

**Bay-Wide Maternity Voices Partnership**  
**University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay**  
**(Previously Maternity Services Liaison Committee)**  
**Annual report 2017**

**Introduction**

Introduction from the Director of Midwifery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology

On behalf of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay I would like to thank all the service users who have helped to shape and drive the significant improvements in maternity services over the last year. We know that women and families have dedicated time and effort to supporting developments across the Bay that means maternity services are now designed to meet women's needs and wishes, ensuring high quality and safe care. It has also been powerful to hear so many women's experiences that have absolutely informed all the changes that have been made, at times not all positive; however this is imperative to ensuring services continue to respond and learn, keeping women and families at the heart of all that we do.

I would personally like to thank Mel Gard who has given real dedication to the Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) and seen the 'Communication in Maternity Matters' project come to fruition which is now being used as an exemplar and tool for other maternity services to use: to all those women who shared their experiences on film, thank you too. As we move forward into the next year, it is imperative that women's and families' voices are listened to and really heard, that they define and underpin the continuous changes that will always need to happen in maternity services to ensure they are individualised, personalised and responsive to their needs.

Continued partnership between the MVP, Maternity Service Providers and Maternity Commissioners is essential to ensuring that the fantastic work demonstrated in this report continues to happen now and long into the future.

*Sascha Wells*

*Director of Midwifery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology*  
*University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHSFT*

CCG Introduction

On behalf of Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group, I would like to thank all the people who have been involved with the Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) groups and have helped to make our local maternity services the best they can be. Our thanks go to the many service users who have given their personal stories which remind us that women's voices and needs must always be at the centre of our focus across the whole of maternity and postnatal care. I'd like to give my particular thanks to the MVP chair, Mel Gard, whose energy, passion and enthusiasm has been the driving force behind the many positive changes and achievements mentioned within this report. I am aware there are a number of other women who have been particularly involved and I would also like to thank them personally for their dedication and support.

As commissioners of maternity services it is essential that we listen to the views of local service users and hear how well the services are responding to their needs. The MVP ensures that women and families voices are heard and that their views help to shape local services. The group plays an important part in ensuring that our maternity services are what we would want them to be.

*Lauren Dixon*

*GP Executive Lead Women and Children, Morecambe Bay CCG*

## Chair's Introduction

I am delighted to report that the views of women and families continue to be heard and have a significant impact on maternity services across Morecambe Bay. The recognition that we need to include women's voices in how maternity services are planned and delivered goes from strength to strength.

This report highlights some of the challenges and the highlights of the last year.

April 1st 2017, Lancashire North CCG's boundary changed to include South Cumbria and the organisation is now known as 'NHS Morecambe Bay CCG'. The MSLC was in an excellent position in advance of this change as it had already changed to cover the whole Morecambe Bay footprint.

In September 2017 it was agreed that the Maternity Services Liaison Committee (MSLC) would adopt the new name of 'Bay-Wide Maternity Voices Partnership' (MVP) in line with a nationwide change of identity. As part of the change to an MVP we also met to review and refresh our Terms of Reference with our Commissioner and Director of Obstetrics and Midwifery to ensure that all partners are taking equal responsibility for sustaining the MVP and working effectively together. We have regular reviews and creative discussions about what we are hoping to achieve together. All of our promotional materials are now being redesigned to reflect the change of name to MVP and the change of organisation to Morecambe Bay CCG.

As a result of feedback from mums, we now refer to our meetings as 'groups' which sounds less intimidating. We also now regularly serve cake! It makes it all feel more friendly and a midwife has kindly been baking on our behalf which is much appreciated. Our main group, with a core of committed staff and service user representatives, meets bi-monthly and rotates around the Bay. We have experimented with venues outside of the main towns where the maternity units are based, in places such as Carnforth and Windermere. This has been successful in drawing in new mums so we shall continue to vary where we meet. At the end of the year, we also held some very successful gatherings specifically for the purpose of collecting service user feedback which we have shared below.

