

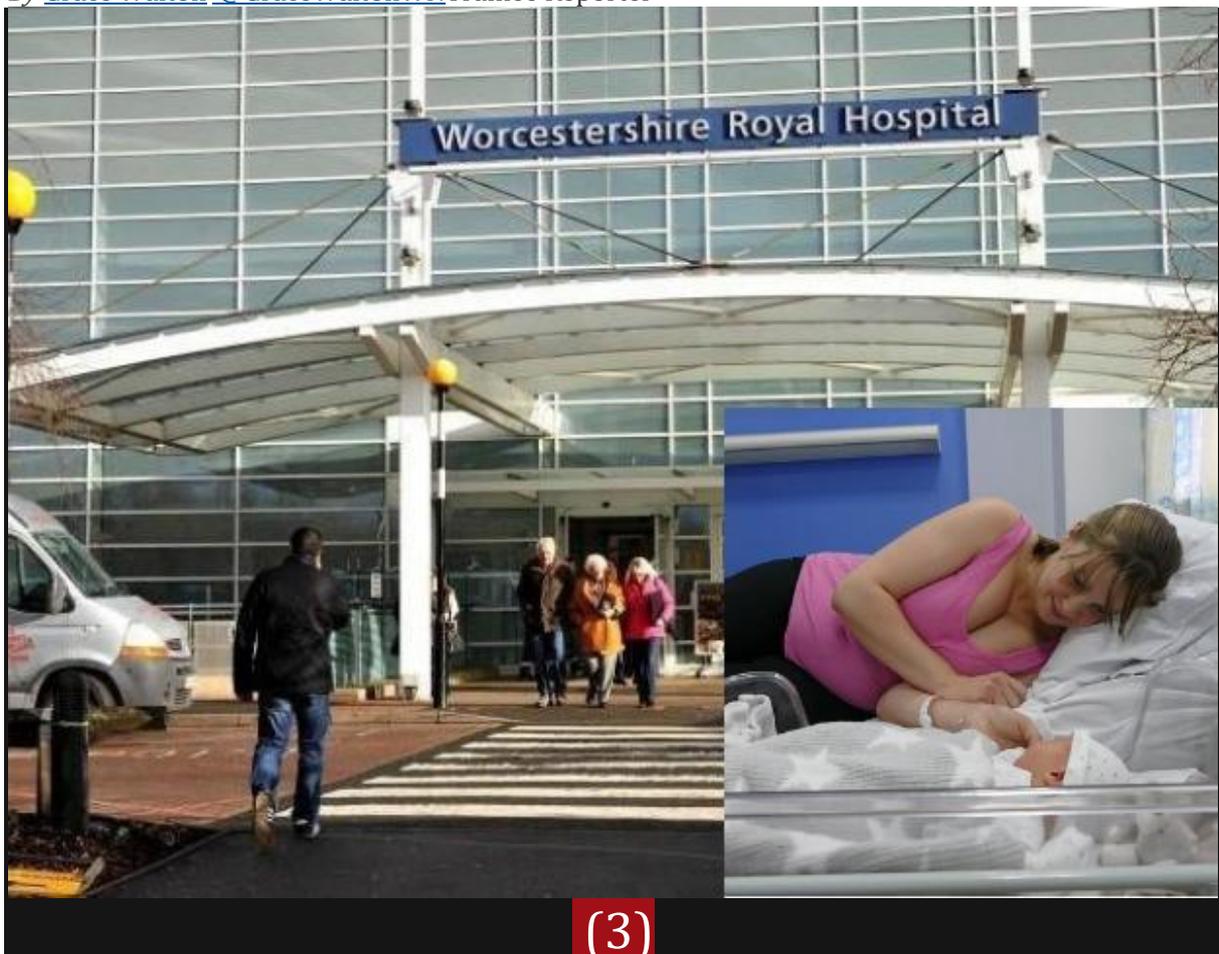
<https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/18778732.whistleblower-midwife-says-staff-exhausted-working-like-dogs/>

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## Whistleblower midwife says staff are exhausted and 'working like dogs'



By [Grace Walton](#) [@GraceWaltonWN](#) Trainee Reporter



[.35 comments](#)

**A TEARFUL midwife has told how her team are “working like dogs” due to a staff shortage at Worcestershire Royal Hospital.**

The midwife claims staff are exhausted as they are currently working with up to a third fewer than the usual number of midwives - who were already worn out after working throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

The whistleblower said there should be 22 midwives at the hospital on a day shift and 18 at night, but on some days the department had only had 13 members of staff.

We reported recently how pregnant women were left waiting for several days to have their waters broken at the hospital because there was not enough midwives available.

The midwife said she felt the problems had shone a bad light on the maternity ward and that midwives felt as if they were being blamed.

She added: "We take it very personal. We feel like we should be doing more.

"I want to speak out for the midwives. We are being blamed but we're doing our best.

"We have worked like dogs throughout the whole Covid-19 crisis. We are still dealing with this every single day.

"We want to care for these women properly but we're not able to give them the time and reassurance and give proper care because of staff shortages.

"We will keep fighting. We are very passionate and believe strongly in what we do. We have got to be dedicated to the job."

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust says the shortage is due to both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 sickness problems - as well as September being a very busy time for new mums.

However, the midwife, who we have agreed not to name, has blamed the pressures on midwives attending a national training programme called Continuity of Carer, which sees pregnant women receiving care from a named midwife or small team.

She said: "We are exhausted. We are short staffed because there is a national initiative.

"We are 24 midwives down than what we were last year with the same work load.

“Staff are being forced to go out on Continuity despite not wanting to. It also means leaving the unit short.

“We can’t even do our jobs properly. We don’t need praise, but we don’t deserve this – there simply is not enough of us to do our jobs.

“It’s dangerous.

“Within our 12 and a half hours shift we are supposed to have a one hour unpaid break but more often than not it’s rare we take a break.”

Following our previous story about a mum who said she was left waiting despite being told she needed to be induced, several more women came forward to say they too had faced delays when they went to Worcestershire Royal hospital to give birth.

The trust says there has been a staff shortage but reiterated that its staffing pressures were the fault of coronavirus and other sickness.

Justine Jeffery, divisional director of midwifery and gynaecology nursing, said: “Continuity of Carer is a new model of care which sees mums-to-be receiving their care from a named midwife or a midwife from a small team throughout their pregnancy journey.

“A national rollout, which expects to see the majority of mums-to-be benefiting from this model of care by 2022, began in 2018 following evidence that it improves outcomes for mothers and their babies. We are pleased that Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust is considered to be a national trailblazer in this area of our maternity services.

“The continued rollout of Continuity of Carer at the Trust is not related to the extremely busy period we had in September - which is not unusual for maternity services. We anticipate that this annual busy period will reduce as we progress into October.

“The senior maternity leadership team are working closely with the midwives to offer support daily and reduce any additional stress; signposting staff to the numerous avenues of support that are available to all staff.

“Staffing pressures due to Covid 19 and non Covid 19 related sickness had caused some additional challenges but putting patients first remains our priority and we would like to reassure families that we have worked carefully to ensure the safety of all mothers and babies is maintained and that staff are supported to return to work when safe to do so.

“On behalf of the Trust I would like to apologise to any expectant mother and their family for any delays in their care, or if any aspect of their care fell below the high standards we set for ourselves.”