Royal College of Midwives

UKMidSS

UK Midwifery Study System

NPEU

Newsletter 36 - October 2026

Autumn Newsletter



Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.

In this newsletter we've got: a thank you to our reporters; a progress update for the Induction of Labour Study as we ask for outstanding reporting and data entry to be completed; details on the upcoming study and survey we have planned for 2027; and the next instalment of 'A Spotlight On' featuring the Home from Home Midwifery Led Unit at the Ulster Hospital in Belfast.

UKMidSS Stars

As ever, thank you to all of our reporters. Please know that your time, care and commitment never go unnoticed, and that every piece of data you contribute makes a real difference. Thanks to you, we are able to build a clearer picture of maternity care across the UK, helping to generate evidence that can lead to meaningful improvements for women, babies and families. UKMidSS is a truly collaborative effort, and its success depends on the dedication of our reporters.

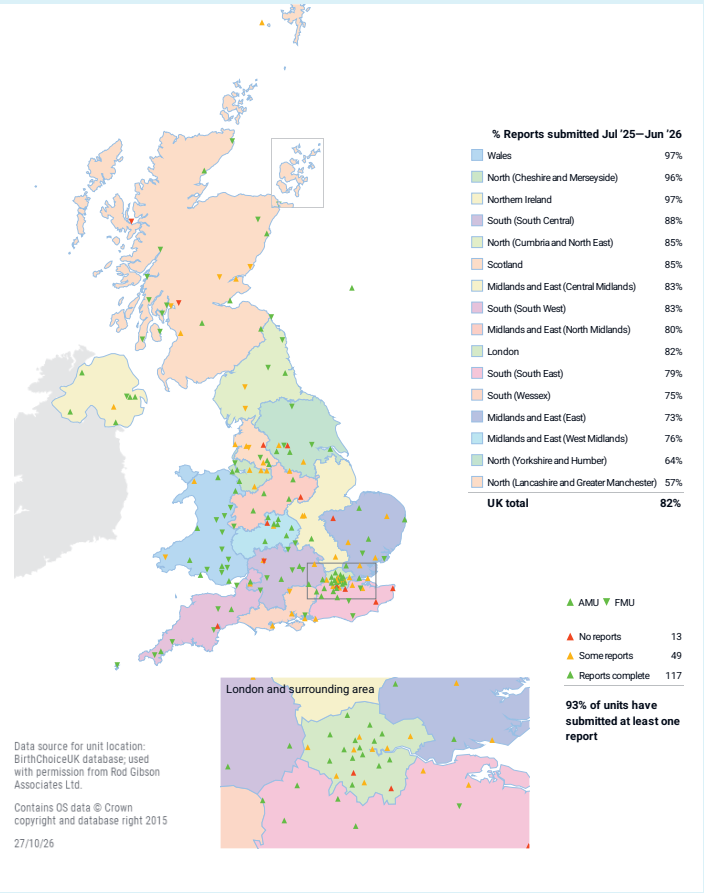
In this newsletter, we'd like to highlight our reporters who have completed (or are very close to completing) their outstanding data entry, despite having some of the highest number of cases!

Thank you to:

- **Tracey Fraser** from the **Midwife Led Unit** at **Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy**
- **Emma Pugh, Hannah Ritter** and **Claire Bertorelli** from the **Midwifery Led Birth Unit** at the **University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff**
- **Tiggy Bwogi** from **The Birth Centre** at **St Helier Hospital, Carshalton**

Your chocolates should arrive soon!

Induction of Labour Study



The Induction of Labour Study has now come to a close. Thank you to everyone who has contributed data so far, we are very grateful.



Our final month of data collection for this study was June, but we are still following up on all outstanding monthly reports and data entry to try and get as complete a dataset as possible.

The deadline to submit this information is 31st December 2026.

Monthly reporting

The map shows reporting progress so far. As you can see, 93% of units have submitted at least one report which is excellent. As always, we're aiming for 100% of units submitting a report each month to ensure we generate high quality results. We are contacting all units with outstanding reports to try and achieve this goal, so please look out for any emails from us! There are a few units with outstanding reports. If you see your unit listed here and/or you can help to put us in touch with any of these units in any other way then please get in touch!

Units we need to hear from that have 4 or more outstanding monthly reports

Hampshire Hospitals Maternity Centre, Andover War Memorial Hospital	The Exeter Low Risk Birth Unit, Royal Devon and Exeter Wonford Hospital
Withybush Midwife Led Unit, Withybush Hospital	Singleton Midwife-led Unit, William Harvey Hospital
The Birth Centre, Birmingham Women's Hospital	St Peter's Midwife Led Unit, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital
Stroud Maternity Unit, Stroud Maternity Hospital	The Oasis Birthing Centre, Princess Royal University Hospital
The Primrose Midwifery-Led Birthing Suite, Hinchingbrooke Hospital	The Midwife Led Birthing Unit, Peterborough City Hospital
Preston Birth Centre, Royal Preston Hospital	Helme Chase Midwife Led Unit, Westmorland General Hospital
Sanctuary Birth Centre, Nottingham University Hospital QMC Campus	The Nest, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospital
Burnley Birth Centre, Burnley General Hospital	Lotus Birth Centre, Royal London Hospital
The Midwifery Led Unit, St Michael's Hospital	

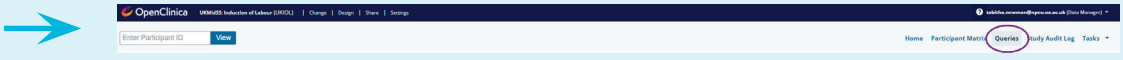
Data entry

Data entry has been started for 77% of cases reported which is fantastic, but we're still striving for that magic 100%! We are contacting units with outstanding data entry to check in on how data entry is going and remind them of the deadline. Please don't struggle in silence as we may be able to help. If your unit is listed below and/or you can help to put us in touch with any of these units in any other way then please get in touch!

