

Description

RCM comments on Panorama's 'Midwives under Pressure'

?Date: 29 January 2024

Following the broadcast of Panorama – Midwives under Pressure by the BBC, Gill Walton, Chief Executive of The Royal College of Midwives (RCM), said:

"The testimonies of the midwives, the women, and their families are heartbreaking and must be the catalyst for change. We have heard too many stories and read too many reports all raising the same red flags around staff shortages, lack of training and concerns raised that are ignored by those in charge, yet still there is little progress.

> The NHS must work harder to foster positive work environments where maternity staff feel comfortable flagging concerns or escalating issues.

"Too often, midwives who raise concerns about the care and safety are ignored or even find themselves subject to reprisal from managers. The NHS must work harder to foster positive work environments where maternity staff feel comfortable flagging concerns or escalating issues. This is something the RCM is actively advocating, with our Standing Up for High Standards programme.

"Trust boards need to be far more effective in interrogating the data they receive and acting upon it. To do this, they need to have midwifery expertise at board level to make recommendations for improvements and learn from mistakes quickly.

> It's imperative that midwives, alongside the whole maternity team, have time to train, learn and improve their knowledge and skills.

"Staffing shortages undoubtedly compromise safety, something that's long been highlighted by the RCM, and by many reviews into failing maternity services undoubtedly compromise safety. Understaffing impacts the skill mix that's available for any one shift and also means staff don't have time to undertake vital training. It's imperative that midwives, alongside the whole maternity team, have time to train, learn and improve their knowledge and skills.

"The Government has to listen to those staff and women who are working in and using our maternity services and it has to act. We have had review after review laying out the same conclusions and recommendations, yet still the Government shows no urgency. Maternity staff and the women and families in their care deserve better."

ENDS

For interview requests and to contact the RCM Media Office call 020 7312 3456, or email me***@*****rg.uk

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