



Invitation to take part in research on the rights-issues which arise during maternity care for women experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage

I am writing to ask for help recruiting women who face severe and multiple disadvantage, and who have had a baby in the last 2 – 3 years to take part in a research study aimed at improving maternity care for the most vulnerable women.

The study is a one-year research project funded by Trust for London, and is a collaboration between the charities Birthrights and Birth Companions. Birthrights is the UK's only organisation dedicated to improving women's experience of pregnancy and childbirth by promoting respect for human rights. Birth Companions is the UK's leading organisation supporting women experiencing severe disadvantage during pregnancy, birth and early parenting.

The research project will investigate the human rights challenges experienced during maternity care by women facing severe and multiple disadvantage. The project will involve interviewing women who have recent experience of maternity care whilst facing severe and multiple disadvantage. Women will be asked about their stories and experiences of maternity care, and human rights issues – for example, issues around respectful care, choice, dignity and privacy – will be identified from those stories. I will also run focus groups with specialist and non-specialist midwives and birth supporters, and with social workers to understand the challenges they face in supporting women with multiple, complex needs. I aim to identify the most severe and most frequent rights-challenges faced by women experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage, compared to women in the general population. The project will then make recommendations for local and national policy and practice change. It is being overseen by a steering group including specialist midwives, researchers and women with lived experience.

I am now looking to recruit women to take part in the interviews. I would like to interview around 15 women in total. I would like to speak to women aged 18 or above who are not currently pregnant, but who have had a baby in the last 2 – 3 years in London. I would like to speak to women from a range of backgrounds and multiple needs. I welcome hearing from women who do, and do not, currently have their child



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living with them. UK residency status or whether the woman is entitled to free NHS care does not matter for this project.

For each interview, I will agree a safe and comfortable location with each woman, local to where she lives or accesses services. The project is able to cover travel costs and we can offer light refreshments during interviews. It can also cover childcare costs. Female interpreters will be sought if needed. Women will be offered a £10 thank you for taking part. I am happy for women to be accompanied, for example by a support worker, if they prefer. I recognise that some of the issues that may be raised may be very upsetting and delicate. Women will have a choice about how much they wish to say, and it will be clear that they may stop at any time, or withdraw from the study at any time until the report is finalised, if they wish. Women will be given time to discuss anything that has worried or upset them at the end of the interview. It will be made clear that all information will be kept confidential unless anything discussed gives rise to safeguarding concerns.

Enclosed is a cover letter and participant information sheet for women who might be interested in taking part. I would be very happy to discuss further if that would be helpful, or for you to identify women who might be interested, and share the letter and information sheet with them.

I would also be interested in hearing from any midwives or social workers who are interested in taking part in focus groups to discuss their experiences of supporting women with multiple and complex needs, and can provide more information on this aspect of the study.

Thank you for your time. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you would like to know more. I would be very happy to hear if there are other individuals or organisations who should also be contacted about participation.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Brione

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