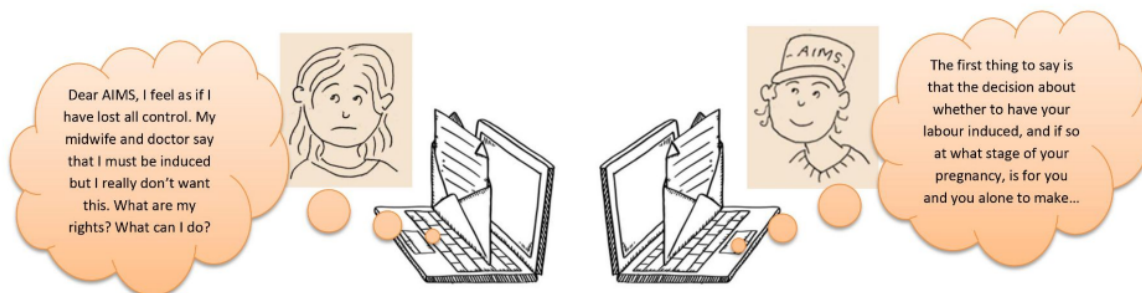




## Volunteering on the AIMS helpline

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### "Do I need to be induced?"

With the rising tide of induction, this is a frequent question the Helpline Volunteers are asked. Along with the majority of other enquiries, people want to know their rights, they want information so that they can make fully informed decisions, and they want to feel heard, believed and respected.

The Helpline team at AIMS is a small group of volunteers who are in touch with members of the public on a daily basis, answering queries about many different issues relating to pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. We are looking to recruit more volunteers, so if this is something that interests you, read on.

### What qualities are we looking for?

- You need to be a lay person, not qualified as any kind of medical practitioner
- You need a background knowledge of pregnancy, birth and advocating for parents, for example, a doula, birth educator, or someone with relevant experience on a support helpline
- You need to be able to write to a reasonable standard - we operate mainly by email and all phone calls are followed up by email
- You need to be able to commit 3-4 hours per week
- You need an active interest in current issues affecting human rights in childbirth

### Who are we?

As Helpline Volunteers we are active listeners and we take a person-centred approach. We make sure we answer the question that has been asked, and are careful to give options and not advice. We frame our response in terms of evidence based information and, where appropriate, in terms of approaches that others have found useful, providing references and links to resources for people to follow.

### **What support is there?**

AIMS has a wealth of resources from which to draw information, including template responses, AIMS books, Birth Information pages and Journal articles, NICE guidelines, Cochrane evidence reviews, and resources from similar organisations such as Birthrights. We meet monthly on an online video chat to keep up to date with each other and talk through any issues or concerns that have come up.

### **What are the benefits?**

As an AIMS Helpline Volunteer you increase your knowledge and skills - it's a steep learning curve to begin with but it soon gets easier. You learn about all aspects of childbirth and keep up to date with current guidelines and legislation and what is going on both inside and outside the system. You help people, which is deeply rewarding. When someone feels calmer and more in control of their situation and can go forward in their decision-making as a result of their interaction with you, it is very satisfying and worthwhile. As one volunteer said, "it restores the soul in a soul-destroying world!".

You also get to be part of the AIMS community, which is a wonderful place to be. We are drawn together through our passion for women in childbirth - our opinions may differ but we have a mutual understanding of respect and trust.

It does make a difference to people's lives, being on the helpline. Even if you only help one person then that may be the most useful thing you have done with your day. This is what makes being on the Helpline sustainable - it's a healing thing.

### **Interested? What to do next?**

If you are interested in [volunteering for AIMS](https://aims.org.uk) and meet the criteria for this role, we would love to hear from you. Our email contact is [volunteer@aims.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@aims.org.uk)