The development of the Local Maternity System, covering the whole of Lancashire and South Cumbria, is starting to mean that the MVP has the opportunity to work with MVPs in neighbouring areas and to help ensure women's voices are heard on a wider scale. As Chair of the MVP I have been able to participate in a number of meetings of the Local Maternity System, highlighting our unique population needs, and ensuring that Morecambe Bay MVP has a strong voice in this work going forward.

*Mel Gard*  
*Maternity Voices Partnership Chair*

## **Where we have made a difference**

### **Recruitment Interviews**

The MVP is regularly invited to be part of the recruitment process and contributes an equal part in the focus groups and interviews for both Midwives and Consultants. The MVP has been able to set interview questions, including questions about good communication and engagement with service users. The MVP is fully involved discussions and decision making; this means we have been able to positively influence the culture of care for local women. Anyone who would enjoy being a part of recruitment will be briefed and supported through the process. It isn't necessary to have a clinical background as it is just about inputting a perspective of the women's experience.

### **Communication Project Training**

The Communication Matters in Maternity training is now well underway for all staff and is having a big impact on the participants. Service user representatives initiated the original idea and have had involvement at every stage. Our MVP chair organised the filming of women, was part of developing the toolkit with the Head of Midwifery, Obstetric Consultant and Midwifery Professors from the University of Salford; she is also part of the presentation and facilitation with lead midwives. The training is continuing throughout the year every two weeks as a compulsory training day for everyone who meets women on their maternity journey. This training is helping to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with a woman on her maternity journey demonstrates empathy and is more aware of the impact of the way in which they communicate, such as their use of vocabulary, tone of voice and non-verbal communication. There has been a significant reduction in the number of complaints that the MVP hears about language and attitude of staff and also through the feedback from the Trust. This project has been presented at neighbouring Trust events and has been shared more widely at national events.

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC) Report**

The CQC carried out a follow up inspection between 11 and 14 October 2016, to confirm whether University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBT) had made improvements to its services since their last comprehensive inspection in July 2015. The subsequent report, published in February 2017, highlighted several areas of outstanding practice brought about as a result of the involvement of the MVP (formerly MSLC). This included public engagement in the development and delivery of maternity services, co-designing the new maternity unit, interviews for the recruitment of new staff, including midwives and matrons, and the development of guidelines and strategies. It also mentioned how the Trust had been successful in securing funding to pilot the Communication Project Training and how the project has the potential to be adopted nationally if measurable improvements could be demonstrated for women who were using maternity services.

### **Inclusion in Perinatal Mental Health developments**

The MVP has been involved in the development of this service and in particular the new Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) in Chorley which serves Lancashire and South Cumbria. We have brought the service user voice to workshops and contributed to a national Perinatal Mental Health website for information for parents, highlighting the need to include the partner's perspective in the information perspective. We were invited to be on the recruitment panel for the Matron of new MBU and to be part of the environmental decisions; this was sadly declined due to lack of availability, however the more service

users we have, the more involvement we will be able to have, so please let us know if you have a particular interest in this area.

### **South Lakes Birth Centre**

The new South Lakes Birth Centre at Furness General Hospital was officially opened on Valentine's Day 2018. This was one of the key actions resulting from the Morecambe Bay Investigation. The MVP has been involved in viewing the progress of the new South Lakes Birth Centre prior to its opening, following on from helping to engage service users in commenting on the initial plans. This development is a significant improvement in facilities for women and families in the Furness and wider South Lakes area and the MVP has been involved throughout the project to ensure that women's views have been incorporated. The work with Maternity Voices was kindly acknowledged and celebrated in the opening presentation.

### **Engagement with mums and families**

There has been renewed engagement from service users and we particularly appreciate that, at the end of the year, there has been a surge of interest and attendance in the Kendal area. This is largely as a consequence of one mum's passion and networking. Nicola has been a part of the MVP for some years but recently generated much interest for a 'service user only' group in Heversham which was very well attended. Three MVP representatives have also visited St Thomas's playgroup in Kendal. Through these we gathered a significant body of feedback from which the MVP is working with the Trust to develop a response, recognising what is already being addressed and feeding into developing an Action Plan for improvements. Themes of feedback include post-natal support on the wards and at home, infant feeding and improvements in discharge from hospital. The MVP received correspondence from the Community Matron and Head of Midwifery thanking the mums for making the time to attend the group.

