

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!

Quote from World Health Organization "Having a Baby in Europe",
European Regional Office, 1985

"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



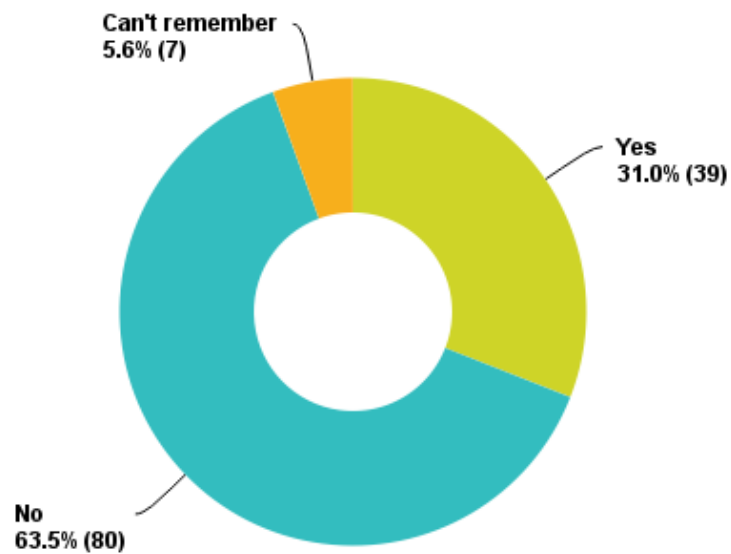
Are you ...?

Answered: 169 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
An expectant mother	13.0%	22
Planning a pregnancy	13.6%	23
Previously had a baby, whose birth was affected by the homebirth suspension	23.7%	40
A father affected by the homebirth suspension	1.2%	2
A health professional	17.8%	30
Other	30.8%	52
Total		169

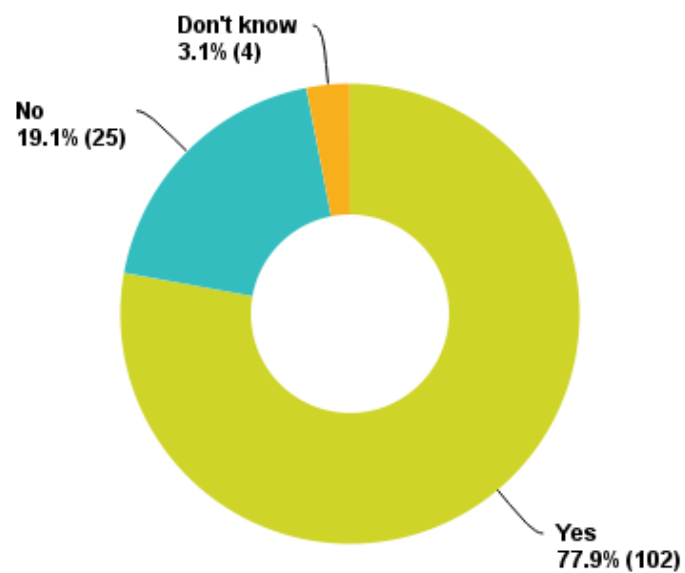
Have you been offered a homebirth or discussed one at any of your midwife appointments?

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

Answer Choices	Responses	
Concerned about safety	33.3%	15
Lack of access to additional pain relief e.g. epidural	11.1%	5
Lack of access to medical professionals	35.6%	16
Lack of space at home	2.2%	1
I haven't considered having a homebirth before	8.9%	4
Other	48.9%	22
Total Respondents: 45		

If the homebirth service remains unavailable at the QEH, will you be considering any of the following?

Answered: 123 Skipped: 47

Answer Choices	Responses	
Homebirth with an independent midwife	46.3%	57
Birthing at the QEH	39.0%	48
Birthing at an alternative hospital/birthing centre	33.3%	41
Freebirth (unassisted)	25.2%	31
Other	18.7%	23
Total Respondents: 123		

If you want a homebirth, what are your reasons for wanting one?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 50

Answer Choices	Responses	
I feel safer and more comfortable at home	61.7%	74
I have previously given birth very quickly	31.7%	38
I have other children and childcare is not easily available	30.8%	37
I want the service back because I am a health professional who believes in choice	27.5%	33
I am frightened of hospital following a previously bad experience	25.8%	31
Other	23.3%	28
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 healthier, 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 1hour 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 2nd 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?

