



Why be an AIMS member?

AIMS Journal, 2024, Vol 36, No 3



By the AIMS Management Team

If you are reading this Journal you may already be an AIMS member, in which case, thank you so much for your support. You will already know how much we rely on membership subscriptions to fund our work. Read on to see why we hope that you will continue to support us.

If you subscribe to our mailing list you will be getting an email from us asking you to consider supporting us to continue our work by becoming an AIMS member. We hope you will.

If you are neither a member nor on our mailing list we would also like to appeal to you to become a member.

This is why

For over 60 years AIMS volunteers have worked towards better births for all by campaigning and information sharing, protecting human rights in childbirth and helping everyone to know their rights,

whatever birth they want, and wherever they want it.

Now we **need your support** to continue.

Every year our Helpline team helps hundreds of people with information and support about a wide range of topics including lack of consent/coercion, induction, lack of support for home births, and referrals or threats of referral to children's services. We want to continue to be there for the people who need us.

Here are some comments that people who have used the AIMS Helpline have given us permission to share.

"I just think that you and the AIMS charity are wonderful and I wanted to say a huge thank you for helping to put my mind at ease. I came away from our conversation feeling empowered and determined."

"It's been so helpful and reassuring for us to have your responses and we both can't quite believe what an amazing service AIMS offers. We asked friends and family to donate to you, instead of buying us more clothes and teddies, so we really hope that some resources might come your way too."

Birth Information pages on the website are accessed around 6000 times every month and we are working to get some key pages translated in order to make them more accessible to those whose first language is not English.

Here's what people have said about the value of our birth information pages.

"AIMS gave me the essential support and resources that I needed in order to make informed decisions about my pregnancies and births for myself. Informed decision making has the power to completely transform birth experiences for the better, and AIMS showed me the way."

"AIMS was so important to me in getting the births that I wanted. Without AIMS I wouldn't have known my rights to make it happen."

We have two new AIMS Guides in development, Breech Birth and Birth after Caesarean, but will need to fund the production of these.

AIMS Journal articles are available to everyone free of charge and each Journal now reaches thousands of readers, helping to spearhead discussions about change and development in the maternity services and giving a platform for the voices of parents, birth workers and staff in the maternity services. We want to continue to produce this fantastic free resource.

Our Campaigns team remains an influential, effective and well-informed lay voice in the national debate

on maternity services improvement. But they can only continue to do this if we are able to fund them to attend conferences and meetings.

All of these services are provided by volunteers.

Why we need more AIMS members

AIMS has had a long history of upholding our independence from receiving any funding or benefit from being linked with any commercial enterprise. We believe that it continues to be of vital importance that AIMS is, and is seen to be, wholly independent of any third parties in order to preserve our reputation for providing information impartiality.

As an almost entirely volunteer run organisation we are able to keep our running cost very low. We estimate the value of the hours our volunteers give each year to be in excess of £70,000 based on the Real Living Wage of £12 per hour, though most of them are highly skilled people who could command much higher rates than this. However, we need to be able to pay our part-time Office Administrator (our only paid member of staff) to enable our volunteers to do this work for AIMS. This essential admin support, plus running the AIMS helpline and online shop, producing the AIMS Journal and paying for volunteers to attend meetings and conferences to further our campaigning work all cost money. These costs have been increasing. At the same time our main sources of income - sales of publications, membership subscriptions and donations - have all fallen substantially in the last couple of years as the cost of living crisis took hold.

The need is real and urgent. On current budget projections, AIMS will, quite simply, run out of money within three years. If we are not able to increase our income within the next 12 months we will need to start making drastic cost savings in order to survive. Then our ability to continue the vital work that we do will be at risk.

What's in it for you?

First and foremost, there's the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping AIMS to survive and continue its mission:

'We support all maternity service users to navigate the system as it exists, and campaign for a system that truly meets the needs of all.'

If you think, as we do, that this is important and want to help make sure that we can continue to do it, please think of it as an investment in the future. We frequently hear people saying how much they value the work that AIMS does.

If you can be here for us, we can be there for those that need us.

As an AIMS member we will send you a newsletter with updates about our work and opportunities to get involved with AIMS activities. You will also be entitled to a discount off the cost of our online interactive

workshops, and to attend our AGM.

What does it cost?

The subscription can be paid either as a one-off payment of £45 or as 12 monthly instalments of £4 - that's the price of a coffee a month.

While we hope that as many people as possible will pay the full rate, we know that not everyone will be able to afford this. As we truly want AIMS membership to be accessible to as many people as possible we are happy to arrange a reduced rate for you if you need it. Please let us know if you would like to pay a lower rate by emailing membership@aims.org.uk

So how do I join?

You can join online by clicking [here](#) or details about setting up a standing order can be found [here](#).