

NHS backed anti-abortionists

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An anti-abortion group that wrongly claims terminations can cause breast cancer has been recommended to women by one of the biggest NHS mental health trusts.

Patients have complained that GCN, formerly the Good Counsel Network, left them feeling harassed and upset by the aggressive pro-life agenda peddled at its "pregnancy crisis centres".

The organisation, which has been criticised by the Advertising Standards Authority for misleading claims, sent activists to picket abortion clinics where they showed women plastic models of unborn children, according to an investigation by the *Dispatches* programme on Channel 4. Yet from

2011 until this year the network was endorsed as "a leading organisation in the field of mental health" by South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust.

Clare McCullough, who founded GCN, told an undercover reporter that there was "a large increased risk in breast cancer after abortion" despite solid scientific evidence to the contrary.

A "pavement counsellor" employed by the network was also filmed confronting women outside an abortion clinic in Twickenham. GCN has since been disowned by the NHS trust, which said that its endorsement had not been a "clinical recommendation".

Ms McCullough categorically denied that any of her staff or volunteers had meant to upset women.

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