

Summer Newsletter



Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. With the recent spell of hot and sunny weather, summer certainly feels like it has arrived!

In this newsletter we've got: a thank you to our reporters; a progress update on the Induction of Labour Study, now that you have received the final monthly report request; a summary of our Study Day that took place on 5th May; and the start of a new series 'A Spotlight On' with the first feature on the Serenity Birth Centre.

UKMidSS Stars

As always, a huge thank you to all of our reporters for the time, care and effort you continue to give to UKMidSS. We know how busy and stretched maternity services are, and we really appreciate that reporting to us is one more thing on an already very full to-do list. Please know that your contributions are incredibly important. The information you provide helps us build a clearer picture of maternity care across the UK and supports findings that can lead to real, positive change. UKMidSS is very much a team effort, and we simply could not do this without you. Thank you so much for your continued support.

In this newsletter, special mentions for sterling work with large amounts of data entry go to:

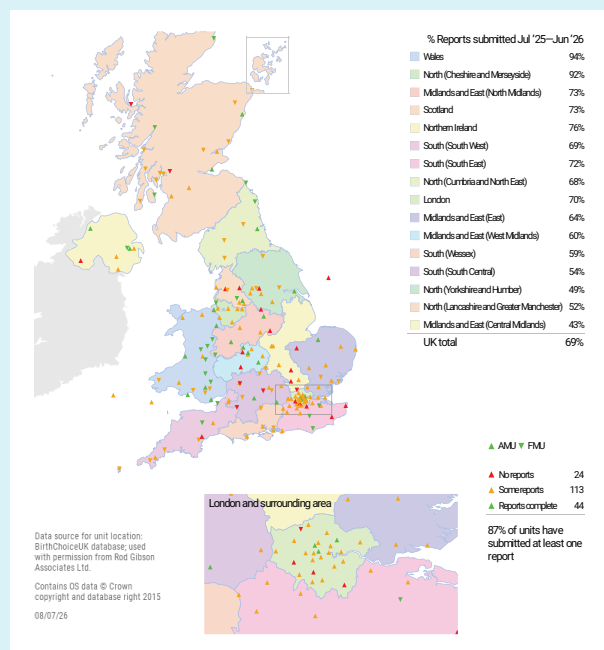
- **Marie Stocks** from the **Derby Birth Centre** at **Royal Derby Hospital**
- **Noki Moyo and team** from the **White Horse Birth Centre** at **The Great Western Hospital**
- **Natalie Drew** from the **Active Birth Centre** at **The Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital**

Your chocolates should arrive soon, assuming that they don't melt in the post!



Induction of Labour Study

We are now approaching the end of the data collection period for the Induction of Labour (IOL) Study! As a reminder, this study is investigating outcomes for women admitted to midwifery units for labour care following a component of induction.



The map shows reporting progress so far. As you can see, 87% of units have submitted at least one monthly report which is excellent. This is a significant improvement from our previous newsletter so a huge thank you to all of our reporters who have entered data on behalf of their units!

Even if your unit does not routinely admit women following IOL, please still complete the monthly report by entering the number of admissions and births in your unit along with a '0' for the number of cases. This information is essential to ensure our results are accurate and represent practice across the UK.

Help us get to 100%!

100

As always, we're striving to achieve 100% of units submitting a report each month to ensure we generate high quality results. Units who we have not yet heard from are listed below. If you work at one of these sites, please get in touch. It may be that we are struggling to re-establish communication and you may be the missing link!

The Carmen Suite, St George's Hospital, Tooting	Sanctuary Birth Centre, Nottingham University Hospital QMC Campus
The Exeter Low Risk Birth Unit, Royal Devon and Exeter Wonford Hospital	Sapphire Birth Centre, Whiston Hospital
The Midwife Led Birthing Unit, Peterborough City Hospital	Singleton Midwife-Led Unit, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
The Oasis Birthing Centre, Princess Royal University Hospital, Orpington	St Peter's Midwife Led Unit, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital
The Primrose Midwifery-Led Birthing Suite, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital	Stroud Maternity Unit, Stroud Maternity Hospital

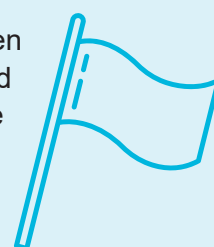


Zero still counts!

Even if **your unit does not routinely admit women following IOL, please still complete the monthly report** by entering the number of admissions and births in your unit along with a '0' for the number of cases. This information is essential to ensure our results are accurate and represent practice across the UK.

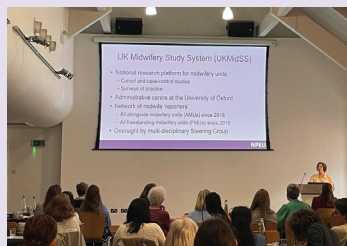
Postcode and other issues

Several reporters have highlighted an issue with the postcode entry and associated children in low-income families measure on the data collection form. This should now be resolved and you should receive queries prompting you to re-enter this information. If you are unable to enter the value to three decimal places, please put the value in the query box (by clicking the speech bubble in the top right-hand corner) so that we can see this value for now. If you continue to have problems with entering this data, please get in touch and let us know.



The UKMidSS Study Day 2026

On the International Day of the Midwife, 5th May, UKMidSS hosted a study day in Birmingham to celebrate 10 years since its inception. In attendance were UKMidSS reporters and others with an interest in midwifery units from across the UK.



