

'Births at home are unfair to others'

WOMEN who insist on having babies at home are putting other mothers and babies at risk, according to a top doctor.

He says the health service has not got the resources to cope with childbirth emergencies both in hospital and at home.

Mr Raymond Booth, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Basildon Hospital in Essex, said: 'If there is a crisis during childbirth at home, a flying squad of four highly trained medical staff has to be called out from the local hospital where they are probably just as badly needed. We just do not have enough staff to deal with emergencies in the home and at hospital at the same time.'

Danger

Dr Booth, who was speaking to members of the National Childbirth Trust, said: 'Being born is the most dangerous part of living, so why on earth should women want to give birth in their homes away from the equipment and staff who could save their baby's life if anything went wrong?'

'At present 97 per cent. of women give birth in hospital. I see no reason at all why they should suffer because of the 3 per cent. who want to have their babies at home.'

He said modern developments in ante-natal care had reduced the number of stillbirths and infant mortality in the critical first week of life. To revert to home confinements would put back the clock 50 years.