Units we need to hear from that have outstanding data entry

The Midwifery Led Unit, Daisy Hill Hospital	The Birthing Unit, Broomfield Hospital
The Birth Centre, Birmingham Women's Hospital	Preston Birth Centre, Royal Preston Hospital
The Midwife Led Unit, Newham Hospital	Lotus Birth Centre, Royal London Hospital
The Midwife Led Unit, Leighton Hospital	Meadow Birth Centre, Worcestershire Royal Hospital
The Midwifery Led Unit, St Michael's Hospital	The Dolphin Suite, James Paget University Hospital
Stockport Birth Centre, Stepping Hill Hospital	Inverclyde Community Maternity Unit

We are also checking the data, which means we may follow up with questions about the data you have entered in OpenClinica – you will see these appear as queries at the bottom of the summary email we send at the end of each month. **You can also see these in OpenClinica by clicking the 'Queries' button along the top bar.**



Snapshot Admissions Study

With the Induction of Labour Study coming to an end, we are planning our next study which is due to open early next year. We are calling this the Snapshot Admissions Study. It's slightly different from previous UKMidSS studies as what we'll be aiming to do is to collect data about a representative sample of all women admitted to UK midwifery units over a six-month period. Crucially, this will involve every single midwifery unit in the UK!

Many of you will be familiar with the Birthplace Study which took place in England from 2008 to 2010 and showed that planned birth in a midwifery unit was associated with a lower chance of a range of intrapartum interventions, compared with planned obstetric unit birth, with no difference in neonatal outcomes. We know there have been changes in the landscape of maternity care since 2010. This includes an increase in the number of midwifery units and percentage of births taking place there, and then a decline since 2016. What we don't know is whether there has been any change in the characteristics of the women planning birth in midwifery units, or their outcomes.



We will compare the Snapshot Admissions Study data, about a representative sample of women admitted to midwifery units, with data collected in the Birthplace Study to provide evidence about how the characteristics and outcomes of women planning birth in midwifery units has changed, if at all, since 2010.

We will be in touch soon with further details on how the study will work and what we will ask of reporters, so stay tuned!



Transfer from Community Settings Survey



Shelly Higgins, UKMidSS Steering Group member and consultant midwife in Powys Teaching Health Board, has been awarded a Doctoral Fellowship by Health and Care Research Wales, with Rachel acting as one of her supervisors. Her PhD, through Cardiff University, will be looking to understand transfers to hospital from planned home and freestanding midwifery unit births using a mixed methods approach. The PhD will consist of three work packages. The first of these will be conducted using a UKMidSS survey aiming to describe how transfers from planned home and FMU births are managed across the UK and assess alignment with national guidance.

Further work packages will describe transfers in Wales, focusing on indications, characteristics, rates, duration, outcomes, and transport mode; and explore women's and staff experiences of transfer. Shelly hopes that the findings overall will identify factors to inform safer, more efficient transfer practices for planned home and FMU births and support informed choice for women, improve staff confidence, guide NHS policy and training, and enhance service planning.

The UKMidSS survey is planned to launch in late Spring so look out for further details early next year. In the meantime, please join us in congratulating Shelly on her Fellowship!

‘A Spotlight on’ Series

Following on from our first ‘A Spotlight on’ feature with Serenity Birth Centre, we’re excited to continue sharing stories from our wonderful reporters and shining a light on the fantastic work happening in your units. If you’d like to contribute to future newsletters, please get in touch!

Our second spotlight is on the Home from Home Midwifery Led Unit based at the Ulster Hospital in Belfast.

The Home from Home Midwifery Led Unit is an alongside birthing unit designed for women with low-risk pregnancies. Home from Home opened in 2008 and remains a successful birthing unit with approximately 50 births a month. It aims to provide a more relaxed home-like environment while still being in the hospital with immediate access to obstetric services if needed. We have seven private birthing rooms, each with ensuite bathroom and birthing pools, staffed by midwives and maternity support workers. Women have the freedom to move around using active birth equipment such as birthing balls, mats, cubes and peanut balls. One to one care is provided by a midwife throughout active labour. Entonox and injectable pain relief are available as well as the option to labour and birth in water. Partners can stay throughout the Home from Home journey with recliner chairs provided for their comfort. If labour and birth remain uncomplicated, most families go home within 12-24 hours after birth. If complications develop or women choose to have further pain relief, they can be quickly transferred to the consultant-led labour ward which is in the same building. Many parents who have recently birthed in Home from Home describe it as a calm and supportive environment, with excellent midwifery care. Ward manager Lindsay runs drop-in open days four mornings throughout the year to open the doors of the unit to expecting mothers and partners to show the facilities and answer any questions.



One of the birthing rooms available on the Home from Home MLU



Katherine Robinson, Consultant Midwife, pictured left and Lindsay Wright, Ward Manager, pictured right.

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.

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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