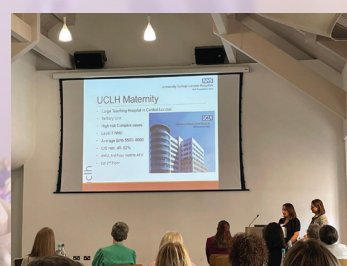
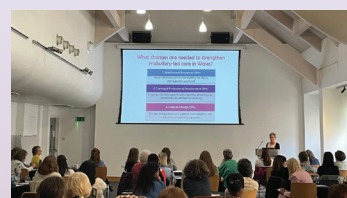
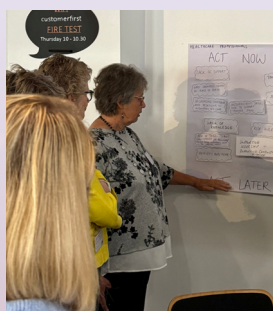
Dr Rachel Rowe, UKMidSS lead, and Professor Marian Knight, Director of the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, and Scientific Director for NIHR Infrastructure, reflected on what UKMidSS has achieved so far and what lies ahead. It was great to hear Marian's reflections on how UKMidSS fits in with NIHR and NHS priorities. Rachel also shared findings from our recent *paper* on changing birth numbers in midwifery units across the UK between 2016 and 2024.

A key focus of the day was how to protect and strengthen midwifery units. Attendees took part in a group activity exploring the question ‘How can we save midwifery units from extinction?’ with discussions centred on improving access and finding practical solutions to current challenges. We will be sharing the output from this activity shortly – keep your eyes peeled for this!

The rest of the day continued this theme, with speakers sharing examples of work to support midwifery units across the UK. This included updates from Shelly Higgins, Emma Mills and Emma Adamson giving an overview from Wales, Arezou Rezvani and Eleanor Moore from University College London Hospital, and Tracey Cooper from the North East of England. Professor Julia Sanders also gave a keynote talk on the **POOL** study, which explored the safety of waterbirth for mothers and babies.

We were also pleased to welcome several UKMidSS reporters to present their own work after submitting abstracts for oral presentation, including Katherine Robinson talking about place of birth discussions, as well as Emily Brocklebank and the team from Royal Derby Hospital and Annie Lester and Maria Scott from University Hospitals Birmingham sharing how they had improved access to their midwifery units.

It was a fantastic day and we were so delighted by the positive feedback we received. Thank you to all who presented and those who attended.



Update Details

Has your unit closed (either temporarily or permanently)? Is one of your reporters leaving? Is the lead midwife for the MLU going on maternity leave? Is your Head of Midwifery taking a sabbatical? If yes, please do let us know. We rely on updated contact details to communicate news as well as collecting data for our studies.

'A Spotlight on' Series

Hoping to continue the momentum from the Study Day, we are starting an occasional series for our reporters to put the spotlight on their unit and share what has worked well for them, what has driven an increase in access to the midwifery unit and/or any other insights that they would like to give. If you'd like to contribute to future newsletters, please let us know!

Our first spotlight is on the Serenity Birth Centre after Amelia (amelia.austin@nhs.net), birth centre manager, and Herpal (herpalmann@nhs.net), consultant midwife, approached us to ask if they could share their story.

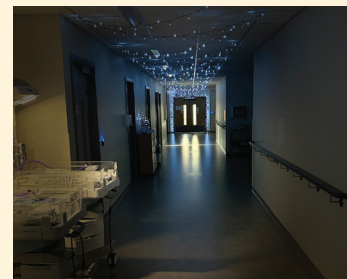


The Rebirth of Serenity

Serenity first opened at City Hospital, Birmingham, in 2010 as a pioneering midwifery-led care (MLC) unit. As the first service of its kind in the region, it quickly established itself as an award-winning centre of excellence. In 2023, the unit was temporarily closed due to staff shortages, with the Serenity team redeployed to labour ward. However, this presented valuable opportunities for team building, greater appreciation of each other's roles, and skill development across both MLC and consultant-led care.

In 2024, inpatient maternity services moved to Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, marking an exciting new chapter and providing the perfect opportunity to redesign our staffing model and relaunch Serenity in its new home - located directly adjacent to the Labour Ward. Serenity offers six birthing rooms, each equipped with a birthing pool, stool, and birthing ball.

We have an experienced core team of midwives and maternity support workers, with both women and junior staff benefitting from this. By combining the skills, knowledge, and experience of our current team with the values and ethos that have defined Serenity, we have created a welcoming, home-from-home environment. At the start of every shift, staff from labour ward and Serenity meet together, with the co-ordinator allocating work according to need. This collaborative approach enables us to provide MLC within the midwifery-led unit at all times. All women are thoroughly risk assessed in triage to determine the safest and most appropriate place for their birth. We also facilitate early discharge from six hours after birth, where clinically appropriate.



Looking ahead, we are committed to growing the number of births taking place within Serenity. A dedicated Consultant Midwife, based within the unit, receives referrals from Community Midwives for women who may not initially meet our standard eligibility criteria and supports them to develop a personalised, safe birth plan. We are also delighted to welcome women from outside our immediate community who wish to have their baby at Serenity. In the longer term, our ambition is to re-establish the home birth service, led from Serenity and delivered in partnership with our Community Midwifery teams and neighbouring trusts.

CPD Certificates

If you need a CPD certificate for your revalidation, please get in touch! Being a UKMidSS reporter means that you are contributing to national audit and research. You can drop us an email here: ukmidss@npeu.ox.ac.uk



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Royal College
of Midwives

