

Bay-Wide Maternity Voices Partnership Annual Report 2019

Comment from Head of Midwifery

Maternity services at UMBHT are committed to achieve the national maternity vision set out by Better Births, the report of the National Maternity Review. This is to ensure that our maternity services are safe and personalised; that put the needs of the women, her baby, and family at the heart of care; with staff who are supported to deliver high-quality care which is continuously improving. The MVP has a vital role in ensuring that we listen to the views of our women and families in all we do.

Comment from GP Lead, MBCCG

The MVP has continued to thrive as a force for positive change, and has a vital and respected role in service development. Feedback from the MVP is fundamental in monitoring how our Morecambe Bay Maternity services are progressing, and is an essential component of our Better Births Together meetings. We appreciate all the time and dedication of those attending MVP meetings, and particularly thank Mel Elliston for being such a guiding star in developing the MB MVP to an extraordinarily high level. We have valued her input enormously, and look forward to working with the new chair, Becky Knagg to maintain and further develop this hugely important partnership.

Review of achievements from Work Plan for 2019

Recruitment involvement

The MVP have been invited to be involved in the recruitment of Obstetric and Gynaecology Consultants, Head of Midwifery and Paediatric Consultant and Governance lead. We have been a part of or chaired focus groups for the candidates and have been able to ask our own questions. Our contribution is of equal value to other members of the focus group and it is a very positive way to influence recruiting candidates who demonstrate an understanding of women centred care and the importance of service user involvement. The role does not require any clinical knowledge, participation is from the perspective of women and their families, and just requires an ability to make assessments based on what we know about experience and needs. Get in touch if you are interested in participating!

Labour Ward Forum

The MVP has regularly attended Labour Ward Forums with live video links to both South Lakes Birth Centre and Royal Lancaster Infirmary. The service user voice is always welcomed in any discussion and it is a valuable way of nurturing relationships in order to develop improvements. The MVP has also been able to give direct feedback to the Labour Ward Forum on the very positive experiences of women and families who we have met 'walking the patch' on the units (and from the chair personally attending births as a doula). There is a noticeable improvement in consistently positive feedback from both sites, particularly over the past two years.

Better Births Commissioning meetings

These meetings involve commissioners, maternity staff, and providers of other services for families and young children, such as children's centres and Health Visitors. These are regularly attended by the chair and enable the MVP to keep in touch with progress of the work streams (with a particular focus on Maternity Hub development this year) and input the service user perspective in discussions.

Wording of 'Provision of Formula' poster

As part of the Baby Friendly Initiative project, the MVP was asked to review the wording of a poster that was intended to be displayed widely in clinics and on wards, to inform women about the changes to provision of formula milk. We consulted with families and proposed a newly worded poster which is clear on the situation but is respectful and sensitive to women's feelings and this was welcomed and adopted.

Catch-up with Head of Midwifery and Professional Midwifery Advocate (PMA)

The chair meets informally with these professionals to keep each other in touch with progress. Both the Head of Midwifery and the PMA give the MVP unequivocal support in championing women's choice and woman-centered care and are always on the end of the phone when needed which is very much appreciated. There has been a case where the chair has been involved in reviewing a woman's birth circumstances and negotiating on behalf of both the parents and clinicians to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

Encouraging women to take up the opportunity for a "debrief"

The MVP actively promotes the opportunity for mothers who would benefit from a 'debrief' to have a 'Listen with mother' session with the PMA and often refers women directly.

Lead and Seniors Midwives

The MVP has good working relationships with Labour Ward Co-ordinators, Ward Managers, Community Managers, Matrons and specialist midwives such as the Diabetes Midwife, Health and Well-being midwife, Quality and Safely midwife and Digital Development Midwife and they attend MVP discussion groups and support the principals of responding to service user feedback. The Safe Active Birth Midwife attends discussion groups and works closely with the MVP to develop care to meet everyone's individual needs. We are very grateful for the supportive way of working together with care providers.

Commissioning Support

The MVP (originally with its previous name of Maternity Services Liaison Committee) has always been strongly supported by Commissioners, admin support and Support Managers. Without this the MVP would not be able to function and the positive way of working is hugely appreciated. We have regular catch ups with the Support Manager - the hand over this year from one to another was seamless due to each being so conscientious and supportive in more than practical ways. The recruitment and hand over to a new chair has also been supported financially and practically by a two months mentoring period which has made it as easy on everyone as possible.

