

**Template letter to send to your representative for members in England**

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

Dear [Name of MP],

I am writing to you [on behalf of / as a member of \_\_\_\_\_\_] WI to call for your support in pressing the Government to end England’s 3,500 midwife shortage.

The WI is the largest voluntary women’s membership organisation in the UK with over 220,000 members in 6,300 Institutes across England, Wales, and the Islands. At the 2012 NFWI 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 our research into the provision of maternity care featured prominently in NHS England’s *Five Year Forward View*. We have welcomed the positive developments in maternity policy in the years since our first report, most notably the publication of the National Maternity Review which sets out a positive vision for the future of maternity care.

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 continue to 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. We are concerned that the midwife shortage is compromising safety and in the context of a continued high birthrate this situation is not sustainable.

The NFWI is calling on the Government and commissioners to end the chronic shortage of midwives 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 end the shortage of midwives and to press the Government for action, and we would be very grateful if you would be willing to raise this matter with the Secretary of State for Health. It would also be helpful if you could raise this issue with local health commissioners so that we can establish what action is being taken at a local level.

We are aware that in the wake of the National Maternity Review, maternity services are at a critical juncture. The Review sets out an inspiring vision for the future of maternity care, but we are concerned that these aspirations will not be realised without addressing the midwife shortage. The voices of women must remain at the fore of the implementation of the Review and we hope, in that spirit, you will act to ensure that the findings in this report are implemented and the WI’s clarion call for more midwives is answered.

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

Yours sincerely,

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