18th October 2014






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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
			
E. Briden	5018 3ND		
G. Kay	Sutton Bridge		
P. Webb	MRECH		
L. Long	MARECH		
C. Wames	7 Inglestone, Snettisham.		Its much control mother have rights
Z. Lester	2 Meridian	Z. Lester	
R. Lester	2 Meridian Wells, Holbeck		
D. Hester	4 PE33 0TA		

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Shanice Burch Christen Manning Nina Harbourn Vanessa Wrix G. Marwick	41 Corander Rd, PE38 9UB 31 TYNDALE, NOETH 2 The Lawns, Wisbeck 4 Ruby Ave K/L 25 Dickfoss. K/L	   	I feel women should have the right to choose where to give birth. I feel that women should have right to birth their baby where they want (etc. home) freedom of choice.
C. Clave	The Firs School Rd	C. Clave	If you want a home birth you should all be able to people should the right.
G Clarke J Watson	22 New Rd PE20 9AN 51 Marlborough St PE34 4NE	 J. Watson	

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Louise Kuntze	7 Gaiswell Way King's Lynn PE30 3SD	L Kuntze	Women should have choices.
Christie	Nuthall, PE32 2PP	Christie	Should have the choice!
Samantha Towells	75 The Lammas Mundford IP26 5DS	S Towells	Choice -
Na	17 HIGH ST METHEN IP26 4NT	Na	CHOICE!!
Sara Burr Dorcas Peers Holland	17 St Winifreds Close	S Burr	CHOICE!
Haley Nudds	24 Cameron Close	Haley	Midwives are crucial. Stopping history in the process. Choice matters
Maika Henri	15 Furflack St, PE30 1ER	Maika	Freedom of choice.

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Mrs BAKERWELL	35, THE DOWNS NG11 7DX		HOME BIRTHS ARE BENEFICIAL
Mrs BAKERWELL	35, THE DOWNS NG11 7DX		
VERITY CONNOLLY	2, FERRIS CLOSE PE30 3SY		Cutting NHS services = less choice - shop the destruction of our NHS.
Jenny Taylor	Cherry willows PE14 0HG	JT Taylor	
Kelly Davies	32, Kings Green PE30 4SD		
Lorraine East	63, Gore Road BS PE13 5AT		
Clare Hallett	14 Church Rd Clenchwarton PE34 4EA		
Anne Bedford	34, Fernay Rd LS4 6ST		
Mrs D. Norgate	8 Shire Green. LS4 6ST		every one should be give a chance

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Kyomi Cooper	6 Spring Sedge	K Cooper	
Veraice Elbowin	240 Boston RD.	V. Elb.	
Lundy Steel	89, Station Road	L. Steel	
Samantha Brown.	8 Paradise Road	S Brown	
Michelle Hutchins	19 GRAY FENNA	M Hutchins	
M Vanstone	18 Howard Acres	M Vanstone	
Gwenda	25 Fenton Close	Gwenda	
Gwenda	81 colby house	Gwenda	
Gwenda	12 Highgate	Gwenda	
Mary, Clavan	2, Brown Close	M Clavan	
Shelly Dyer	1, Willow E11	S Dyer	
Shirley Dyer		S Dyer	
Jenny Gurnard	34 Wicacott Rd	J Gurnard	
Victoria Roberts	82A St Peters Road	V Roberts	
Sadie Wright	1 Mill Lane PE37 7EU	S Wright	Women deserve a choice.

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Alexa Penny	2 Bee Meadows PC31 8AR		
Sarah Hayman	Scarborough House 71 Whin Common Rd Tottenham, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0RS		Disgrace this has been taken away.
Kerrie Toll	29 Ramworth Kings Lynn PE30 4XD		Need to be more support for mums wanting home births.
Tally Dillon	4 Manor Close Hunstanton		Everyone should be able to give birth how they wish.

