



Booking a Home Birth

The decision whether or not to have a home birth rests with the mother, and no-one else. The decision is hers alone. Midwives, GPs or obstetricians have no authority to agree or deny anyone a home birth, they are there to ADVISE. Whether or not you accept their advice is entirely up to you. Some women have been told that it is 'illegal' to give birth at home. This is untrue.

In order to justify an attempt to refuse a woman a home birth some women are told that they are 'high-risk', for example, they may have had a previous caesarean section. If you are classed as 'high-risk' you can ask the doctor or midwife to put in writing precisely why s/he considers you to be so. It is not uncommon for women to be labelled as 'high-risk' as an excuse for urging a hospital birth and it is important to establish what the risks are perceived to be. However, even if a doctor has defined your pregnancy as 'high risk' you are still entitled to midwifery care and to have your baby at home if you wish.

You do not have to approach your GP in order to book your home birth, you can write directly to the Director of Midwifery Services at your nearest maternity unit along the following lines:

Dear

I am expecting a baby on the ... and intend to give birth at home. I have carefully considered the risks of home birth and compared them with the risks of hospital birth and I am not prepared to risk my, or my baby's health, by giving birth in hospital.

I would be grateful if you would arrange for my care to be provided by a midwife who is experienced and confident in assisting women to birth at home.

Yours sincerely

The Director of Midwifery has a responsibility to provide a midwife and if you have any problems making these arrangements do not battle alone, contact AIMS.

AIMS supports all maternity service users to navigate the system as it exists, and campaigns for a system which truly meets the needs of all. AIMS does not give medical advice, but instead we focus on helping women to find the information that they need to make informed decisions about what is right for them, and support them to have their decisions respected by their health care providers. The AIMS Helpline volunteers will be happy to provide further information and support. Please email helpline@aims.org.uk or ring 0300 365 0663.