AIMS For a better birth...

Better Births

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Beverley Beech summarises the report on improving outcomes of maternity services in England

Following the National Maternity Review team's programme of engagement with the public, users of services, staff and other stakeholders over the last twelve months, Baroness Cumberlege and her team have published their findings and their vision of how maternity services across England can be improved. The 126-page document highlights the messages the team received, makes the case for change and identifies what action needs to be taken.

The Better Births report begins by setting out their vision for the future:

1. Personalised care, centred on the woman, her baby and her family, based around their needs and their decisions, where they have genuine choice, informed by unbiased information.
2. Continuity of carer, to ensure safe care based on a relationship of mutual trust and respect in line with the woman's decisions.
3. Safer care, with professionals working together across boundaries to ensure rapid referral, and access to the right care in the right place; leadership for a safety culture within and across organisations; and investigation, honesty and learning when things go wrong.
4. Better postnatal and perinatal mental health care, to address the historic underfunding and provision in these two vital areas, which can have a significant impact on the life chances and wellbeing of the woman, baby and family.
5. Multi-professional working, breaking down barriers between midwives, obstetricians and other professionals to deliver safe and personalised care for women and their babies.
6. Working across boundaries to provide and commission maternity services to support personalisation, safety and choice, with access to specialist care whenever needed.
7. A payment system that fairly and adequately compensates providers for delivering high quality care to all women efficiently, while supporting commissioners to commission for personalisation, safety and choice.'

The report sets out a table of recommendations for action, who should take responsibility and what timescale they should work towards.

For more information see www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/national-maternity-review-report.pdf