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Roger Taylor J. Lucas J. Lucas A. Let	Cherry Willows PE14 0HG 18. Hawthorn Parade 20 Church Lane Fellingby	Roger Taylor J. Lucas	Give couples the choice.
Theresa White Hollie Jodie Lauren Miller	63 Sorely Hill Leamington 17 Hall View Road Stutton Road Flat 1 Cavendon House Deringham Rd 92 Wostway PE34 308 " " "	Theresa White Hollie Jodie Lauren Miller	
O. Young A. Young			

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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)
Anna Farnham	34 Walsingham RD PE14 8SD	AS	
Amy Knight	11 Saxton Court Walsingham	A. Knight	
Amy Martin	71 Cockfitts PE13 2TS	A Martin	
Helen Butler	11 Birch Grove Elm Walsingham PE14 0AF	H Butler	
Teresa Glendon	11 Cottier Drive Walsingham, Eng.	T Glendon	
Carl Heywood	11 11	C Heywood	
Eleanor Jones	11 Walsingham EAST WALSINGHAM PE3 21PX	E Jones	
Beth Atkins	2 Felbrig Close South Wootton PE30 3UY	B Atkins	

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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)
Louisa Harvey-Baill	31 Laverghon Common PE13 5DG		
Melissa Dudley	166 Elm Rd, March PE13 5DG	M. C. Dudley	THIS IS COOL
Ethan Dudley	166 Elm Rd March	E. C. Dudley	
S. Allsop	133 Bagby Rd		
N. Lord	117 Badgersley Rd.	N. Lord	
INDIE		INDIE	
Emma Cole	9 Troopers Drive		
Bethany Clark	24 Park Road	Bethany Clark	
Jade Cooke	24 Penn Road	J. Cooke	
Ruth Watkins	47 WATER HAVES CROFT	Ruth Watkins	
Emma Withers	92 Hurlington Square	Emma Withers	
Sarah Hainsworth	53 TOTTENHILL	Sarah Hainsworth	
VIKORICIA PETROS	8 CINCE'S GREEN		
	PE30 4SQ		It's a good cause

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Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
J P SIMPSON PJ Dudley Nathan Kneer nancy freear matt Richards Jane Whitfield	13, SPINNEY CR. 166 elmd, March 6 Spring sedge a church close 25 windle street 17 wings RD	J P Simpson PJ Dudley Nathan Kneer Nancy freear Matt Richards Jane Whitfield	Good luck. dont let them win.
Helen A Reed Sharon Stebbing	55 Lynn RD, L25 4 8 Manor Close Fakenham	Helen A Reed Sharon Stebbing	EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT
Sarah White. Loran James	PE30 5RF (53) 53 SONDERS PE30 5RF	Sarah White. Loran James	
Danny Gurnwin Sylvia Procter	2 Beorn Close SOUTH WOOTTON 1 The willows	Danny Gurnwin Sylvia Procter	

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18th October 2014








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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
KATEA McATEER	165 BURNTHOUSE CREES PE33 9LF	K. McAt	
JAMAH POOLE	1 STATION ROAD LITTLEPORT 2A MARSHES PE36 5PB	J. Poole	
Born Smith	13 Rushmeadon Downham MKT	B. Smith	Feeling away our night to birth children!
Blie yusuf			
NAS Yusuf	13 RUSHMEADON CRESCENT DOWNHAM MARKET PE13 30G	N. Yusuf	WE HAD 2 OUT OF 3 AT HOME - MUCH BETTER FOR EVERYONE!!
P.M. Bates	1E30 - 4BB	P.M. Bates	Woke Done
P. PHILLIPS			
D. Thwower.	85 FRONT RD PE13 4JD	D. Thwower	

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18th October 2014





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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
ELIZABETH BARLOW Megun Westbury	WINDY NOOK, MILL LANE PE13 5JP.		To take away the basic human rights of every woman is a disgrace.
Megan Watson	9 little Walsingham close south western PE30 3TF		Big supporter, of being comfortable.
Amanda Pearson	73 Riverside North Lynn PE30 2TF		Big Supporter people need to feel comfortable
G Stouns	43 Woodland Gardens, North Western. PE30 3RX.		Women should have choice. I was lucky enough to have a home delivery.
Hilda Park	60 Wadpole Rd CT Yaremouth NR30 4NF		"
P. Harber	37 Adedison Rd Ct Yarmouth NR30 1QJ 21 Teningson Ave PE30 2QG		"
			"

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18th October 2014

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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Turner HERBIE Lorraine Clark	20 middlebld AL7 4DJ	Mrs Turner HERBIE	C O O O O O O O O O
Amos Kellen NICK LADDS	24 Free Road Huntington 22 Smallwood Road Cirencester		WE SHOULD HAVE A CHOICE!!
Alice Carter Anber Wright	7 Bradford Place Stoke Ferry "	 	Should have a choice. Should be couple/monous choice
Dawn Styles	HAKES HOUSE PE15 0AT		CHOICES.

