



'Born Homeless?'

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Safeguarding Midwife

GSTT

In 2023 what does homeless mean?

In 2019 the Royal College of Midwives released

guidance for midwives regarding their responsibility to enquire, support and refer pregnant women who are at risk of homelessness. This guidance was to support

But what does *being homeless* look like in 2023?

Single Homeless people living in hostels, shelters and temporary accommodation

Statutorily Homeless people without current accommodation or at immediate risk of losing accommodation

Concealed Households; sharing overcrowding or unsuitable accommodation

Homeless but not *Roofless*; sofa surfing, living with friends, family or strangers. Accommodation can be a transaction and risks of violence, exploitation or any other illegal activity

How and when should midwives approach discussions around accommodation?

Four times as a minimum in pregnancy; booking, 28 weeks, 36 weeks and before postnatal discharge.

Open ended questions:

Can you tell me about your current accommodation?

Who are you living with?

How secure is your long term accommodation?

Have you had any thoughts about where you will spend your first few weeks with your new baby
Pregnant clients may

Have you thought about where your baby will sleep?
Housing concerns can

Do you have any worries or concerns?

feel concerned about disclosing their housing or accommodation worries as it can be viewed as a child

be complicated by domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, rent and mortgage arrears, overcrowding, NRPF, poor housing

protection concern

conditions, possession orders

Claire's Story... *hidden homeless*

Booked at 14 weeks

Address in East
London

Missed multiple
appointments for
OGTT

'sofa surfing' –
unwelcome and
uncomfortable

Pandemic issues

Employment
terminated

Evicted from rented
accommodation

Multiple finance
issues

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○ Barriers to
maternity
care =
barriers to
parenthood

- Multiple missed appointments – long term affect on maternal and fetal wellbeing
- Unable to maintain a healthy diet
- Deterioration in mental health in pregnancy
- Attachment and bonding with baby
- Preparations for baby

Professional Curiosity

- If we do not ask questions we do not get answers – but we seek to understand and not interrogate
- Tenacity helps us to support our pregnant clients and then empowers them to be able to care for their babies
- Why do clients book late?
- Why do they chose hospitals not near their address?
- Who is their support network? What does *'Support'* mean?
- Where is the GP
- Have we spoken to the health visitor?
- Robust interagency working and handover

You do not need a fancy nursery ... we can support you with what is available to help your baby be safe, grow, and thrive.