



Royal College
of Midwives

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

October 2021
By email

Dear Prime Minister,

The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) supports the manifesto commitment on which the Government was elected to make the NHS the best place in the world to give birth. However for the ambition for the safest maternity services to be realised staff need to feel valued, be paid fairly and have working conditions that support a healthy work life balance. That is not currently the case, 92% of RCM survey respondents said that being a midwife or maternity support worker (MSW) is not valued by the government and 95% told us they were unhappy with the recently implemented 3% pay award.

The Government have accepted that there is currently a shortage of 2000 midwives and our fears that midwives and MSW's will start voting with their feet and leave the NHS have begun to be realised. A report by NHS Digital in July of this year revealed that the number of NHS midwives working in England had fallen by almost 300 in just two months. RCM members are exhausted and close to burnout. Increased pay, more midwives and MSWs and a change in working conditions are absolutely vital if the NHS is to retain and recruit the maternity staff it so desperately needs.

A good start to the UK's move to a high skilled, high wage economy would be to recognise that midwives and MSWs are already highly skilled at what they do and they deserve a pay rise that recognises that. A pay rise that starts to make up for years of pay restraint. With rising prices, inflation and the upcoming National Insurance increase, RCM members will have even less in their pockets. 86% of respondents to the RCM's survey told us that increased pay might encourage those





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considering leaving the NHS to return.

Midwives and MSWs not only deserve a fair pay rise in 2022 they also deserve to get their pay rise on time. The Government's late submission to the NHS Pay Review Body this year and the announcement of the pay award right before the summer break meant that NHS staff received their insufficient pay rise almost six months late. This is no way to value NHS staff.

We are highlighting these issues ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review, funding for the NHS must include support for a fully funded pay rise for NHS staff. Not least because highly skilled workers deserve higher pay but because it is imperative to ensure the NHS has the staff it needs to meet the demand on services.

G. Walton

Gill Walton
Chief Executive and General Secretary

