



News Release

24 January 2019

New birthing pool hire service available at Dorset County Hospital

A new birthing pool hire service is now available at Dorset County Hospital, thanks to a generous donation.

The pools were donated by Claire Williams, a long-time advocate and supporter of homebirths, to the hospital's Cygnet Homebirth Team.

In 2011 Claire sought to give local women access to birthing pools at home, to save them the expense of buying one.

As part of the then Dorset Homebirth Group, a pool loan scheme was launched which Claire ran from her home on a voluntary basis for eight years.

Claire said: "It can be very heavy work at times as each pool has to be checked, cleaned and repacked before it goes out but there are so many benefits to labouring in water, it is important women can choose to have a pool."

Since the introduction of The Cygnet Homebirth Team in 2015 the number of women choosing homebirths has soared and around eight to 10 per cent of women in the area chose to give birth at home in the last year, with pools still very much in demand.

So when Claire, who also works as an Infant Feeding Support Worker at the hospital and as an NCT antenatal teacher, felt it was time to step back she decided to donate the pools to the Cygnet Homebirth Team.

As a thank you, the team invited Claire to meet with them and presented her with flowers.

Tara Pointer-Putt, Lead Midwife for the Cygnet Homebirth Team, said: "We are very happy to receive the birth pools. Many Dorset families have benefited from Claire's hard work over the years so we wanted to show our appreciation on their behalf.

"It's great that local women will still have access to the pools through our new hire service."

The Cygnet Homebirth team is going from strength to strength. Not only does the team hold one of the highest homebirth rates in the country, but they have also been shortlisted into the final five of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Team of the Year Award.

The team will be heading to London in March for the RCM Awards Ceremony.

The Cygnet Team midwives can be contacted on 01305 253169 and hold a regular meeting on the first Thursday of each month.

The meetings start at 7.30pm and are held in the Children's Centre on Damers Road in Dorchester and are open to anyone who would like to find out more about the pools and giving birth at home.

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PHOTO: The Cygnet Homebirth Team with Claire Williams

For more information, please contact Communications Officer Meghan Hindley on 01305 253394 or meghan.hindley@dchft.nhs.uk