

## Mark Lancaster seeks reassurance on maternity staffing

Mark Lancaster has urged the Government to maintain improvements in the city's troubled maternity unit.

The city MP put midwifery back on the agenda of the health secretary yesterday (Tuesday) when he urged Andrew Lansley to continue to train more midwives.

The problems at Milton Keynes Hospital have been well documented, with the coroner citing inadequate staffing levels as factors in the deaths of two babies in 2007 and 2009.

Strict conditions were put in place by the Care Quality Commission, which in October were lifted after great improvement was shown, including the introduction of one-to-one supervision for all mothers.

Mr Lansley replied that there is a record number of midwives in training, something which he pledged to continue. In fact, in the earliest months of the Coalition, 296 extra midwives were employed by the NHS.

After his question in the House of Commons, Mr Lancaster said: "I am delighted that this Government is committed to recruiting midwives. Milton Keynes Hospital has really turned things around. Its maternity unit is now an exemplar for staffing levels. Thanks to the hard work of the staff and the backing of ministers, I believe this upward trajectory will continue."

Last year Mr Lancaster praised the hospital for its improvement in retaining midwives "with the turnover rate dropping to 3.8 per cent in 2010/11 from 7.8 per cent in 09/10 and 11.6 per cent in 08/09.