

## THE AFRICAN MATERNITY HEALTH LINK, THE ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL REDDITCH

### What is a Health Link?

*A Health Link is a formalised voluntary partnership between counterpart health organisations in the U.K. and a Developing Country (DC)*

*A Health Link is about people working together to share ideas, knowledge and friendship to improve health care. By doing this within an organisational agreement Links have the potential to be strategic and long-term, better able to inspire change.*

*Our African Maternity Health Link began in February 2012 with our first visit to Freetown, Sierra Leone. With a start up grant from the Department for International Development through the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) we made a scoping visit to Lumley Government Hospital to see if and how we could help. The need was obvious and vast. Through discussions with the Ministry of Health in Sierra Leone and senior managers at Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust an agreement was undertaken to provide training and support for the midwifery staff at Lumley. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both partners agreeing to cooperate and develop the Link to improve the maternity services being offered in the Lumley area.*

*In April 2010 the government of Sierra Leone introduced free health care for pregnant and lactating women and children under five years of age. This was a massive step forward in improving maternal mortality and morbidity statistics as a large proportion of women did not attend hospital due to the cost of treatment. However, it is now imperative to have the resources available to the women when they arrive in the hospitals in order to encourage continued attendance. Having trained health professionals at each delivery is essential in contributing to reducing maternal and neonatal deaths many of which can be prevented through very simple means.*

## Millennium Development Goals



*'The U.K. should see itself as having a responsibility as the employer of a global workforce and seize the opportunity to support training in developing countries. Ethiopia trains 200 doctors a year for a population of 75 million, the U.K. trains 6,000 for a population of 65 million.'*

*Lord Crisp 2008*

*By training and supporting midwives at LGH we can contribute to the achievement of MDG Nos.4&5 and change the lives of countless women and their families.*

*Our aim is to visit Freetown at least twice a year and to arrange reciprocal visits for the midwives to come to the U.K. to observe how we work here. These visits will be invaluable as the midwives will learn an incredible amount in a very short space of time and return to Lumley with clear goals of how to improve the services offered there.*



Africa has 11% of the world's population,  
24% of the global disease and only  
3% of the healthcare workers to deal with it.

The Alexandra Hospital (Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust) has formed a Maternity Health Link with the Lumley Government Hospital in Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. The aim of the Link is to improve the maternity services offered in that hospital by providing on-going training and support to the staff working there. This is achieved through reciprocal visits by midwives, delivering workshops and clinical training.

We are looking for support with this Link either financial or practical to secure its growth and development into the future. **Many Thanks**



Training





Sierra Leone Streets



Makeni School of Midwifery student block





Drying bras for the ante-natal ladies