

BIRTHRIGHTS SUPPORTS LEGAL ACTION AFTER BREACH OF WOMEN AND MIDWIVES' RIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaking after the release of a statement from [IMUK](#), Rebecca Schiller, chief executive of the human rights in childbirth charity [Birthrights](#), said:

“Birthrights supports the actions of this group of independent midwives and women who have announced their intention to bring a judicial review of a Nursing and Midwifery Council decision that has prevented some independent midwives from providing care to the women relying on them. We believe that the NMC’s decision has breached the rights of midwives to practise their profession and women to choose their care provider.

As I made clear in my [January letter](#) to its chief executive Jackie Smith, we do not believe that the actions of the NMC have been those of a responsible regulator. There have already been very damaging consequences of this incorrect decision. The NMC has jeopardised the safety of hundreds of women and babies by effectively severing each woman’s access to continuity in her midwifery care. Faced with the absence of any comparable NHS service in their area, or following previous traumatic experiences with local maternity services, I know of a number of women who now believe that their only choice is to give birth without any medical assistance.

The nature of this decision is also in direct opposition to the positive direction of current maternity policy, which has recognised how fundamental women’s decision-making and autonomy is to safe, quality services and is seeking to expand access to maternity services that allow women and their caregivers to build relationships.”

ENDS

For further information about IMUK or this legal action please contact: Kiran Nagendran (0203 772 2471, knagendran@bellpottinger.com)

For comment from Birthrights please email press@birthrights.org.uk or call 0300 400 3401.

We can provide spokespeople.

Notes to Editors:

Birthrights is the UK’s only organisation dedicated to improving women’s experience of pregnancy and childbirth by promoting respect for human rights. We believe that all women are entitled to respectful maternity care that protects their fundamental rights to dignity, autonomy, privacy and equality. We aspire to advance the human rights and lawful treatment of all child-bearing women.

What we do:



- Provide free, accurate and accessible legal information and advice on human rights and the law relating to childbearing women.
- Campaign on respect for women's rights in childbirth as fundamental human rights that maternity-service providers are legally obliged to respect and fulfil.
- Offer advice, assistance and training to caregivers, professional or otherwise.

Birthrights promotes women's right to receive evidence-based care that conforms to the best medical and midwifery standards. We do not hold views on clinical issues arising in maternity care.

Birthrights is a charitable incorporated organisation. Our registered charity number is 1151152. You can read more about our work on our [website](#) and read our press coverage [here](#).

