



Royal College of Midwives

Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

28 May 2024

Dear Secretary of State

Thank you for meeting me recently to discuss a range of issues affecting maternity services. I will follow up on that meeting with you shortly, but in the meantime I wanted to write to you about pay, which is central to the issue of retention that we spoke about when we met.

I am writing to you to express our members' frustration at yet another delay in the NHS pay award. The timing of the pay round is crucial to ensure that NHS staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are not delayed in receiving their pay increase which is due on 1 April each year. These delays will only serve to further erode the morale of midwives and maternity support workers (MSWs). We urge the Government to publish the Pay Review Body's recommendations as soon as they have them and without delay. The General Election should not delay this crucial government business.

Findings published by the RCM have revealed that during one week in March this year, midwives and MSWs in England, worked 118,181 extra unpaid hours to keep services running safely, an increase of almost a fifth (18%) on the same poll undertaken last year.

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents to this poll considered leaving their role as midwife or MSW in the past year. This is a worrying upward trend as intention to leave in a similar poll in 2021 was ten percentage points less (57%).

Maternity services can't continue to run on the goodwill of midwives. Aside from the toll that is taking on our members' physical and mental health, they are being further demoralised by governments dragging their feet over giving them a pay rise, which is now overdue.

Yours sincerely

Gill Walton
Chief Executive
Royal College of Midwives