

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2019**

## **TV STARS LAUNCH NATIONAL COMMUNITY MIDWIVES' BAGS**

*A community midwives' national survey shows that 40% of current home birth bags and equipment don't meet their needs.*

**London, 1 March 2019** – British TV stars Linda Bassett (*Calendar Girls*, *Call the Midwife* and *Lark Rise to Candleford*) and Leonie Elliott (*Black Mirror*, *Call the Midwife* and *Danny and The Human Zoo*) will today launch the trial of Baby Lifeline's new standardised home delivery bag for community midwives. Baby Lifeline Ambassador and Ormer Mayfair's celebrity chef Shaun Rankin will host and prepare lunch for the stars and the six midwives leading the trial.

Mother and baby charity [Baby Lifeline](#) provides ongoing training for maternity healthcare professionals, including midwives and paramedics who may attend births outside hospitals. Over the past two years Baby Lifeline has trained over 1,000 community midwives across the UK. Its expert professionals of frontline midwives, paramedics and obstetricians came to realise that there was an urgent need to standardise equipment carried by midwives to births in the community, as well as the processes to keep the equipment and supplies up to date.

Baby Lifeline's survey of frontline community midwives reported that 35% of respondents had to buy their home birth bag themselves, 30% felt the bag/container they used wasn't safe, and 27% felt that they don't carry all the equipment they need. Significantly, 40% said their bag didn't meet all their needs.

Some midwives had to supply their own equipment and bags, while others had bags provided through their employer. Bags could range from plastic clinical waste bags holding a few bits and pieces, to a fully equipped tool chest, and midwives want to change this situation.

Baby Lifeline Founder and 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.”

Judy Ledger continued, “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.”

Starting in April 2019, 42 of these bags will be trialled by frontline midwives in six UK trusts. 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.

Our expert working group has developed a rucksack style bag with adjustable straps and optional wheels. It 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 the newborn baby, as well as equipment for emergencies that, although rare, can occur.

The project is funded by Fawsley Birth Centre, a charity which promoted high standards of education in all matters affecting the ante natal, peri natal and post natal care of mothers and babies. When the Trustees decided to close the Fawsley Birth Centre, they wanted to choose a suitable project to invest their retained funds in. After a long search they donated the funds to Baby Lifeline for the community midwives’ bags.

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## **About Baby Lifeline**

Baby Lifeline is a unique national charity supporting the care of pregnant women and newborn babies across the UK and worldwide. It raises funds to purchase much needed maternity equipment and is one of the leading providers of training for maternity health care professionals. It has attracted the support of leading health figures who sit on the charity's board, and A list celebrities as Patrons, including Dame Judi Dench, David Tennant and Shaun Rankin.

For more information please visit: [www.babylifeline.org.uk](http://www.babylifeline.org.uk)  
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