

## DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL MIDWIFE WINS TOP HONOUR

### Ali Fuszard crowned South of England's 'Emma's Diary Mums' Midwife of the Year 2018'

Nominated by local mum, Charlene Willoughby, Ali Fuszard has been awarded the *Emma's Diary Mums' Midwife of the Year 2018* for the South of England region. The prestigious award is one of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Annual Midwifery Awards, recognising the incredible work done by exceptional midwives across the country.

Midwives play such a pivotal role in so many mums' lives and the *Emma's Diary Mums' Midwife of the Year Award* enables them to pay a heartfelt tribute to their own special midwife whose kindness and support truly surpassed what was expected of them.

After a tricky first birth, Charlene was hopeful of having a home birth with her second pregnancy and was keen for it to be as natural as possible. This included delayed cord clamping (allowing more blood to transfer from the placenta to the baby), using a cord tie instead of the standard plastic clamp, no Vitamin K after birth (although this was opted for later, when the baby was two days old) and for the baby to be held solely by her parents following birth. Ali cared for Charlene throughout her pregnancy, supporting her and respecting her birth plan.

Charlene, who nominated Ali for the award, explains: "My midwife, Ali, deserves this award because she empowered me so much during my pregnancy. She supported my partner, my toddler and myself and enabled us to have the home water birth we dreamed of. I was free to contact her with any questions or concerns and she always provided the reassurance I needed. Ali respected all my wishes when it came to our home birth plan and I cannot praise her care enough. She's an amazing woman and is part of an amazing team.

Ali who works for Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, believes the continuity of midwifery care is key to women feeling confident and supported through pregnancy and beyond. On winning the award she adds: "The news that I'd been chosen as the regional winner of the Emma's Diary Mum's Midwife of the Year came as a complete surprise! I'd no idea that I had even been nominated, so to discover that Charlene had taken the time to do that was just lovely. Working in partnership with women and families to support their choices and ensure they are safely cared for is all part of being a midwife, but really getting to know people through providing continuity of care is what enables me to do my job well."

She continued; "I'm very fortunate to be able to work in this way as part of Dorset County Hospital's Cygnet Homebirth Team, alongside wonderful colleagues. To be truthful, it's a real pleasure to watch women's confidence grow and families flourish so I'm slightly embarrassed to receive an award for doing something I love, however the fact that it has come directly from a woman I've cared for makes it very special indeed."

Emma's Diary, the UK's essential support resource for mums to be and new parents, received a record 751 nominations from mums across the UK. All entries were put through a meticulous judging process by a panel of representatives from both Emma's Diary and the RCM, culminating in seven regional winners.

The RCM's Annual Awards, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Ali will join the six other regional winners at a glamorous awards ceremony in London, where she will receive her trophy and find out who is crowned the coveted national winner.

Sunil Singh, Emma's Diary's healthcare director, comments: "This will be our third year sponsoring the award and each year we get blown away by stories of exceptional compassion and dedication shown by hundreds of wonderful midwives across the UK. Each nomination conveys a level of care and support that makes such a huge difference to a mum and their family's life. It is a truly humbling experience and we are delighted for Ali, who is so deserving of this extra recognition."

Commenting Mandy Forrester, Head of Quality and Standards at The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) said; "This is a really special award to have won. Mums' Midwife of the Year Award recognises the amazing support that midwives give to women throughout pregnancy, birth and early motherhood. Ali has delivered exceptional care and support to the mother that nominated her for this award and she should be very proud of this achievement.

"To read testimonies from mothers who have recognised that their midwife has provided safe, high quality, woman centred care is truly inspiring and certainly something as midwives we can all learn from."

**For more information or to arrange an interview with Ali Fuszard and Charlene Willoughby, please contact:**

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **Emma's Diary Mums' Midwife of the Year Award – the judging process**

Nominations were triple reviewed and a strict scoring system was applied to whittle down the entries to a shortlist of 6-8 per region, before the overall regional winner was announced. Attributes including aiding the strengthening of the bond between mother and baby, support for their emotional care and best practice in helping the mother feel involved and in control were all carefully assessed. In total seven regional winners were awarded from the regions London, South, Midlands & East England, North of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

#### **Emma's Diary**

Emma's Diary is the UK's essential support resource for mums to be and new parents. The site provides best practice support and advice on pregnancy and early post-natal information, via responsible and reliable content that is verified by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RGCP) and supported by the RCM.

Emma's Diary supports every stage of the journey towards parenthood and beyond by making useful recommendations that match the ongoing needs of all new mums, helping to make the experience of motherhood a positive and reassuring one while offering peace of mind that any information given is clinically verified.

Users of Emma's Diary will also benefit from great offers, discounts and free gift packs full of relevant samples to support their pregnancy and post-natal journey.

For more information visit [www.emmasdiary.co.uk](http://www.emmasdiary.co.uk) or contact Emma's Diary on 01628 522776 or [emma@emmasdiary.co.uk](mailto:emma@emmasdiary.co.uk).

#### **The Royal College of Midwives**

The RCM is the only professional organisation and trade union dedicated to serving midwifery and the whole midwifery team. We provide workplace advice and support, professional and clinical guidance and information, and learning opportunities with our broad range of events, conferences and online resources.

For more information visit the RCM website at <https://www.rcm.org.uk/>.