

# Midwife suspended over blunders

## that led to death

**Chris Smyth** Health Editor

A midwife whose incompetence led to the death of a baby was allowed to keep working for seven years, then another child died in similar circumstances.

Regulators are being investigated over why Lindsey Biggs was allowed to continue caring for pregnant women while under inquiry for her role in the scandal at the Morecambe Bay trust, where failures and cover-ups led to the deaths of 11 babies and one mother.

She was among midwives who called themselves “the musketeers” as they fought doctors for natural childbirth at any cost, an inquiry found last year.

Biggs was suspended last week by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) over the death of another baby in March. She failed to monitor its heart rate or call in senior staff when things went wrong, then altered the baby’s records, according to a panel that found that her “lack of basic midwifery skills” had potentially contributed to the baby’s deterioration. The

**Lindsey Biggs failed to alert senior staff**



council’s failure to act sooner was condemned by James Titcombe, whose nine-day-old son Joshua died in 2008 after poor care by Ms Biggs.

“The similarities to Joshua’s death are really shocking,” he said. “The panel only took action after seven and a half years and even then only with this other case.”

The NMC cited similarities to Joshua’s case as it suspended Ms Biggs for 18 months because of a “real risk of repetition” if she were allowed to work during a full investigation. Only last week did the NMC formal-

ly conclude that Biggs had failed to monitor Joshua’s temperature properly and did not call in a paediatrician, denying him a chance to survive. She was also criticised for her evidence, described as “lacking in credibility”.

Mr Titcombe dismissed the regulator’s argument that it needed to wait for police and government to complete inquiries. “They’ve got it absolutely back to front,” he said. “The NMC have a duty to act straight away.”

John Woodcock, MP for Barrow & Furness, said: “It’s staggering that this was allowed to go on for so long and it looks to any observer like the NMC has closed ranks around its members.” A

spokesman for the NMC said: “In the case of midwife Lindsey Biggs, the NMC is confident that we have taken the correct actions. We carried out a series of risk assessments which included maintaining regular contact with her employer. At no point during the process did the employer raise any concerns about her current practice.

“Having now received a new complaint in relation to Lindsey Biggs, we feel that it is right that we review the actions we have taken to date. As an organisation that is committed to continuous improvement we have asked an external adviser to help us undertake this review.”