AIMS For a better birth...

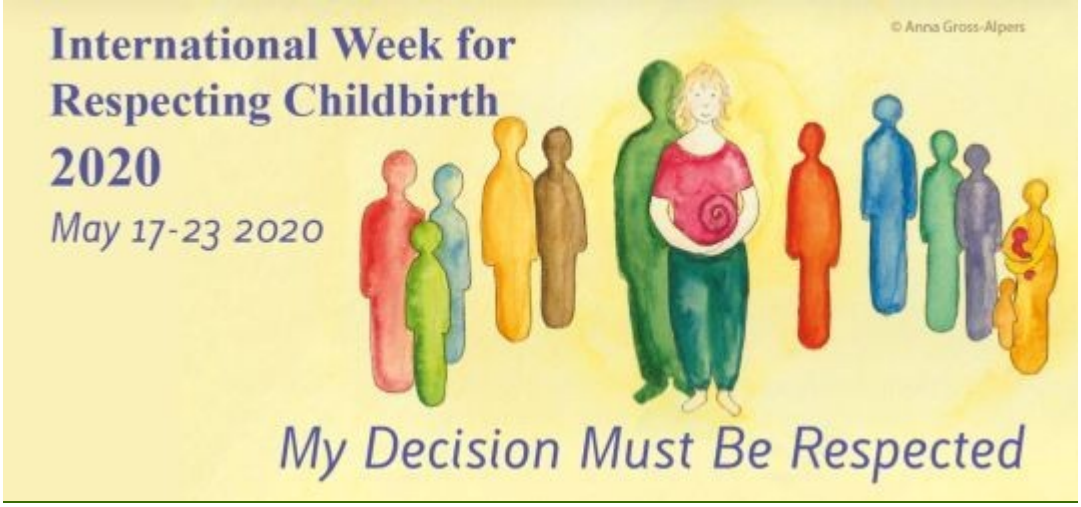
Campaign Update: What has AIMS been doing?

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Other quarterly updates

- We have continued to review and update the AIMS Birth Information page'Coronavirus and your maternity care',[1] in line with latest guidance from the NHS and the Royal Colleges. We posted about new guidance lifting some of the restrictions on birth partners and having supporters at antenatal appointments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and England. Full details of the current guidance for each of the four nations are on the webpage.
- AIMS Volunteers Emma Ashworth and Verina Henchy have been in correspondence with RCOG about their guidance on waterbirth. We are pleased to see that thanks to these challenges that the latest version of the guidance now makes it clear that those who have no symptoms of COVID-19 and either do not have a test result or test negative for COVID-19 should be able to use a birth-pool. RCOG have also said that "For women who are asymptomatic but test positive, the evidence is unclear and we have made this evident in our guidance" while they seek an opinion on the evidence from the national Infection Prevention and Control team. Interestingly, they have also changed their reason for advising against use of birth-pools for those with COVID-19 symptoms from the theoretical risk of infection (for which, as Emma and Verina have pointed out, there is no evidence) to saying that necessary monitoring of their oxygen levels etc. "is better provided on land". We will continue to ask them why this monitoring cannot be done in water.
- We wrote to the Royal College of Midwives to welcome their Clinical Briefing Sheet: 'freebirth' or 'unassisted childbirth' during the COVID-19 pandemic[2] but also to lodge a few concerns. You can read our letter here[3].
- We supported the European Network of Childbirth Associations social media campaign #MyDecisionMustBeRespected for the International Week for Respecting Childbirth[4]



- AIMS has welcomed the RCOG document "Restoration and Recovery: priorities for obstetrics and gynaecology"[5] and made a number of suggestions[6].
- We welcomed the publication of the report "First do no harm"[7] from the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, chaired by Baroness Cumberlege. We plan to publish a review of this important document soon.
- We read the NHS constitution's seven key principles[8] that "guide the NHS in all it does". It's well worth looking at what these say about respecting human rights, supporting disadvantaged groups and offering services "tailored to the needs and preferences of patients, their families and their carers." In the light of the difficulties that many people have faced in finding information about maternity services changes and the decision-making process being used during the pandemic, we were particularly struck by the statement "The system of responsibility and accountability for taking decisions in the NHS should be transparent and clear to the public, patients and staff."
- AIMS Vice Chair Nadia Higson spoke at the virtual 'Let's Talk Birth' Conference about how AIMS has been supporting choice in the pandemic. You can watch her presentationhere.[9]
- We attended a stakeholder meeting organised by the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit (NPEU), and followed up our concerns about report delays and data issues by writing to Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent (Chief Midwife Officer, England) and Matthew Jolly (National Clinical Director for the Maternity Review and Women's Health, NHS England).
- We wrote to Helen Vernon, NHS Resolution, welcoming the inclusion of #ContinuityofCarer in the latest annual Maternity Incentive Scheme
- We submitted evidence to two Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiries, the first regarding the delivery of core NHS and care services during the pandemic and beyond[10], and the second regarding the safety of the maternity services in England[11].

Previous Campaign Team Update. June 2020

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1 www.aims.org.uk/information/item/coronavirus

2

www.rcm.org.uk/media/3904/freebirth_draft_23-april-v5-002-mrd-1.pdf

3 www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/rcm-briefing-freebirth

4 enca.info/iwrc

5 www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/2020-06-26-restoration-and-recovery---priorities-for-obstetrics-and-gynaecology.pdf

6 www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/rcog-restoration-and-recovery

7 www.immdsreview.org.uk/Report.html

8 www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england#principles-that-guide-the-nhs

9 www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kei2oFytS6E

10 www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/health-and-social-care-select-committee

11 www.aims.org.uk/campaigning/item/safety-of-maternity-services-in-england