



Dear friends,

Just a quick note here, from all of us at Birth Companions, to say a huge thank you for your support this year.

We have so much important work coming up in 2024, as we continue to tackle inequality and disadvantage during pregnancy, birth and early motherhood, and we're delighted to have you on board.

Our team will be getting some much needed rest between Christmas and New Year, and we hope you all have a happy & restful festive season too.

With love,
Birth Companions

Our services in 2023

In 2023, we supported...

- **131** women and birthing people in the community in London and the South East
 - **112** women and birthing people in prisons around England
 - **55** women through our Peer Support services in prisons
 - **57** women during separation from their baby both in prison and the community
 - **123** women with practical items for themselves and/or their babies
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When we asked women we worked with about our support...

- **100%** felt our support had helped improve their mental health and wellbeing
- **94%** felt we had helped them to feel less isolated
- **88%** said our support had helped them to feel more confident about contacting other services
- **96%** said we helped them know more about the choices they could make about their care

Our campaigns, research and publications in 2023

In 2023, we **campaigned for change across the criminal justice, children's social care and immigration systems**, to protect the rights of pregnant women and mothers of infants, and to ensure that all women get the care they need during the perinatal period:

- We continued our **campaign to end the imprisonment of women during pregnancy and early motherhood**;
- We joined Women for Refugee Women and others to **successfully campaign to protect limits on the detention of pregnant women seeking sanctuary in the UK**;
- We launched our **campaign for a new national health and social care pathway to improve the care received by women with involvement from children's social care during pregnancy and early motherhood**.

We also **undertook research and released several publications**. Many of these related specifically to women with children's social care involvement:

- *The Birth Charter for women with involvement from children's social care*;
- *Understanding women's lived experience of children's social care proceedings: An insight report*;
- *Spotlight on Dual Contact: Understanding the needs and experiences of women in contact with the criminal justice and children's social care systems during pregnancy and early motherhood*;
- *Co-designing a new support service for women who are experiencing or at risk of the removal of their baby at birth by children's social services*.

None of these campaigns, projects or publications would have been possible without the insight and expertise of our 50-strong Lived Experience Team. Birth Companions sends an enormous thank you to all of our wonderful members.

**Thanks again for all your support in 2023.
We'll see you in the New Year!**

*If you'd like more information on anything mentioned in this newsletter, please
get in touch*
