A pictorial guide to birthing positions; the Mums’ Midwife of the Year Award; a webinar on addressing weight management issues; an A to Z guide to pregnancy and nutrition.

What do these things have in common? They all came about as a result of the RCM’s Alliance Programme.

Set up in 2004, the Alliance Programme supports strategic partnerships between the RCM and commercial organisations. Currently there are seven in place – each carefully considered, only coming about after a lengthy due diligence process.

Every partnership is also supported by the RCM’s director for midwifery and a senior midwife to ensure RCM guidance and best practice is always followed. They have an important part to play in generating revenue to develop new initiatives.

In the case of Slimming World, which joined in 2012, the focus is on weight management and healthy lifestyle in pregnancy. Projects include a website helping women manage their weight safely during pregnancy and breastfeeding, as well as training and resources – including a webinar and e-learning module – to help midwives broach this difficult but important issue around digital record-keeping are also being considered.

The connection with big consumer brands also raises the profile of the RCM, helping it to encourage evidence-based research and disseminate information, as well as opening up channels of communication with the wider public.

Cathy Warwick, RCM chief executive, says: ‘The Alliance Programme is a fantastic resource for the RCM and our members. Through the additional income and energy that the partnerships provide, we are able to offer tailored services and resources that membership income would not cover.’

‘The partners also make a significant contribution to the RCM awards and conference, as well as other events such as the MSW conference.

I believe that carefully considered, well-managed partnerships with a range of high-quality companies are a brilliant way of helping us all to carry out our roles to even better effect!’

Members are invited to suggest new ways RCM Alliance partners can support their work at alliance@rcm.org.uk

How does the RCM Alliance Programme benefit midwives? We take a look.

For Babyline Pregnacare®, a partner since 2009, the focus is on vitamin care – with resources for midwives and mothers-to-be to communicate key messages about nutrition and pregnancy, including an A to Z guide to pregnancy and nutrition and a due-date calculator for members.

Research, factsheets and online training will all play a part in spreading the message. Already Kellogg’s has supported an RCM-accredited CPD module on the role of fibre in pregnancy, and sponsored an educational session at the RCM annual conference outlining simple advice to improve digestive health.

The benefits There is much to be gained on both sides. Partners are able to draw on the RCM’s breadth and depth of knowledge, and the insights of its members. They are also able to use RCM logos to reflect their support and place in the Alliance, subject to RCM review. For example, from January next year, an RCM supported logo will be shown on the JOHNSON’S® ‘TOP-TO-TOE’ range, which is backed by evidence-based research.

Clearly the RCM and its members also benefit greatly. The support is not only important at an organisational level, but also on an individual basis, providing resources to midwives when NHS funding is under pressure.

And everything produced through the Alliance is carefully reviewed by the RCM, which means midwives and mothers can rely on the resources to be evidence based, current and accurate. The connection with big consumer brands also raises the profile of the RCM, helping it to encourage evidence-based research and disseminate information, as well as opening up channels of communication with the wider public.

For example, the RCM’s Midwives’ Breastfeeding continues to be supported by the RCM Alliance through a new partnership with Lansinoh. The company already conducts annual surveys into breastfeeding attitudes and behaviours, along with clinical studies, to inform its work.

Further research and the development of resources are planned through the Alliance to support breastfeeding initiation and continuation.