

**Client:** Birth Companions Yellow News  
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### Charity raises plight of imprisoned mothers and pregnant inmates

A charity has today (26 May 2016) called on the government and prison service to improve care for incarcerated pregnant women and new mothers. Birth Companions launched the Birth Charter to help inform the government's ongoing review of the treatment of imprisoned women and their babies. It highlights good practice, but also inconsistencies and failures to meet with national and international legislation. There are 600 pregnant women and 100 new mothers held in prisons in England and Wales each year. The report aims to improve current practice for these women on aspects ranging from antenatal care and birthing partners to breastfeeding, family visits and counselling. CPHVA/Unite professional officer Rosalind Godson said: "Pregnancy and labour are among the most stressful time in any woman's life, and women in prison who face additional stress around this time are still in need of expert support in all their decisions around pregnancy." "Evidence shows that the mental and physical health of the mother and quality of attachment of the mother and child reaps considerable benefits for the development of good childhood emotional mental health which persists to adulthood." "We fully support the recommendations in the Birth Charter and urge the government to implement them in full as soon as possible." Birth Companions works with women in custody and women released from prison, as well as others facing severe disadvantages during the crucial period in their lives around birth.

Unattributed

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