



Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership - Annual Report 2018/19

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Becky Gray

Contents

Letter from the Chair	2
Why we need a Maternity Voices Partnership.....	3
The Function of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP	4
What we do	4
What we have achieved this year	4
Volunteer recruitment.....	4
Walking the patch	5
Coffee mornings.....	5
Surveys.....	5
15 Steps Maternity	5
Bi-monthly meetings	6
Recruit service user chair.....	6
Future plans 2017-18	6
Conclusion	7

Letter from the Chair

We have had a busy year!

We have had five meetings this year, with follow-up planning and review meetings between each. Meetings have been lively and enthusiastic, with a diverse range of health professionals, local council and commissioning representatives and service user volunteers (and their delightful babies!) coming together to discuss positive ways forward that will benefit everybody. During the meetings we have discussed a wide range of topics and reviewed the feedback we have received from our engagement activities.

Meetings have been a real example of staff and service users striving for co-production, bringing together many voices who all respect each other and their work. Everyone is dedicated to improving the experience of women and their families around this exciting and vulnerable period in their lives.

We have seen a strong national movement to bring Maternity Voices to the fore, with the groups very much a part of Better Births. Nottinghamshire Local Maternity System has been working closely with the MVP to ensure that local voices are heard and feed into any new initiatives, this is something that will remain a focus as Maternity Transformation continues.

I would like to thank everyone who attends and takes an interest in Maternity Voices. Your support is much appreciated.

Thanks also to:

HealthWatch for supporting our volunteers and extending the reach of our engagement.

Small Steps Big Changes for helping to make our Nottingham City events such a success.

Killisick Children's Centre for enabling us to hold our meetings in their lovely space and

Jenny Pilmore who has worked over and above to support and facilitate the MVP.

Author: Anna Rutkowska, Lay-Chair, and Becky Gray Co-Chair Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership

Why we need a Maternity Voices Partnership

“In a maternity context, the best way of instituting service user co-production is through a ‘Maternity Voices Partnership’ (MVP). These are independent formal multidisciplinary committees which come together to influence and share in the decision-making of the Local Maternity System and its constituent parts. They are underpinned by practical support from local commissioners and providers, which should include appropriate financial support. They are similar to existing Maternity Service Liaison Committees (MSLCs) which they will replace”ⁱ.

MSLCs have been operating throughout the UK for the past 30 years to ensure that the unique perspectives of maternity service users are integrated into decision making about NHS maternity services. At the time of this report, and as a result of the 2016 National Maternity Review’s report *Better Births*ⁱⁱ, Maternity Service Liaison Committees across the country have been transformed into Maternity Voices Partnerships including that in Nottinghamshire.

Understanding and awareness of the true meaning of co-design and co-production are growing and many commissioners are realising for the first time why investing in Maternity Voices Partnerships represents a good investment even in cash-strapped times. However, involving service users collaboratively in making decisions about health care services and driving forward improvements is not just good practice, it is the law.

The NHS Constitution 2015ⁱⁱⁱ defines the rights, pledges and responsibilities of NHS patients and staff. It tells us that the NHS aspires to provide high quality care that is safe, effective and focused on patient experience. This requires ‘collective effort and collaboration at every level of the system’ and is dependent on welcoming feedback from patients and utilising feedback to drive forward improvements. Collaboration and patient involvement are crucial for delivering high quality care. The Constitution also highlights the right of service users to be involved in decision-making about health care services:

“You have the right to be involved, directly or through representatives, in the planning of healthcare services commissioned by NHS bodies, the development and consideration of proposals for changes in the way those services are provided, and in decisions to be made affecting the operation of those services.”

This notion is mirrored in many other policy documents including; ‘Patient and public participation in commissioning health and care’ Statutory guidance for CCGs^{iv} which states that:

“Effective participation comes from our mindset and culture. It moves beyond process and embraces people, carers and patients in the design, delivery and assessment of care. It should be a natural part of the way we work.”

In maternity care, NICE guideline CG190, ‘Intrapartum care for healthy women and babies’ (2014)^v, recommends that commissioners and providers should ensure that there are multidisciplinary clinical governance structures in place, which include adequately supported user representation, to enable the oversight of all birth settings. In March 2017, NHS England published the resource pack for Local Maternity Systems to help them implement *Better Births*^{vi}. Chapter 4 of that resource pack reaffirmed and strengthened the commitment to ensuring maternity services were co-designed and co-produced with women and their

families, and that commissioners are responsible for supporting and investing in local Maternity Voices Partnerships, and ensuring that they are able to take part in all Local Maternity System planning.

The Function of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP is an independent, multi-disciplinary advisory body, made up of local parents, representatives and professionals. Our committee includes representatives from two providers of maternity services, Nottingham University Hospitals Trust and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust with both Midwifery and obstetric representatives attending; Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) Mid Nottingham CCG, Nottingham City and County Councils, HealthWatch, Small Steps Big Changes, and doulas. At each meeting we have a number of service users who have used Nottinghamshire maternity services and have volunteered to be active members of our MVP. The Maternity Voices Partnership exists in order to plan, monitor, develop and improve maternity care for women, partners and families within Nottinghamshire.

What we do

We meet bi-monthly to discuss key issues for Nottinghamshire women and families, from pre-conception through to antenatal care, birth and postnatal care and recommend changes and improvements where these are needed; we have had a strong focus on areas which align with those denoted in the National Maternity Review: Better Births.