Regular Discussion Groups and Themes

We continue to rotate our regular MVP discussion groups around the areas of Barrow/Ulverston, Lancaster/Morecambe, Kendal and have used Helme Chase Midwifery Unit, church halls and Children Centres. It is important that we meet somewhere that is baby/child friendly as we love to have the little ones along to remind us all who we are working together for! It is never a problem to turn up late or leave early if you need to - we appreciate any time you can join us. Transport costs and OFSTED childcare can be reimbursed so please do ask for a claim form.

It is a reflection of the positive relationship that we have built with the maternity professionals that they have been approaching us in order to have a particular focus to our regular MVP groups. Recent examples are 'Screening' and 'Governance'. It means that the professionals have the opportunity to tell us how they work and to ask the service users for ideas and views which they can take directly back into their area of work. We have found that this is the most productive way to hold our groups as it attracts people with specific interests. In the past we have had successful focus discussions on Mental Health, Pregnancy Loss, Helme Chase Midwifery Led Unit, as well as longer workshops on Infant Feeding and 'Choice and Personalisation'.

Future themes may include Induction, Caesarian Section Birth and Birth Plans/Preferences- but please make suggestions if you have something you would like discussed!

Further outreach

We have reached many service users in our outreach as well as regular forums and focus groups as indicated below. This includes some vulnerable groups such as young parents and isolated communities, however we would still like to reach more ethnically diverse communities and have requested help from the Local Maternity System Family Engagement Coordinator to expand our capacity to do so. We have also had a significant focus on raising our profile generally with promotional materials and our new chair is more tech-savvy so watch this space!

Listening to feedback

We have talked with parents in many different locations and ways other than our regular discussion groups.

- The MVP dropped into the waiting room at a clinic in Ulverston alongside Community midwives and found it to be very positive with no concerns raised. We have dropped into the postnatal ward at RLI and rooms at South Lakes Birth Centre to find out how parents experienced the care. (We always ask if people are happy to talk of course and, if they are not too tired, people are very willing).
- We have been in the community at breast feeding support groups in Ulverston and Windermere, Parents with Prospects (young parents) in Barrow and in Children's Centres generally
- We have had one-to-one chats in people's homes and other places. We have talked at length on the phone to individuals, had email conversations, text conversations and even snail mail, with women from places as far afield as Morecambe, South Lakes, and even a remote Scottish island! (The woman on the Scottish Island was flown into the mainland for the end of her pregnancy and therefore ended up using UHMBs Maternity Services).



- We have heard your comments on our Facebook page and responded. (Many thanks to Nicola who has been posting on Facebook for us and generously given us many years of general support, especially around promoting Helme Chase, but who is now stepping back)
- We have met parents at the Helme Chase Open Day.
- We have met mums - and lots of dads! at Babyfest in Kendal.
- We have links with a Healthwatch representative.
- We have talked to midwives about their perspective.

Basically - if you would like to give us feedback we will find a way that suits you!

Inclusion Survey and Report to the Gender Equality Network

The MVP was invited by the Assistant Director of Workforce of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay to collaborate with themselves and a maternity Matron to create suitable questions for a staff survey focusing on staff 'inclusion and engagement'. This was developed to gather feedback about staff experience, both as an employee and as a service user of the maternity services, to understand what is done well, and where improvements are needed, recognising the unique lens in which staff experienced the care provided. This was distributed to members of staff who had returned from adoption, maternity or paternity leave over the last 2 years and included questions about flexible working requests and opportunities for shared parental leave, access to advice and support and the experience of returning to work, including when breastfeeding. The MVP discussed the sensitivity required for asking questions of staff members about their personal experiences and the importance of offering the opportunity to hear further feedback, to offer support or offer a recommendation for a debrief. The report was shared with the MVP and the Gender Equality Network in order that it could feed into future improvements for staff and all service users.

'Have Your Say' MVP - Promotional Merchandise and advertising

This year we have had a significant focus on raising awareness of the MVP with both women and families and with professionals working in maternity services, in order to encourage involvement and gather more feedback. We gave a short presentation at a gathering of Health Visitors to make them aware of the MVP and received a lot of enthusiasm. We also addressed a group of new Midwifery recruits. We made the decision to use some of our allocated budget to purchase merchandise to gift every midwife and health visitor in Morecambe Bay a cloth bag with pen, badge, mug and business cards and covering introduction. It was felt that this would be a really effective way to ensure that absolutely everyone involved in maternity care and the first weeks after birth would know who we are, with our logo and 'Have your say' strap line. It was also a way to say 'thank you' with a personalised label and a way to raise our profile with the professionals who work with women and families day-to-day. We need these professionals to remember to suggest to women and families that they might want to get in touch with us. The packs have been very well received and appreciated and they are already having the desired effect of raising our profile.

