AIMS For a better birth...

Better Births Basics #1: the Better Births vision

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(THE ESSENTIAL CUT OUT & KEEP CHECKLIST FOR BIRTH ACTIVISTS)

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By the AIMS Campaign Team

Given the vast agenda we have between us, all birth activists deserve a short-cut or two. In that context, the AIMS Campaign Team would like to suggest that you keep a written copy of the Better Births vision close-to-hand. (You can even learn it off by heart if you like!)

So often when we come across problems in the context of maternity care, whether in an MSLC/MVP meeting or on social media, we can find ourselves mired in argument, trying to justify why things should be different. And far too often, the energy to resolve the problem fizzles out before a solution is identified and put in place.

When such discussions arise, we'd like to suggest that it might be useful to keep in mind that theBetter Births report - now being implemented across England under the title of the Maternity Transformation Programme - already does much of that explanatory work for us. So in the vast majority of cases, more debate just isn't necessary. It really is enough to declare that the Better Births vision, endorsed by NHS-England, supports the change you wish to see, thus opening the way to move straight onto a collaborative and focused discussion about possible solutions.

The Better Births Vision, 2016

Our vision for maternity services across England is for them to become safer, more personalised, kinder, professional and more family friendly; where every woman has access to information to enable her to make decisions about her care; and where she and her baby can access support that is centred around their individual needs and circumstances. And for all staff to be supported to deliver care which is women centred, working in high performing teams, in organisations which are well led and in cultures which promote innovation, continuous learning, and break down organisational and professional boundaries.

We'll give you an example. Recently, on social media, we came across a quote from a Dad who was clearly still reeling from being excluded from his wife's side after the birth of their baby. We have known for many years that too many families find themselves in this position. Taking the Better Births vision as our cue, we linked this problem to the part of the Better Births vision that talks about family-friendly services, and tweeted that:

"Family-friendly mat services DO NOT exclude a woman's support network, except in highly exceptional circumstances. Wrapping care around us, not expecting us to fit into your model of care. That's what #betterbirths is about."

For Better Births to stand a chance of being implemented fully, AIMS firmly believes that we all need to work together to remind people that Better Births is the agenda that we are supposed to be working on together. It's no longer a question of why or whether, it's all about the how and when. It won't be an easy transformation to deliver, we know that. But let's all play our part in changing the conversation, to at least have a hope of doing so.