

Template letter to send to your Assembly Member

* Please note that you can send this letter as an individual member of the WI or, if everyone agrees, on behalf of your WI



Dear [Name of AM],

I am writing to you [on behalf of/ as a member of] WI to call for your support in pressing the Welsh Government to increase investment in maternity services and take steps to ensure the midwifery workforce is sustained at an adequate level.

The WI is the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK with over 220,000 members in 6,300 Institutes across England, Wales, and the Islands. In Wales we have 16,000 members and about 500 WIs. At the 2012 Annual Meeting, WI members voted to campaign to increase investment and support for the midwifery workforce to address our concerns about the state of maternity care. Since then, the NFWI campaign for 'More Midwives' has galvanised a national conversation about maternity services and members across Wales have welcomed the Welsh Government's continued commitment to its maternity strategy and its increased investment in perinatal mental health support.

On 17 January of this year, the NFWI released our second report into women's experiences of maternity services. The report – *Support Overdue (2017)* – demonstrates that while mothers in the UK enjoy some of the highest quality maternity care in the world, too many women are being let down at the moments when it matters the most. We found that staffing shortages are leading to widespread, clinically unsafe conditions in labour wards across the country and that nearly 1 in 5 women will not be able to see a midwife as often as they require in the postnatal period, which results in other parts of the NHS, such as A&E, having to step in to plug the gaps.

NFWI-Wales is calling on the Welsh Government and health boards to prioritise maternity services and ensure that midwives are supported to stay in the profession and provide the high quality care that women and their families deserve and rely on.

We urge you to support our call to ensure the sustainability of the midwifery workforce and improve maternity services and we would be very grateful if you would be willing to raise this matter with the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being, and Sport. It would also be helpful if you could raise this issue with local health boards so that we can establish what action is being taken at a local level.

We are aware that the NHS in Wales is going through a transformative period. The prudent health care agenda will only be realised if maternity services are upgraded and organised so that mums are supported and babies are afforded the best start in life. We are concerned that the Welsh maternity strategy has not been updated to reflect new evidence about maternity staff planning, new trends in midwife retention, and what women themselves are saying needs to change. The voices of women

must remain at the fore of the Welsh Government's maternity strategy and we hope, in that spirit, you will act to ensure that the findings of this report are implemented.

[I/We] look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,