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20,000 words of support for the reinstatement of a homebirth service here in Norfolk.
The resumption of a homobirthing service here in Norfolk.

By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20,000 words of support for

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Petition to reinstate the homobirthing service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn.

Name: [Signature] 1st line of address/postcode: [Address]  Comment (optional): [Optional comments]

18th October 2014
Petition to Reinstate the Homemother Service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn

18th October 2014
**Petition to reinstate the Homobirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn**

18th October 2014

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<td>Good luck!</td>
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<td>Don't let them win.</td>
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<td>Everyone has a right</td>
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<td>Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn</td>
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18th October 2014
The reinstatement of a homobirth service here in Norfolk.

By signing this petition, I consent to my comments being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20000 words of support for.

41

F. Morgan

17 Runnymede Ave

Hilary Carlyle

G. Stone

Andrew Russell

M. Warner

Ukranian Community

Eliagheli

Petition to reinstate the homobirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn

18th October 2014
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Turner Herbie</td>
<td>20 MIDDLEHEATH AL7 4DJ</td>
<td>Mr C Turner Herbie</td>
<td>C0000000000O0L We should have a choice!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorraine Clark</td>
<td>24 PARK ROAD HUNTSNANTON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Kollar</td>
<td>22 SMOETHOLCOMBS CL DICAMANTON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracey Latos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alix Carner</td>
<td>7 BROADFIELD PLACE ST ALBANY</td>
<td></td>
<td>Should have a choice. Should be couple/women's choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Wright</td>
<td>HAKES HOUSE PE15 0AT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dawn Styles</td>
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<td>Choices.</td>
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*By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20,000 words of support for the reinstition of a homebirth service here in Norfolk.*
By signing this petition, I consent to my comment being added to a document called Birthplace Matters, which already contains 20000 words of support for the reinstatement of a homebirth service here in Norfolk.

I think women should get the choice.

**Comments (optional)**

I'm very against this.

**Signature**

1st Line of address/Postcode

Name

Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

18th October 201
The reinstatement of a homemaker service here in Norfolk.

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<tr>
<td>Choice of choice: We should have a choice.</td>
<td>S. Shrop</td>
<td>1 Mill Lane</td>
<td>Simon Cassidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of choice: We should have a choice.</td>
<td>L. S. Bridge</td>
<td>55 Jessy Avenue</td>
<td>Lisa Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of choice: We should have a choice.</td>
<td>V. Bridge</td>
<td>1 Mill Lane</td>
<td>Lisa Bridge</td>
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Petition to reinstate the homemaker service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn.
Petition to reinstate the homembed service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

Name

First line of address/Postcode

Signature

Comments (optional)

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<td>If you want to...</td>
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<td>I need this service</td>
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Petition to reinstate the homelbirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn
Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn 2014 December

Comments (optional):

Signature: 145 - Peit 7ly
First line of address/postcode: Olivia O'Kelly

3030 4020 4040
Name:

Mama
46 High St
I'll remi 1050 4049
Peri 70

Emma Rose
Sarah Louise

Hannah Hardy
Kiera Murray

Journal

Deneille

Susan Case

Bring back the choice.

For women & their children.

The midwife is missed. Patients need the support of homebirth.

Women need the choice.

Signature: 

Date: 12-07-14

47
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<th>First line of address/postcode</th>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up please. You do not need to charge the house. Every woman deserves the best.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lynne Rosecock</td>
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<tr>
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Further reading

Am I allowed?  
AIMS

New Active Birth  
Janet Balaskas

The Baby’s Coming  
Virginia Howes

Birth Space, Safe Place  
Adela Stockton

Birth Crisis  
Sheila Kitzinger

The Heart in the Womb  
Dr. Amali Lokugamage

Sensitive Midwifery  
Caroline Flint

The Father’s Homebirth Book  
Leah Hazard

Birth Matters  
Ina May Gaskin

When survivors give birth  
Penny Simpkin

Birth Rediscovered  
Sheila Kitzinger

Gentle birth, Gentle Mothering  
Dr. Sarah Buckley
Websites

http://www.aims.org.uk/

www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/

www.adelastocktoncounselling.net

www.homebirth.org.uk/

http://www.birthrights.org.uk/

http://homebirthersandhopefuls.com/

http://www.birthchoiceuk.com/

http://www.nct.org.uk/birth-topics/home-birth

http://www.oneworldbirth.net/

Clickable link to the official page for Birmingham South Central CCG Homebirth Service Relaunch