Following an MVP workshop with midwives to explore how to make the MVP more visible we have also put tall MVP banners in the units in prominent places, have our cards on all reception desks and have small posters being mounted on all toilet doors on the wards and rooms, with large



posters in clinics and corridors and day rooms. We are also working towards refreshing the posters in other locations and making sure that every GP surgery and children's centre has one.

Another successful idea has been to put an MVP sticker on the front of the 'Red Book' which mothers receive after birth (to record information about their baby and young children) and the ward clerks are kindly helping us stick those on!

This has all been a mammoth practical task but we hope that it is an investment that will bear fruit in future years.

Representing our local women's voices

Choice and Personalisation

The MVP ran a workshop for service users to focus on what 'Choice and Personalisation' meant to them. This is a main work stream and the Local Maternity System for Lancashire and South Cumbria is required to develop an on-line booklet so we proposed that the MVPs begin the co-production process with the collated feedback from this workshop combined with additional input from all the other MVP chairs. We presented the findings to the wider Choice and Personalisation work stream group and have been a member of the core group that has been developing this booklet in detail. The draft will be ready for further consultation by the end of this year. The opportunity to co-design this booklet and encouragement to take ownership of the wording has been appreciated by the MVPs, as has the support given to accommodate availability for meetings which made the involvement more possible.

Personal Care Plan

This is a paper booklet (also to be available as an App) designed to encourage women to consider their thoughts and plans, their health and well-being, how they will feed and care for their baby and space for reflections after the birth. Women will be encouraged to use it to note questions they may wish to discuss with their care providers, especially regarding their feelings.

The MVP were part of the consultation to develop this booklet and now we have some draft copies we have been seeking feedback from individual service users on the units and in groups about whether they feel they would use it if offered and what they like or dislike about it (there is also a pilot trial with some service users in Central Lancashire).

Feedback has been positive so far but there is a useful theme emerging about the colours being difficult to read and so we will emphasise this in our collated feedback.

Attendance at Lancashire and South Cumbria Better Births Board meetings

Although the original intention was that the LMS Board meetings would be rotated around the whole of Lancashire and South Cumbria, which would enable the MVP chairs to attend in their own area, they have now been centralised in Preston to facilitate maximum attendance from staff. This makes it particularly challenging for MVP chairs from all areas to attend so the chairs have been working together to ensure that one can attend whenever possible and to represent and feedback as a group. We have also been submitting a summary of activities from each MVP to the



Family Engagement Coordinator to submit to the Board and present on our behalf in our absence. The fact that these meetings days are fixed has excluded some chair participation and we have requested that this be reconsidered to ensure future involvement.

Lancashire and South Cumbria 'Better Births' Engagement Strategy

The MVP chairs from the 4 areas of the Lancashire and South Cumbria Local Maternity System (Pennine/East Lancashire MVP, Central Lancashire MVP, Fylde and Wyre MVP and Bay-Wide MVP) have found it very challenging in the past to meet all together due to the difficulties of childcare, work commitments and travelling distances. This year, however, we have been successful in meeting up several times, and connecting by WhatsApp, in order to co-ordinate our advocacy for service users within the LMS. We found that we had similar concerns about how to most effectively work with the Family Engagement Coordinator and each other in order to meet all our objectives. We also needed clarity about the levels of remuneration being offered for our considerable time and travel commitments over and above our commitment to our own MVPs. We have been supported by our respective commissioners and care providers with our concerns and it was proposed that an 'Engagement Strategy' document be drawn together so that everyone is clear about the best practice for the implementation of the co-production and service user advocacy. It is based on an 'offer' drafted by the Family Engagement Coordinator drawn together from our views. This is hoped to be concluded by the end of the year and will be a creative way forward so that our individual priorities and work plans compliment the LMS work streams and each other's contributions. It will also support us in sharing out the commitments to cover each work stream and Board Meeting and keeping each other in the loop. This is valuable as the LMS work streams drive the local developments which affect our service users.