### **Helme Chase Positive Birth Group**

Some mums are keen to promote Helme Chase Midwifery Led Unit and a 'Positive Birth Group' run by an enthusiastic group of parents at Helme Chase is now evolving which the midwives are very happy to support. It's great to be working together to raise awareness of what a great place Helme Chase is to give birth for women with straightforward pregnancies.

### **Helme Chase Open Day**

The MVP was part of a very successful Open Day in December where mums and families were invited to view the unit, meet the staff and some of our mums who had birthed there. This was used as an opportunity to capture feedback about Maternity Services from local parents touring the unit, for example hearing about how dads would appreciate more involvement. More Open Days are planned for the future and we would love some parents who have had experience to join us to talk to expectant parents. One mum approached the local MP for support to encourage more mums to consider birthing at Helme Chase and he has responded positively. Parents who have birthed at Helme Chase and expectant parents have helped to review the 'Frequently Asked Questions' leaflet to ensure it reflects the families' needs.

### **Exploring creative ways to engage service users**

Several MVP members including staff and the chair have attended the 'Art of Hosting' training; this is an alternative model of engaging communities in creative conversations. The training events have helped to raise our profile and have had a significant impact on

how we host groups, plan our actions and engage with service users, for example we now open groups with a 'check in' to help everyone feel included and heard. The GP Executive Lead for Morecambe Bay CCG asked the MVP chair, with other facilitators, to be an apprentice on the Art of Hosting training. This training will enable the MVP to host new engagement events and offer the Art of Hosting training to commissioners and Trust employees.

### **Maternity Matters Events**

Maternity Voices were a part of three Trust engagement events in Lancaster, Barrow and Kendal where we set up our 'Cosy Corner' to give parents a friendly place to chat to our representatives. Feedback was gathered on tablecloths and on a 'Wall of Conversation' that was produced by a graphic illustrator as people were talking. This feedback will be used by the Trust to make further improvements.

### **Participation in the Safe Active Birth Conference**

Service users ensured that women's views were heard at the 'Safe Active Birth' conference where some Maternity Voices mums participated in a presentation on the positive effect that the principle has had for women in diverse birth situations. 'Safe Active Birth' actively promotes the principles of choice, however complex a pregnancy or birth situation. The MVP championed this in a document several years ago, as the Maternity Services Liaison Committee, and it is a very welcome development for women's experience which is ahead of the national Better Births Transformation programme. Women have been given an opportunity to directly influence developments so that positive changes can be implemented within maternity services. For example, following one Mum's story where the midwives explored theatre procedure when members of the team are routinely asked the question 'Are you ready?', the mum is now included in this question and this is going to be added to the formal checklist.

The Safe Active Birth Midwives and Professional Midwifery Advocate were involved with students at Lancaster University in running a Vaginal Breech Birth Study Day, to expand women's choice for Breech deliveries, which the MVP attended to keep up to date with current best practice.

### **Working with the Professional Midwifery Advocate and other specialist midwives**

If a mum tells us a story where we feel she would benefit from a formal de-brief, we always refer them directly to the 'Professional Midwifery Advocate'; this replaces the role of Midwifery Supervision. Despite work to publicise this opportunity through the maternity service and the MVP, some women still don't realise they can have this debrief and the MVP has an important role in helping promote this opportunity. We also work closely with other specialist midwives such as the Health and Well-being midwife for example to review Infant Feeding and Ante-Natal education.

### **Invitations for service user comments**

The MVP was invited to review an information leaflet for patients involved in a 'Serious Incident' and comments were appreciated and included.

MVP reps were invited to a presentation on 'Transitional Care' which has been proposed in order to keep mums and babies together when they need extra monitoring on the ward. We were also involved with reviewing plans for 'Enhanced Recovery' of C Section patients, helping them to be discharged early when everything was well with mum. When reviewing the information leaflet for 'Enhanced Recovery' the MVP highlighted that some women may feel that they would be being 'kicked out' early and emphasised the

importance of communication around this to explain that it is current best practice when mum and baby are well and is a response to many women wishing for an early discharge.

