

To whom it may concern,

To date the method of regulation of midwives directly causes a substandard level of care that is unacceptable in medical practice. It further reduces the support of a pregnant woman and her family - which is particularly necessary in a maternity care system so rife with prejudices that have been evidentially shown to be unjustified by those studies performed with responsible statistical procedure. Any system of 'presumed guilty until proven innocent' is dysfunctional. This is particularly so when restrictions are imposed without sufficient severity of the claim, and repercussions for the complainant if on examination it is found to be a false or unjustified allegation. Our legal system has already recognised that certain situations do not require immediate severe action and this recognition must be applied here too as the consequences of placing extra conditions on registration are severe and apply to the wider community beyond the midwives themselves.

Currently we provide far too wide an advantage for those carrying prejudice against homebirths, the midwives who tend them and the families who choose them. Excepting extreme complaints - e.g. an intoxicated practitioner or allegations of assault - no such restrictions should be placed on any midwife prior to an investigation taking place. A patient may wish to be informed of a complaint, but no patient should be subject to being stranded by an immediate imposition of insensible regulations. Especially when this has the consequence of removing the only practitioner with a thorough knowledge of her medical history. It is not simply a matter of autonomy, but a matter of providing the safest care possible.

It is also unjust and unworkable to cause the resulting severe financial impact on midwives by removing their source of income without adequate justification.

The current imbalance in the health care system is unjustifiable. That we live in a system so disorganised and lax that practitioners such as _____ and _____ were able to continue long after complaints had been registered by both patients and other practitioners, when other doctors would not concede to working alongside them, and even after de-registration in related areas simply because they stand on a higher tier in the power hierarchy currently in maternity care is unacceptable. That midwives are subject to a level of control that goes far beyond the healthy scrutiny that should be applied to all practitioners and functions to damage the care provided to consumers and the situation of all midwives and nurse practitioners in this illegitimate hierarchy is equally so.

It is necessary that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be resorted.

Sincerely,
Alicia Davey.