

14th April 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

It was with some alarm that I heard that when a complaint is received against a midwife, restrictions are placed on her registration immediately, without any investigation taking place. Just as bad is that these restrictions can continue if the board decides that no investigation is necessary – it is grossly unfair that a person working in any profession would have their practice restricted without a chance to defend themselves.

To restrict an independent midwife to working only in a hospital, under supervision, means that women who were her clients can be left without care, and could be in a situation where they put themselves or their babies in danger if they birth without the support that they had counted on (and paid for) – this includes unassisted birth or birthing in a hospital with unknown midwives doctors – both of which can work out perfectly well at times but come with their own dangers if something goes wrong.

Restricting a midwife without investigation, or until the investigation takes place up to a year later, can mean extreme loss of income or even loss of profession. I fail to see how this can be possible in our society where people are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. I understand the need to protect patient's rights, but if there is an unfounded complaint then the negative repercussions for so many involved are so profound. If the complaint was founded, then perhaps it would be better to have an immediate investigation so that it can be determined if there is a problem – then midwives can continue to work and women can continue to be supported in their birth choices, as they have the right to be as they birth their babies.

Thank you for your time

Anne Regan