### **Individual and group meetings**

The MVP is always happy to meet parents individually or act on their suggestions. An example of this is one mum in Morecambe who is arranging a group of friends to meet with us to offer feedback. Another mum reviewed Infant Feeding documents and an MVP rep visited her home to discuss suggestions in detail.

### **Walking the Patch**

We always ensure that the MVP has as much visible presence as possible at events involving service users and try to occasionally drop in to the maternity wards. On recent visits we have had very positive feedback from women about their experience of the service. We always report this back to the Ward Manager as it is really helpful for staff to hear positive feedback. We would love to be able to do more drop-in visits to the wards in Royal Lancaster Infirmary and the South Lakes Birth Centre in Barrow and would welcome hearing from anyone who might be interested in getting involved with the group to help us with this.

### **Sustaining parental involvement**

As is the case with all national MVPs we face the constant challenge of renewing parental involvement and at the beginning of the year we had very few regularly involved parent representatives who were able to offer support. Mel Gard, the chair would like to particularly acknowledge Jo and her little daughter Rose who demonstrated considerable commitment by travelling to all the meetings from Ulverston on public transport, Debs who committed to attending the monthly Labour Ward Forum in Lancaster on our behalf, Nicola, as we have already heard has been enthusiastically networking, and Ann, a lactation consultant who has been involved in the development of the Infant Feeding Strategy.

Other mums have kept in touch and contributed in other ways which we really appreciate. We are constantly seeking opportunities to engage more service users and welcome anyone with any opportunity to participate offering a wide range of ways that people can get involved. We can always find a way that people can help even if they have very little time to spare such as reading guidelines, sharing posts on Facebook or being in a focus group.

### **Social media presence**

The MVP has a Facebook page which promotes the MVP and gives details of when groups and events will be held; this is available at <https://www.facebook.com/baywidemvp/> Some extra training will help us to facilitate the Facebook page and promote the MVP across Morecambe Bay, this will hopefully increase engagement even further.

## **Review of our Work Plan for 2017**

### **Infant Feeding Strategy**

MVP service user representatives have been involved in developing and reviewing the work of this strategy and for regularly requesting updates and the completion of this piece of work. Infant Feeding themes arise regularly in discussions with mums. The MVP is keen that the strategy ensures the emotional support and consistently sound information for the mums, as well as meeting the nutritional aspects of feeding for the baby, in order for both to thrive.

### **Increase engagement with maternity workforce, health visitors and children's centres**

- There have been connections made with Children's Centres in using them as venues for MVP groups and in attending and contributing to an 'Action for Children' meeting with Barrow Infant Feeding group.
- Health Visitors have regularly contributed to the MVP groups and we keep in touch with each other's current works streams.
- In order to engage care providers in encouraging service users to become involved in the work of the MVP the chair arranged a workshop at her home, using the 'Art of Hosting' model of holding conversations. This was in partnership with the new Support Manager for Children and Maternity from Morecambe Bay CCG and the Health and Well-being midwife, who had both attended the training. Those attending the workshop represented midwives, health visitors and ex-staff volunteers. The focus was on how the care providers could further support the MVP *within their normal work systems* by generating interest from mums and families and increase the number of service user representatives to spread the workload and gather more feedback. This has already had some success.

### **Topics for service user engagement**

There have been some exceptionally successful opportunities for service user engagement this year where we have responded to the themes which the women have raised rather than setting an agenda which has been felt to be an appropriate approach e.g. How to positively promote Helme Chase, Post-Natal support at Royal Lancaster Infirmary and Infant Feeding at Furness General Hospital. However, it is still the intention to have focus groups for particular areas of interest or concern when there is a need.

### **Engagement themes resulting from the Better Care Together Integrated Maternity Pathway**

This piece of work has now been integrated into the Local Maternity System's (LMS) 'Better Births' programme. The MVP has been involved from the beginning with these developments. The MVP chair gave a presentation at the LMS Assembly, has attended workshops and is currently part of the focus group for Continuity of Carer, including developing the engagement plans. We are being invited to be part of the recruitment process for the Family Engagement Coordinator who will create links with all the LMS MVPs.