'Walking the patch' and '15 steps'

We now have a service user representative who regularly 'walks the patch' on the Antenatal and Postnatal ward at RLI before each bi-monthly MVP group and reports with a summary of findings. (Thanks to Aurea). We are able to discuss what is working well at the discussion group and midwives attending can immediately pick up on anything which needs taking forward. It is less easy to make advance arrangements at South Lakes Birth Centre because all rooms are potentially in use for giving birth. However, the staff are very welcoming of the MVP making spontaneous visits according to everyone's convenience.

The MVP have volunteers awaiting the organisation of the 15 steps reviews and a Matron is in the process of setting up the visits.

Review of "Communication in Maternity Matters" training workshops

A training package has been developed to include a video for maternity staff which illustrates parent emotions and feelings, and describes how communication styles impact upon the experience and outcomes of those that use our services. This powerful teaching video forms the basis of an intense multi-disciplinary communication training plan aimed at current and all new staff. We hope it will encourage staff to reflect on current practice and make them aware of the impact of communication - good and bad - on women and their families.

There have been other ways to share the learning from the project.

'Better Conversations' Local Maternity System Assembly Workshops

The MVP Chair facilitated two short workshops about "Better Conversations" at the Lancashire and South Cumbria Better Births Assembly. The workshops were inspired by the successful 'Communication Matters in Maternity' training workshops for UHMBT maternity staff. The workshops were jointly facilitated by the Professional Midwifery Advocate and Practice Development Midwife as the UHMBT training days had been, and we were able to demonstrate the benefits of positively working together. It was very challenging to fit the 'essence' of a whole day training into a one hour slot but we were able to share one of the service user films and, as always, the strength of hearing directly from a service user had a significant impact and prompted lively discussion about good communication.

Monitoring of BFI implementation

Infant Feeding Workshop

Maternity Voices has advocated for many years for the needs of the support women need whilst feeding their babies, particularly for consistent evidence-based breastfeeding knowledge. We therefore welcomed UHMBT adopting the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) in 2018 as the ideal model for ensuring the highest standards of training and delivering the best care. It was clear, however, that some service users (and professionals) were not entirely convinced of the benefits of BFI, especially in supporting those mothers who have been unable to breast feed or choose not to. It felt important to create an opportunity for all voices to be heard in order that local women's and families' views are considered in the implementation of BFI.

The MVP facilitated a workshop especially dedicated to collating all points of view, but also to acknowledge the challenges in Infant Feeding and what an incredibly emotional experience it can be for everyone. The workshop was well attended, including parent participants from Barrow, Lancaster, Carnforth and Morecambe. It was very rewarding to see a diverse group, of dedicated professionals and mothers with children, engaged in a variety of activities, sharing their concerns, their heart-ache and their triumphs. There was laughter and tears and good conversation. Everything was collated creatively by our new CCG Support Manager and shared widely within the MVP and UHMB and presented to the BFI project lead, in order that these experiences can be at the heart of all developments.

Every feeling is right and we wanted you all to know how valued your individual experiences are.

Here are a few snapshots of the words, feelings and actions captured on the day to describe womens emotions around infant feeding, including words and actions voiced by professionals, media, family and friends.



To attend and represent MVP at Conferences, workshops, Babyfest etc.

Opportunities to represent the MVP have included:

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (RCOG) Curriculum Review.

The Chair was asked by the National Maternity Voices committee to submit comments, from a service user perspective, on the draft of the new RCOG curriculum at the end of 2018. These comprehensive comments were well received and were part of a wide consultation and thanks and updates have been received. The new curriculum endorses the importance of good communication skills and supporting women's choices. The Chair is a lay examiner for the MRCOG exam in which these aspects of care are emphasized for assessment - all the experience of listening to service users in Morecambe Bay is therefore positively influential in national standards of care!

Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Curriculum Review

UCLAN invited service users and representatives to comment on the review of the RCM Midwifery Curriculum by attending meetings or sending in comments. We invited service users to send their thoughts on Facebook and collated these with the service user representative's comments to contribute to the formation of a newly designed curriculum.

The MVP has also been invited to be part of the recruitment for midwifery students at the university.

