

Here's what some of the women
we've helped say about
Birth Companions...

*"Having a Birth Companion made a
difference to how I felt approaching
labour because I knew I had someone
who was going to be there for me."*

*"I would have been so alone.
Thank you for being there."*

*"It made me feel good and less left out.
They made up for what I was missing,
my family."*

*"Birth Companions are like guardian
angels and I have a special place in my
heart for each one of them."*



OFFICE NUMBER
07855 725 097

24 HOUR BIRTH LINE
020 7117 0037

Birth Companions
PO Box 64597
London
SW17 1DR

Email: info@birthcompanions.org.uk
Website: www.birthcompanions.org.uk

Charity Number: 1120934

Birth Companions



*Supporting pregnant
women and new
mothers in prison*

Who We Are

Birth Companions is a small registered charity established in 1996 to provide a much-needed support service to pregnant women and new mothers in prison. Women in prison can be accompanied during childbirth by a friend or family member. However, many women prisoners, particularly foreign nationals, have no one to support them, and face the challenges of child birth alone.

Currently, Birth Companions provides antenatal, birth and postnatal support to women at HMP Holloway, and to women in London who have recently been released from detention.

Our services are offered completely free of charge by a group of dedicated staff and volunteers. Each of our birth companions has been highly trained to offer sensitive, non-judgemental support to the women they work with.

Antenatal Support

We visit Holloway prison every week to meet pregnant women and offer antenatal support and information. Our aim is to recognise the

particular needs of women dealing with pregnancy in a prison environment. We strive to address the issues and topics that are most relevant to women in this situation, and aim to reduce stress and isolation that can negatively impact on mother and baby health.



Birth Support

When a woman who wants our support goes into labour, she can contact us via our 24 hour Birth Line. We then arrange for a trained birth companion volunteer to meet her at the hospital and support her during labour and childbirth. The birth companion volunteer can help with breathing exercises, positions and massage, and can offer emotional support and encouragement.

She can also provide companionship and act as an advocate if and when necessary.

Postnatal Support

After the birth, we offer early support with bonding and breastfeeding. We take photographs of mother and baby together and provide two sets of prints - one for the mother and one she can send to her family. We also provide phone cards so women can receive support from family and friends and share news of the birth. If a mother and baby are to be separated, we are there to offer reassurance and support as the woman copes with this difficult and emotional transition.

At the prison we deliver a weekly parenting group on the Mother and Baby Unit, and visit women on a one to one basis to offer support as needed.

Post-Release Support

When pregnant women or new mothers are released from prison, we can help them to resettle in their communities by linking them in with local birth and parenting services. We may also be able to provide birth support.