### **Work targeting 'Hard to reach' groups**

Healthwatch - an initial offer from Healthwatch to help the MVP with engagement in Morecambe area was withdrawn. There hasn't been progress to date with assistance from Healthwatch in South Cumbria.

There have been some new contacts made with mums in the Morecambe area which are being nurtured by arranging a service user gathering in an easy to access venue. We have also met with a Polish mum to explore how we can connect with that community. Now that we have engaged with a higher number of service user representatives we would welcome any help with engaging with people with a learning disability.

### **Engagement with Ambulance Service**

Continuing and sustaining other work has had to take priority over beginning this new project. It remains a long term plan to pick this up when time and opportunity allows and if anyone has a particular interest in this work we would be grateful for their support.

### **Continuing development of the MVP**

There has been continuing support from the Children and Maternity System Senior Manager, the new Support Manager for Children and Maternity, the Head of Midwifery and midwives. We constantly review how the MVP can function most efficiently given the challenge of limited service user capacity and turnover of service user representatives when mums return to work or have a new baby. There has been a lot of encouragement, positive feedback and advice for prioritising opportunities to represent Maternity Voices. As mentioned earlier, we have run a workshop for staff to help sustain involvement and review of how best to engage mums and families. We have also had support to respond to renewed interest from an enthusiastic mum in Kendal.

### **Continuing input to strategic work on Better Care Together, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) Review**

The MVP chair has: -

- Had active involvement in both the Better Care Together and the Local Maternity System work, as mentioned earlier.
- Been a member of the Clinical Senate reviewing the RCOG Options Appraisal and will be part of the presentation to the UHMBT Board.
- Contributed the women's perspective in all discussions at the local Better Births Commissioning Meetings and Maternity Strategic Partnership meetings.
- Taken a role as RCOG lay examiner for communication

### **Continuing work to improve participation within the Maternity Services**

- User representatives have regularly attended and contributed at the Cross- Bay and Site-Based Labour Ward Forums. They give the woman's perspective in decision making, for example about the discharge process for C section.
- The Maternity Guidelines Group has changed its process and it is no longer functioning in a way that encourages regular service user input, however the MVP has been assured that it will be included in future reviews.
- The MVP is monitoring the roll out to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary (RLI) of the Always Event project of partners staying after the birth, which we were very involved with piloting at Furness General Hospital (FGH).
- Also see above for the many ways in which Maternity Voices are embedded in all the Maternity work streams.

## **Work plan for 2018**

- To continue with regular commitments to represent Maternity Voices which are embedded in the Maternity system e.g. Labour Ward Forum, Better Births Meetings, and Recruitment Interviews.
- To continue to represent women's voices in Local Maternity System Better Births work streams, e.g. Maternity Hub and Continuity of Carer development, engagement with other MVPs and the Family Engagement Coordinator.
- To facilitate, evaluate and develop Communication Training Workshops.
- To facilitate Service User Feedback Groups - two in each locality in a year. Collate feedback and develop an Action Plan with the Matrons and Head of Midwifery. Continue to respond to emerging themes.
- To include outreach to more difficult to reach and vulnerable groups of parents in areas such as Morecambe, Barrow and rural areas, depending on service user capacity to assist.
- To urge the Trust to complete the 'Infant Feeding Strategy', and monitor its implementation through the service user engagement.
- To monitor birth and post-natal experience through 'Walking the patch' at RLI and SLBC, monthly if possible.
- To represent service users at local and national conferences and workshops.

### **New Projects to explore when capacity allows:**

- To work with the Gynaecology Matron and sonographers around Early Pregnancy Loss.
- To review Ante-Natal Education content and availability.
- To engage with the Ambulance Service.

## Terms of Reference



ToR Bay Wide  
MVP.docx

The MVP Terms of Reference are available at the following link: -

<https://www.morecambabayccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/maternity-voices-partnership>