**The Tommy’s #movementsmatter campaign challenges dangerous myths about baby movement during pregnancy**

* **New campaign led by Tommy’s and supported by Kicks Count and NHS England challenges dangerous myths about fetal movement, such as babies move less in third trimester due to lack of space**
* **55% women who had a stillbirth noticed their baby’s movements had slowed down or stopped but hadn’t reported it.**
* **Tommy’s CEO Jane Brewin says women need to be empowered with current and up-to-date information about their baby’s movements**

A recent Tommy’s survey of 1,318 pregnant women has found that only 15% of respondents know how to monitor fetal movement during pregnancy.

In June 2016, Tommy’s conducted a survey in partnership with the Bounty Word of Mum panel, of 1,318 respondents, all of whom were pregnant women. The survey included a number of questions about baby movements, including: when they first felt their baby move; what they would do if they felt their baby moving less; and what would prevent them from calling the midwife. The findings are concerning.

Although 95% of pregnant women are aware that baby’s movements are important, 85% were unaware of how much movement they should be watching for. Only half of women would call a midwife promptly on noticing reduced movement and a massive 73% would delay asking for help and try to do something to make the baby move, despite there being no evidence at all for the effectiveness of this. More than half (52%) would avoid calling the midwife/hospital due to worry about ‘wasting time’ or ‘being a nuisance’.

A baby moving during pregnancy can be anything from a flutter, kick, swish or roll and these are a sign that baby is well. When a baby is unwell, they may conserve energy by slowing down their movements. We think that if this symptom is reported promptly there is a window of opportunity in which the baby’s life may be saved.

Tommy’s, supported by NHS England and Kicks Count, is challenging some of the prevalent and incorrect thinking about RFM, such as

* Baby movements slow down in the third trimester due to lack of space (although baby’s movements may change in type, their frequency should not change)
* A certain amount of kicks is fine
* I can get help tomorrow
* I don’t want to bother the hospital
* I can’t be checked at the weekend or outside 9-5
* I can use a home Doppler for reassurance

**Jane Brewin, CEO of Tommy’s** comments; *‘There are no set number of movements a woman should feel, what is important is that she knows what feels normal for her and her baby. It is not true that babies move less often towards the end of pregnancy, a woman should feel their baby move right up to the time of labour, and during labour too. We urge women to never hesitate to contact their midwife or maternity unit for advice, no matter how many times this happens.’*

Amy Horwood, 28 from Bath, had a stillborn son, George at 31 weeks. She says *“I’ve had lots of counselling and the biggest thing for me was forgiving myself for not knowing enough about fetal movement. I felt it was my fault George had died and the guilt was overwhelming. I thought that once you got beyond that first 12 weeks everything would be okay. I miss George all the time and life is still full of ‘What ifs?’ but I’m trying to channel that grief, that loss into something positive. For me, encouraging other women to be more aware of fetal movement, is George’s legacy.”*

**Dr Matthew Jolly, National Clinical Director for Maternity and Women’s Health at NHS England**, said: *“It’s crucial that women and their partners feel informed and empowered when monitoring their baby’s movement, acting immediately to seek advice if they are concerned. Raising awareness of the importance of fetal movement through access to clear, consistent advice is key in helping reduce the number of stillbirths.”*

**Elizabeth Hutton, CEO of Kicks Count**, said: *“It’s vitally important that expectant mums are aware of current recommendations on how and why to monitor their baby’s movements.  This is something which Kicks Count has been raising awareness of since we launched in 2009.  Things are improving slowly but there are still many myths in circulation such as ‘a baby will run out of room to move as they grow larger’, that are still commonly believed across the UK and are quite simply wrong.  Now is the time for change.  We encourage mums to trust their instincts and speak to a midwife whenever they feel that their baby’s movements have changed or if they are worried about any change during pregnancy”*

A recent study showed that around half of women who had a stillbirth noticed reduced movements. It’s common, however, for women to wait for up to two days before they mention it to their midwife or doctor. Stillbirth rates are shockingly high – in 2014 the UK ranked 24th out of 49 high-income countries. For every 220 babies born in the UK, one is stillborn. This means that more than 3,200 families go home without their newborn baby, every year. Reduced fetal movement (RFM) can be a warning sign that there is a high risk of stillbirth.

Raising awareness amongst pregnant women of the importance of monitoring the movement of their unborn baby and reporting reduction in movement allows timely clinical intervention to save the baby’s life. A Norwegian study alerting women to seek help with reduced fetal movements, has shown a reduction of a third in stillbirth rates.

**About Tommy’s**

Tommy's funds research into pregnancy problems and provides information to parents. We believe it is unacceptable that one in four women lose a baby during pregnancy and birth. When a pregnancy fails or a baby dies, it causes devastation. Twenty-four years ago, frustrated at the lack of research that meant they could rarely tell families why their babies were dying, two obstetricians in St Thomas' Hospital in London were inspired to start a campaign for more research into pregnancy problems. Soon, their cause was taken up by others and a charity known as 'Tommy's' (after St Thomas' Hospital) was born. That was 1992. Today, we lead the way in maternal and fetal research in the UK. [www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org)

**About NHS England**

In March NHS England published new guidance to help reduce the number of stillbirths and address variation in outcomes across England. This was the first time that guidance specifically for reducing stillbirths including the importance of fetal movement was been brought together in a coherent package. An information and advice leaflet on reduced fetal movement will be provided to all pregnant women.

**– Ends –**

Notes to editors

* Tommy’s Reduced Fetal Movement video is available to watch here [www.tommys.org/movementsmatter](http://www.tommys.org/movementsmatter)
* The campaign hashtags are #movementsmatter and #kickmebabyonemoretime
* The survey was conducted in partnership with Bounty, the pregnancy and baby information website
* A total of 1,318 women responded to the survey
* Jane Brewin, CEO of Tommy’s is available for interview
* Dr Alexander Heazell, Clinical Director of Tommy’s Stillbirth Research Centre at St Mary’s Hospital, Manchester, is available for interview
* Women who are happy to share their personal experiences include Theresa Richardson, 30, from Aberdeen; Camilla Crippen, 29, from London and Amy Horwood, 28, from Bath
* All video assets and images are available for use. Please contact Hannah Blake.
* Link to care bundle here <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/mat-transformation/saving-babies/>

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