

News...

2019

April

August

Feb

Jan

July

June

March

May

Celebrating Nursing: Cumbria has excellent opportunities to train as a nurse

Cumbria Health on Call Co-locating with A&E at the Cumberland Infirmary

Electronic maternity notes now available to women across Cumbria – with case study

Expanded breast screening service at north Cumbrian hospital

Help us celebrate International Nurses day!

International Day of the Midwife: how things have changed!

Making the C. diff-erence

NHS merger plans progress following feedback from staff and patients

North Cumbria shortlisted for a national CHKS data quality award 2019

North Cumbria's children's diabetes service performs above national average

Pop and have a conversation about dementia in the pop up shop

The NHS asks people to choose services wisely

September

2018

2017

News

2016

2015

2014

2013

[Home](#) > [News](#) > International Day of the Midwife: how things have changed!

International Day of the Midwife: how things have changed!

Posted on Wednesday 8th May 2019

Sunday 4th May is the International day of the Midwife and in the week leading up to it we have been celebrating Cumbria's midwives. We have shared stories from women and families who have said thank you to the midwives who supported them through their pregnancies and births.

Alison Smith, System Chief Nurse said: "It has been very humbling for all of us to read these beautiful stories of thanks and although I'm sure most would say they are 'just doing their job' it goes to show what a difference our midwifery teams make to Cumbria's women and families. I'm am very proud to have these wonderful people working in our midwifery services and I hope they also realise how their kindness and professionalism has touched and made a difference to so many."

Ruth McCall has been a midwife for over 30 years and to celebrate International Day of the Midwife on Sunday 5 May she has been talking about how the profession has changed with the times and how some practices that are common place now would have been considered 'wacky' when she first qualified.

Ruth said: "When you look at old photos one of the obvious differences is the uniforms, dresses with rather fancy but useless hats. I served in the British Army for seven years in Queen Alexandra's Nursing Corps where they had a particularly impractical uniform. Midwifery is a very practical job and scrubs on labour ward are far better.

"Some of the changes in midwifery may have been viewed as rather 'hippie' or alternative 30 years ago but there is now a significant bank of evidenced-based research behind midwifery practice including offering a more woman-centred approach to care.

"Water births were almost unheard of when I trained but now each maternity unit has a pool room and, for those whom it is appropriate for, women are offered the benefit of drug free pain relief as well as more conventional analgesia in a hospital setting.

"We now routinely offer a home birth service for those women who are suitable for one and women are now encouraged to be upright and active as much as possible in labour as it has been shown to improve normal labour. Skin to skin contact is offered at every delivery where the baby is placed on the mother's chest at birth and covered as they both recover from the birth and to aid bonding. Delayed clamping of the cord at birth is also offered to allow the transfer of more red blood cells, stem and immune cells to the baby.

"Women now have a much shorter stay in hospital, 30 years ago it would have been five days for your first baby and up to 10 days following a Caesarean section. Now women are keen to go home as early as six hours after birth and only a two night stay following a caesarean. With fathers having much longer paternity leave there is more support at home, and now there are more community midwives to give care at home rather than in the hospital.

"30 years ago midwives and health visitors recommended placing your baby on their front to sleep: advice now is to place the baby on their backs following research and the 'Back to Sleep' campaign launched in 1991 has reduced unexplained babies deaths by 80%. (National Office of Statistics 2018).

"Advances in information technology mean that women now have access to their maternity records and advice on their phones with a new App being introduced this year. Midwives are also working to improve the continuity of care women receive: Presently in Carlisle women receive care in the antenatal and postnatal period from their named midwife 80% of the time and we are now looking at how the service can improve the rate of continuity in labour for women in line with the Better Births report.

"After 34 years as a midwife I still find it a fascinating career: there is always something new to learn. I started out with conventional nurse training and then went into midwifery gaining my degree a few years after my initial qualification. Today most midwives enter the profession directly through the degree course.

"It is meeting the women and their families who make this job very special. It's a privilege to be able to care for families at this very important time and every baby is very unique and special.



 Download as PDF

 Print this page

[Patients and visitors](#)
[Our services](#)
[For GPs](#)
[Working with us](#)
[Media](#)
[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)
[Accessibility](#)
[Cookies](#)
[Copyright](#)
[Privacy](#)
[Terms and conditions](#)
[Site map](#)

[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Freedom of Information](#)
[Frequently asked questions](#)
[Videos](#)
[A-Z](#)