

PRESS RELEASE

28th April 2009

- International Day of the Midwife – 5th May 2009
- Milton Keynes midwives put spotlight on maternal deaths across the world
- Local midwives fundraising and awareness raising

Independent Midwives from Milton Keynes will be in-store at the Nursery Department, John Lewis, Central Milton Keynes on Saturday 9th May to talk about any aspect of pregnancy, birth and early parenting. They are aiming to raise awareness of the fact that every minute somewhere in the world a woman dies because of complications in pregnancy and childbirth. Many of these deaths happen simply because women in many countries lack access to skilled birth attendants such as midwives, or basic medical care.

The event marks the International Day of the Midwife (IDM) on 5th May 2009, when midwives around the world will take action to highlight the knowledge and skills of midwives, and the contribution they make to the health of their nations. The Royal College of Midwives will be highlighting the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 5 (MDG5), which aims to improve maternal health.

The goal, supported by the UK Government, is to reduce by 75% the number of women who die during pregnancy or childbirth, by 2015. There are two targets within MDG5; one to reduce maternal deaths and the other to provide universal access to reproductive health.

MDG5 has made the least progress of all the goals since its inception in 2000, but the global voice calling for change is getting stronger. Maternal Health was on the G8 agenda for the first time ever in 2008 with many governments pledging funding for this issue. The challenge now is to make sure these pledges are fulfilled. International Day of the Midwife actions will highlight the need for midwives and celebrate their important role in improving maternal health.

The midwives will also be aiming to raise funds to help mothers and newborns in developing countries, and to help provide skilled midwifery care to women. IDM is organised by the International Confederation of midwives (ICM), and is supported in the UK by the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) and the White Ribbon Alliance (WRA).

Valerie Gommon from the local branch of the Royal College of Midwives said "Because we have such relatively high quality maternity care in the UK, it is easy to forget the terrible conditions in which hundreds of millions of women have to go through pregnancy and give birth. We can all do our bit to change

this and try to make the horrifying numbers of deaths in pregnancy and childbirth across the world a thing of the past.”

As part of International Week of the Midwife, local Independent Midwives will be in-store at the Nursery Department, John Lewis plc, Central Milton Keynes on Saturday 9th May between 10am and 4 pm. They will be available to answer any questions on pregnancy, birth and early parenting including breastfeeding. More details can be found at www.3shiresmidwife.co.uk