



## Request the support of a Maternity Mate

Maternity Mates work alongside midwives and other health professionals to help the mum and baby receive the best possible care.

If you would like to receive the support of Maternity Mates, please discuss this with your midwife or GP, who will refer you to our service, or you can call us direct on 020 7377 8725.

## Become a Maternity Mate

The Maternity Mates project is an exciting and rewarding scheme that provides **accredited training** to volunteers.

Being a Maternity Mate makes a real and lasting difference to the lives of the people we help. These are much sought-after roles that require a degree of commitment and we have a limited number of vacancies each year.

### Training provided

Maternity Mates undergo an accredited training course to **Level 3** with the **Open College Network (OCN)**. WHFS also provides on-going support following this initial training.

For further information on the role and how to become a Maternity Mate, please see our website.

[www.whfs.org.uk](http://www.whfs.org.uk)



## Contact Details

For further information on the Maternity Mates service - as well as how to become a Maternity Mate - please see our website, or contact:

### Maternity Mates Team

T 020 7377 8725

F 020 7377 1064

E [maternity.mates@whfs.org.uk](mailto:maternity.mates@whfs.org.uk)

[www.whfs.org.uk](http://www.whfs.org.uk)

Maternity Mates  
WHFS (Women's Health & Family Services)  
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# Are you pregnant and need extra support?



## Ask your midwife or GP about a referral to Maternity Mates



## About us

**WHFS (Women's Health & Family Services)** began working as a community health charity in 1981 and in 2010 developed the pioneering project, **Maternity Mates**, to support disadvantaged pregnant women.

A Maternity Mate is a female volunteer who is trained by WHFS to provide practical and emotional support to women during pregnancy, birth and the early weeks of motherhood.

Maternity Mates work alongside midwives and other health professionals, helping the mother to understand the issues and decisions that affect her care, and that of her baby.

Our aim is to ease the mother's concerns and help her gain a positive experience of giving birth and caring for her new baby.

## Mothers we support

Maternity Mates is open to pregnant women living in **Newham, Tower Hamlets** or **Waltham Forest** who do not have a suitable support network, or have specific needs or healthcare issues, such as:

- Single mums who do not have family or friends to offer support
- Women new to the UK without access to support from family or friends
- Women who have had a previous traumatic birth
- Women currently experiencing domestic or sexual violence
- Women with substance misuse issues
- Women affected by mental health issues
- Women with complex health needs
- Women who do not have a good command of the English language

## Flexible support

We are flexible with the support we provide, but it is preferable to begin at the earliest opportunity. We can help through one - or all - of these periods:

- Antenatal - from the 5<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy
- Birth - including labour
- Postnatal - up to 6 to 12 weeks

## What Maternity Mates provide

Maternity Mates are local volunteers and, where possible, will speak the same language as the mother-to-be. Maternity Mates provide:

- Emotional and practical support before, during and after the baby is born
- Support during hospital, GP, antenatal appointments and antenatal classes
- Information on birth planning and pain relief options
- Support during labour and birth – contributing to a more positive experience of childbirth
- Information and support around breastfeeding
- Information and referrals to specialist groups
- Introductions to the local children's centre and mother & baby groups

## Maternity Mates CANNOT

- Offer any clinical advice or perform any medical tasks
- Offer domestic cleaning, shopping or cooking
- Offer babysitting services
- Drive mums to and from appointments (for insurance reasons)

