



Medway trials Call the Midwife-style kit bags

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554 words

7 March 2019

The Medway Messenger

MEDWAM

English

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A group of midwives in Kent are to be among some of the first in the country to trial new Call the Midwife-style equipment bags after it was revealed some professionals are forced to carry what they need in clinical waste bags.

For the first time in its 70-year history, the NHS is issuing identical home delivery bags for community midwives, which are going to be put to the test by six health trusts including Medway.

The move is in response to a national survey by mother and baby charity **Baby Lifeline** which revealed big differences in what community midwives in the country are carrying and how their kit bags are funded.

The survey, conducted by the organisation which provides training for healthcare professionals who may attend births outside hospitals, revealed midwives' kits ranged from plastic clinical waste bags holding a few bits and pieces, to fully equipped tool chests - with many admitting to having to fund equipment themselves.

Starting this April, 42 new bags, unveiled at a launch event in London with Call the Midwife actresses Linda Bassett and Leonie Elliott, are being issued by **Baby Lifeline** to midwives in the six chosen NHS trusts.

The rucksack-style bag with adjustable straps and optional wheels is compartmentalised and colour coded to make it easier to identify equipment quickly.

The bag includes everything from scissors to cut the cord, to a hat and towels to dry and warm a newborn baby, as well as equipment for emergencies.

Baby Lifeline chief executive Judy Ledger said: "**Baby Lifeline** provides specialist emergency training to community midwives and paramedics. From the training provided, frontline community midwives reiterated the same thing that nationally, there is no standardisation in what equipment is carried to community births. **Baby Lifeline** believes that every woman who gives birth in the community, no matter where in the country she is, should have access to the same essential equipment through her midwife.

"Equally, every midwife should have access to the equipment needed to deliver safe and effective care. This is what we are working to achieve through this project. The trusts taking part in the trial are: Barts Health NHS Trust; Hywel Dda University Health Board; Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Medway NHS Foundation Trust; North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, and partners City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust. The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust was also part of the development team.

The bags have been funded by charity Fawsley Birth Centre., which promoted high standards of education in matters affecting ante natal and post natal care of mothers and babies, and when the trustees closed Fawsley Birth Centre, they chose the community midwives' bags project in which to invest their retained funds.

Judy Ledger added: "We are working very closely with community midwifery teams from six NHS Trusts to trial **Baby Lifeline** approved bags to demonstrate the value of standardisation. What's very important is that we've also developed the right processes to make sure the contents are replenished and kept up to date. "

"Our dedicated health professionals have total confidence the trial will be a success, and they hope that other NHS Trusts across the country will adopt these bags."

Document MEDWAM0020190308ef370000n