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18th October 201





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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Louise CORNER	17 GREEBE ESTATE PE34 4SN	L. Corner	1 Think women should get the choice.
Mike Abel	16 TOLLESTON CREEKE	Mike Abel	
Leon Turvey	6 PROVIDENCE STREET	Leon Turvey	
James Edwards	18 GORDON CT	James Edwards	1 was born at home
Joyce Corneal	11 PREMIER MILLS T-3-C.	Joyce Corneal	
Louisa Riches	25 LINDWOLD STREET	Louisa Riches	
Ami Howard	12 SHIRE GREEN	A. Howard	
Emma Miller	99 WISSEY RD	Emma Miller	
Megan Miller	21 WALLACE CLOSE	Megan Miller	
Mike Hailey	7 LOUTH COURT	Mike Hailey	2 was a home birth.
Aisha Hailey	7 GRANTING COURT	A. Hailey	
Nicola Eagleson	3a WILKINS RD HUNDERTON	Nicola Eagleson	
Michelle Pomeroy	1 FIDONAS COURT	Michelle Pomeroy	

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18th October 20

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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Simon Caseley	7 Mill Lane		Women should have a choice.
LYNSEY BUTTS	151 LOKE RD		
Isobel Fienmuth	PE305QT		
Vinny Styles	PE305AT		
Sara Shipley	PE13 5QY	S. Shipley	We should have a choice. Repent choices without let should be able to choose.

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

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December
2014






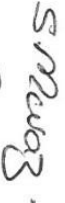


Petition to reinstate the homebirth service at Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Ashon Kramarchuk	3 Modernworks Cottages Gayton	A Kramarchuk	We need this service if we want it.
Pau Fossie	62, Broad St. Gt.	<i>[Signature]</i>	
Philby Fuggle	62 Broad St, Ely	Philby Fuggle	
Genma Cole-Reese	14 Sandringham Drive Dunston Wt.	Genma Cole-Reese	
Jo Argent	Ripps Cottage Bells Brow PE14 9TA	Jo Argent	
Monley Williams	129 Main Road PE13 4SA	<i>[Signature]</i>	Choice!!!
S. Kilsbance	7 St. Augustine's Rd	S. A. Kilsbance	

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





December
2014

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Olivia O'Neill	145 - PE14 7LY		Women <u>need</u> the Support of Homebirth Services.
Vivienne Manning	1 - PE30 5NX		Women should be given the choice as to where and how to give birth.
Jan Burton	PE33 9RG		women should have choice!
Kirsten Murray	77 - PE31 6LA		Cuts should not be made to a service which promotes the physical & mental health of women & their children.
Hannah Hardy	56 Norwich Road. NE27 0HD		
SARAH TURNER	PE14 7QT		
Suzanne East	19 Gosmill, PE30 4QG		
Danielle Wheeler	40 Hight St MANBA		Bring back the choice.

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December
2014

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

Name	First line of address/postcode	Signature	Comments (optional)
Kirsty Peacock	14 Peterhouse Crescent PE15 8QT		Every woman deserves the right to choose the manner of her birth. You do not "allow" it.
Paul Easesy	129 Teunson Ave PE30 2AT	P Easesy	
Dionne Mitchell	100A Marsh Rd. PE34 4LA	D. Mitchell	
Rebecca Griffiths	1 Moyles Cottage, PE12 0HE		
Natasha Morgan	86 The Russells	N.M.M.	
Neil Morgan	111	N Morgan	
JANE WICKER	29 RESSINGTON PE15 8UR	Joel Wick	
KORALIA HEDDERSON	158 High Rd. PE13 4RS	KH	
CATHERINE HIGGINS	156 Elm Road PE13 2SG	C Higgins	
Rob Higgins	156 Elm Road PE13 2SG	Rob Higgins	
Mike Mccann	1 Elm Cottage EN9 3AD		
Alison Atkin	4 Lydney Close		
Chris Sanders	4 Lydney Close	Chris Sanders	

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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](#)