Meetings are generally held in Killisick Children's Centre, which is central to the Nottinghamshire MVP footprint and provides a welcoming environment for the group. Around 5-10 people attend each meeting, with around 25 people on the mailing list.

Throughout the year the MVP volunteers with the support of HealthWatch have undertaken a number of engagement activities where they have sought feedback from service users within the local area. This has included 'walking the patch', '15 Steps' and themed surveys. As many of our members work with pregnant women and new parents they also can provide a great deal of information about current experiences and feelings. We are working hard to make links with 'seldom heard' groups and have representatives who attend meetings on their behalf. Information which is collected via these activities is then reported to the group and feedback to the services to guide service improvements- we are working hard to strengthen this feedback loop to ensure that service users are listened to and true co-production of service improvement and development takes place.

We are always delighted to welcome new service users to the committee. If you have had a baby in the last three years in Nottinghamshire, or have an interest in maternity and would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you. Please email either Rebecca.gray12@nhs.net or katie.swinburn@nhs.net

What we have achieved this year

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP has only been in place since May 2018 and in that time we have achieved a great deal.

Volunteer recruitment

In partnership with Nottingham HealthWatch the MVP recruited 9 service users to form a core volunteer group who would support the MVP in gathering feedback from a range of service users via a number of means. From March to July 2018 HWNN advertised for, and

recruited, seven volunteers who had given birth in the last 12 months to support this project by undertaking surveys, ward walk rounds and interviews with new mothers. In August these volunteers were trained in safeguarding, confidentiality, equality and diversity, HealthWatch 'Enter and View' powers and the 'walking the patch' procedure. The volunteers also reviewed the walking the patch survey and practised carrying it out. The volunteers are all local mothers who have recently had contact with maternity services and who felt passionate about the co-production of maternity services within Nottinghamshire. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to you all for your hard work and dedication

Walking the patch

Throughout the year there have been three 'Walking the patch' visits to maternity wards within Nottinghamshire. The MVP volunteers undertook interviews with women who had just given birth on maternity wards at City Hospital, Kings Mill Hospital and Queens Medical Centre. The aim of these visits was to collect 'live' experiences about maternity services in order to inform service design and delivery. For each 'Walking the patch' undertaken a report has been compiled with recommendations which have been fed back to the Trusts via MVP members.

Coffee mornings

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have also organised a number of coffee morning events where local women and their families have been invited to share their stories, views and suggestions with members of the MVP which has included representation from local maternity services. These coffee mornings have been very successful in gathering feedback from local populations which has then been used to guide discussion at the MVP meetings and to inform Trusts of areas where they are performing well and not so well.

Surveys

We have also undertaken 3 surveys which have focused on key areas of Better Births and Maternity Transformation to provide information about these areas relating to local families. We have had a fantastic response to these surveys, both online and face to face with over 500 women and families sharing their experience with us.

15 Steps Maternity

Our Lay-Chair has taken part in 15 Steps Maternity walk rounds at one of the LMS Trust sites which produced some great feedback for the Trust.

The MVP has also had representation at a number of local events. In October several members of the group attended a Whose Shoes event organised by Nottingham University Hospitals Trusts with a particular focus on Continuity of Carer.



We have also had representatives attend several regional events and MVP forums which have helped us share our successes and learn for the successes of other MVPs.

Bi-monthly meetings

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have held bi-monthly meetings which have been attended by our key members inclusive of service user representatives, maternity service representatives and other key stakeholders. We have discussed a wide range of topics including reviewing of feedback received through our various engagement methods. The MVP had been consulted on several aspects of local transformation including the development of Personalised Care Plans and digital information sources such as Apps and websites.

Recruit service user chair

During the latter part of the year we recruited a Lay Chair, Anna Rutkowska, who has worked hard to ensure that the voices of Nottinghamshire women and families are heard.

Future plans 2019-20

A planning meeting has been scheduled for March 2019 in order to plan for 2019/2020 to ensure that the group build on work already completed and in progress. Our future plans include:

- Increasing the visibility of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP by exploring digital communications such as Facebook
- Continue to support Nottinghamshire LMS in implementing Better Birth through co-production and consultation. We are looking at ways to improve our feedback mechanisms and hope that our Chair will attend LMS board meetings.
- To work closely with local groups and users
- To reach out to seldom heard groups and hear their voices – link up SSBC and community groups to achieve this
- Increase numbers of parents attending the meetings and considering how we will do this
- Continue to collect feedback at children's centres and get more volunteers on board to assist with this through partnership working
- Continue to carry out regular 'walk the patch' and '15 steps' with the help of more volunteers
- Review funding options and bid for formal commissioning possible through LMS commissioning work stream

Conclusion

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership has had an interesting and productive year. We have made recommendations to both Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust and Nottingham University Hospitals Trust and identified areas where improvement is needed. We have gathered the views a wide range of women and families and have been able to relay these results to the Trusts through their attendance at our meetings and via the LMS Transformation work streams - we look forward to strengthening these channels over the coming year and to more fully demonstrating the impact the MVP is having.

ⁱ Implementing Better Births: A resource pack for Local Maternity Systems. NHS England, March 2017 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/nhs-guidance-maternity-services-v1.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/national-maternity-review-report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

^{iv} Patient and public participation in commissioning health and care. Statutory guidance for CCGs and NHS England 2017 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/patient-and-public-participation-guidance.pdf>

^v 'Intrapartum care for healthy women and babies' (2014) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg190>

^{vi} Implementing Better Births: A resource pack for Local Maternity Systems. NHS England, March 2017 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/nhs-guidance-maternity-services-v1.pdf>