Meeting The Princess Royal (Princess Anne)

The MVP was invited to join staff, dignitaries and a mother who was part of the Kirkup enquiry, to welcome The Princess Royal to South Lakes Birth Centre. There was much excited anticipation and practicing of curtsies - everyone was very proud to be showcasing the positive changes. Opportunities were taken by the Chair, when Princess Anne asked, to advocate for 'women's choice' and praise the staff on working together with service users in the transformation of maternity care in Morecambe Bay.

Other conferences and workshops where we advocated for service user views:

- Local Maternity System (Lancashire and South Cumbria) Assembly for multidisciplinary professionals and service user advocates and representatives.
- A focused LMS workshop on developing Maternity Hubs.
- A local UHMBT workshop for exploring how to engage the workforce with new developments in the 'Continuity of Carer' work stream and the BFI.
- A regional engagement event focusing on quality and safety with the Lead Midwife.
- The Babyfest events in February and September were great opportunities to meet dads as well as mums and gain feedback as well as promote the MVP.
- Helme Chase Open Day helped raise the profile of both the unit and the MVP.

Reflections and farewell from Chair

Transformation

As this year draws to a close I find I am reflecting on the Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) achievements, not only for this year, but for the seven years since the formation of this 'forum' for parents and their representatives to work together with maternity professionals. During this time the Morecambe Bay Maternity Service has transformed on many levels, not least in it embracing and welcoming the inclusion of the service user voice within all the positive developments and changes and in the growing involvement and co-production with the MVP.

Trust

Over the years I believe that everyone who is part of this partnership (parents and advocates, multidisciplinary professionals and commissioners) have learned so much about the importance of building trusting relationships with each other in order to work together creatively. Having realised that we are all working to the same goal, we have been able to appreciate that different perspectives make up the whole picture and that therefore every perspective is genuinely valued. This has been key in enabling the MVP to influence the shaping of the service.

Have your say

The ethos of 'putting the women and families at the heart of everything we do' means that the service user voice has been elevated to one of great importance and influence. It has been very rewarding for me to be able to bring that 'voice', sharing the many stories that women and families tell us and advocating for women and families in many different ways. Nothing has more impact, however, than when a woman comes along to a discussion group (or offers views in any other way), and expresses for herself what is important to her. Without that direct feedback about women's experience of maternity care, we would lose touch with the purpose of our joint aspiration - ensuring everyone feels they have had the best experience of being truly cared for in every way, whatever her personal circumstances.

Gratitude

I cannot thank you enough if you have attended a discussion group or given us any feedback as a parent, perhaps on Facebook. I felt such gratitude when one mum travelled from Carnforth to Barrow to join us saying, "I had a terrible night but I reckoned that if you waited for parents to get a good night's sleep before attending, you'd never get anyone, so here I am!". We do understand the effort it takes to respond to our invitations to contribute but I just want you to know it truly makes a difference which I hope you will see illustrated in this 2019 review.

Partnership

I also very much appreciate every professional who has listened - and used the MVP feedback and views to best effect in implementing positive actions. There are many of you who have enthusiastically committed to supporting the MVP from the early days, and personally supported me as chair to influence change - I feel it has developed into a genuine and equal partnership where the MVP receives unequivocal support from clinicians and commissioners. The willingness to encourage the service to shift from an attitude of "We will do what's best for you" to asking

women “What do *you* feel is best for you?” has evolved and is becoming established, down to your hard work and dedication.

Continuing

When I retire from the chair role at the end of 2019 I will be very happy that I am able to hand over to the new chair, Becky Knagg, who is a recent service user, and who is very excited at continuing the work of the partnership. I am confident that I am leaving Maternity Voices in capable hands and that it will continue to be supported and encouraged by the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay and the Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group so that it flourishes and empowers all voices.

With many thanks for working creatively and constructively together, as a diverse group of parents, advocates and professionals, to make our local Maternity Services amongst the best in the country and for you helping to make the MVP chair role one that has been productive and fulfilling.

Mel Elliston





Appendix

Link to Bay-Wide MVP Terms of Reference

<https://www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/about-us/publications/get-involved/944-tor-bay-wide-mvp/file>

Link to Bay-Wide MVP previous annual reports

<https://www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/about-us-2/publications/our-documents/corporate-documents/1544-maternity-voices-partnership-2018-annual-report/file>

Link to CCG and Trust web sites

<https://www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.morecambebayccg.nhs.uk/>

Link to National Maternity Voices

<http://nationalmaternityvoices.org.uk/>

Link to 2016 Healthwatch report

<https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2017-11-01/our-annual-report-201617>