



# Trustees' Annual Report for the period

		Period start date			Period end date		
<b>From</b>	01	April	2015	<b>To</b>	31	March	2016

## Section A Reference and administration details

**Charity name** Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services

**Other names charity is known by** AIMS

**Registered charity number (if any)** 1157845

**Charity's principal address** 5 St Ann's Court, Grove Road  
 Surbiton  
 Surrey  
**Postcode** KY6 4BE

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Beverley Beech	Chair		
2	Deborah Chippington Derrick	Vice Chair		
3	Shane Ridley	Publications Secretary		
4	Gill Boden			
5	Emma Ashworth			
6	Chloe Bayfield			
7	Dorothy Brassington	Treasurer		
8	Virginia Hatton	Secretary		
9	Ceri Durham		Appointed 12/09/2015	
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## Section B Structure, governance and management

### Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	AIMS is a Charity Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Trustees are appointed in accordance with the terms of the constitution

### Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

## Section C Objectives and activities

### Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The objects of AIMS are, insofar as the following relate to improvement of the provision of maternity and maternity related health services, pregnancy, childbirth, the postnatal period and early parenthood:

1. to advance, preserve and protect the mental, emotional and physical health of women;
2. to advance, preserve and protect the mental, emotional and physical health of families, parents and children;
3. to advance the education of the public, including healthcare professionals;
4. to promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms) in the United Kingdom

**Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)**

The provision of high quality, safe and legally compliant maternity services is for the public benefit as it is in society's interest that maternity services function in such a way that the mental, emotional and physical health of pregnant women, parents, children and their families are advanced and preserved. All our activities have been geared towards promoting this goal. In planning our activities for the year at the meetings of the trustees we kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Our main activities during the year included:

**The AIMS Helpline.** This is staffed by a small team of volunteers who, during the year, have responded to enquiries, providing information and support to (mainly) women who are seeking information about their care or who may want to complain about the care they did or did not receive.

**Participation in Consultations.** We have responded to numerous requests from official bodies, such as NICE and MMBRACE to comment on their guidelines and documents, in order to convey users' views. For example, one of our trustees was a member of the MMBRACE lay summary writing group for the Perinatal Confidential Enquiry: normally-formed, ante-partum, term singleton stillbirth at >37+0 weeks.

**Publishing.** The AIMS Journal is published four times a year, and in the last year the journal themes have ranged from Stillbirth to Caring for Midwives. We have also published numerous pregnancy related books and are working with authors of prospective pregnancy books.

**Conferences.** AIMS Committee members have regularly spoken at, attended or participated in conferences, not only in the UK, but internationally as a member of the European Network of Childbirth Associations.

**Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)**

AIMS would not function without the enthusiasm of the committee members and the large number of volunteers scattered around the country who supported them and undertake various activities locally and nationally.

AIMS has no paid staff.

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

**Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year****Publications**

AIMS publications are specifically designed to inform the lay reader and the AIMS website showcases the wide range of publications available. Several books have been commissioned this year to be completed in 2017. Gestational Diabetes and Twins are new. Two books, Birthing Your Baby - Second Stage and Birth After Caesarean are being rewritten, Safety in Childbirth and Making a Complaint are being updated. Most of the AIMS publications are now available as ebooks.

The AIMS Quarterly Journal spearheads discussions about change and development in the maternity services, and is highly regarded both by parents, who find it an excellent source of information and support and by workers in maternity care.

In 2016 the Journals focused on the potential for real change, blowing the whistle on poor care, dealing with bullying, and looking at how to create continuity and real change in maternity provision. Readers use this information to support their own local campaigns, improving maternity care in their local areas.

**AIMS role in the maternity debate**

The National Maternity Review published its findings in December 2015. AIMS submitted its views and following the 'Birth Tank' consultation meetings AIMS joined the National Maternity Transformation Stakeholder Council, a forum to bring about the changes highlighted in 'Better Births'.

AIMS continued to respond to NICE and other official consultations; as we run a UK totally confidential helpline, we are often able to submit information which does not otherwise reach official sources.

In April 2016 AIMS joined with Neighbourhood Midwives, the Positive Birth Movement, Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust and the Royal College of Midwives to organise a conference to promote and encourage continuity of carer and caseload midwifery. It was very successful and a second conference will be run in April 2017 to develop the ideas and support health professionals to implement the changes that are needed to enable women to access care that is appropriate for them.

**Support for research**

The Optibirth Research four-year project concluded this year. The research, conducted in 8 EU member states was designed to promote optimal childbirth by increasing vaginal birth after caesarean section and AIMS was invited to act as the lay adviser to the research group. The results have been published and AIMS has organised seminars in London and in Lisbon to disseminate the results to women.

AIMS also has an advisory member on the research group exploring 'Improving Access to Midwifery Units in England' which aims to identify the reasons why the provision and utilisation of midwifery units across England is so variable and to develop a strategy for increasing their availability and use.

**Supporting local women**

The AIMS telephone and email Helpline, designed to give help and information to those who contact us, has had a busy year. Two of the most consistent enquiries relate to induction of labour and to the problems women have booking a home birth and the closures of free-standing midwifery units. For example, for many years the Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn has consistently refused to provide a home birth service. AIMS supported a local mother to challenge the hospital and subsequently supported a local campaigning group which was successful in forcing the hospital to provide the service. Similar support is also being given to inform and empower those local groups who are campaigning to stop the closures of their local midwifery units.

The AIMS helpline is unique in its ability to support women across the UK from a lay perspective, but with the experience that only comes from decades of supporting women through thousands of different situations.

We look forward to continuing to be a major force for improvements to the UK's maternity services throughout 2017.

## Section E

## Financial review

**Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves**

AIMS will maintain sufficient reserves to fund its work for 6 months.

**Details of any funds materially in deficit**

### Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

AIMS raises most of its funds from membership subscriptions and the sales of publications, but also through fundraising and donations. A fundraising campaign has been started in aid of a new, specially designed website and had raised almost half the anticipated cost by the end of the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## Section F

## Other optional information

## Section G

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	DV Brassington	Deborah Cappington
Full name(s)	DOROTHY BRASSINGTON	DEBORAH CAPPINGTON
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	TREASURER	VICE CHAIR
Date	24/1/17	