



Department  
of Health

Dr Daniel Poulter  
Parliamentary Under  
Secretary of State for Health  
Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London, SW1A 2NS

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Chief Executives of NHS Trusts  
Chief Executives of NHS Foundation Trusts  
Heads of Midwifery

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### **Protecting the privacy and dignity of all women and their families**

You are probably aware of the recent media coverage about the Mumsnet survey into people's experiences of Bounty representatives, while in NHS care.

I recognise that it is for you, as individual trusts, to make decisions about representatives from Bounty or any other organisation being allowed on maternity wards. However, as with all hospital or birth centre visitors I expect any representative to respect the privacy and dignity of all women and their families.

Many mothers and their families value the information and other benefits they receive from parenting clubs or other support organisations. This information often includes accessible information on important subjects such as preventing cot death, car seats and how to access benefits. Bounty has helped with the promotion of Department of Health messages on whooping cough, encouraging pregnant women to have the flu jab and encouraging women to sign up to the NHS Information Service for Parents.

Whilst it is beneficial to have accessible information available to women at a time when they are responsive to messaging, I am sure you will agree that it is unacceptable for parenting support organisations including Bounty to use this as an opportunity to collect private data and share it without the express informed consent of the parents. It is for this reason that I am asking you to review your practices for allowing representatives from private companies on maternity wards to assure yourselves that you are maintaining women's dignity and respect shortly after the birth of a baby when they can be tired and vulnerable.

Dr Daniel Poulter  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health