

# Statement from the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership chair on partnership working with NUH Maternity

For the Nottingham City Health Scrutiny Committee of July 15, 2021

*By Nadine Otting, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership Chair*

## **About the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership**

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) is an independent NHS team of professionals and local people. Our goal is to review and improve local maternity services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, so that families and babies can have the best health outcomes. We do this by putting the experiences of families at the centre of our work and amplifying the voices of people who are seldom heard.

The MVP board members include representatives from both Nottingham University Hospitals Trust and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust and the local Clinical Commissioning Groups. Our MVP is also linked to local organisations and charities such as Small Steps Big Changes, Zephyr's and The Emily Harris Foundation, who all support local families, as well as the local Healthwatch. We also have a diverse team of passionate MVP volunteers who represent and reach out to local women and their families.

Engagement and co-production with service users is at the core MVPs. Local MVP service user involvement has taken various shapes such as serving as a channel for service user feedback, running surveys, and holding multidisciplinary board meetings and focus groups that bring professionals and lay people together at the (virtual) table to review and improve local maternity care.

The CCG has commissioned Healthwatch for MVP work. Their focus for the current 6 months is on improving maternity services for ethnic minority service users by setting up a new review group that will include both maternity professionals and service users from an ethnic minority background.

## **Partnership working with NUH maternity**

On 15th of July, the Nottingham City Council Health Scrutiny Committee is considering NUH's progress in making improvements to maternity services since they last spoke to the Committee in January this year. This statement contributes to this by giving insight into the collaboration of NUH maternity with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP.

- NUH has expanded their MVP board membership at MVP board. In addition to the NUH midwife representative, the NUH Director of Midwifery and a NUH obstetrician have joined as MVP board members.
- Since March 2021, we have increased the frequency of meetings between NUH maternity and MVP service user representatives (MVP chair and MVP project officer at Healthwatch) and now have biweekly catch-up meetings. NUH engagement and communication staff participate in and support these meetings.
- Three NUH maternity staff members with an ethnic minority background have stepped forward to participate in the upcoming Healthwatch/MVP working groups around improving maternity services for ethnic minority service users.
- The following two co-production projects were supported by the MVP:

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| <b>Date</b>                        | May 11, 2021   |
| <b>Service development/project</b> | NUH antenatal clinic letter  |
| <b>Staff involved</b>              | 2 NUH obstetric consultants  |
| <b>Service users involved</b>      | 1 current service user<br>2 MVP volunteers<br>1 Healthwatch MVP project officer<br>1 MVP lay chair   |
| <b>Coproduction methods used</b>   | Zoom discussion on antenatal clinic letter and Pregnancy Health Record (Part 1).   |
| <b>Outcome</b>                     | Additions to antenatal clinic letter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prompts regarding previous pregnancy history ("e.g birth complications, traumatic experience, PN depression, pregnancy loss/neonatal death") so that this includes what pregnant people find important.</li><li>- Addition of "action points for women" so that it is clear for women whether this letter is only for their information or whether there is something they need to do.</li></ul> |

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| <b>Date</b>                        | June 28, 2021   |
| <b>Service development/project</b> | NUH maternity website gap analysis  |
| <b>Staff involved</b>              | 1 NUH Deputy Director of Communications & Engagement<br>1 NUH PMA<br>1 NUH obstetrician   |
| <b>Service users involved</b>      | 3 MVP volunteers<br>MVP project officer (Healthwatch)<br>MVP chair  |
| <b>Coproduction methods used</b>   | Teams discussion around NUH maternity website guided by Midlands MVPs gap analysis tool. One MVP volunteer sent in their feedback via email.  |
| <b>Outcome</b>                     | This meeting has informed an initial evaluation about the gaps in information supplied by the NUH maternity website and its ease of use.<br>Improving the website will be an ongoing project with involvement of service users. |

- NUH maternity has published a Q&A video to help keep families informed. MVP will support such Q&A videos by promoting the ask for questions for these videos and sharing the resultant videos on the MVP Facebook page.
- Via the MVP, there have been requests for more insight on the following two issues. NUH's response to these requests is still outstanding.
  - o Healthwatch had requested an update on how previous Healthwatch/MVP reports have led to change within NUH maternity, in particular how recommendations from the *Maternity Voices Partnership: Walking the Patch and Post Natal Surveys Report*<sup>1</sup> published by Healthwatch in June 2020 have led to improvements.

<sup>1</sup> <https://hwnn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/HWNN-MVP-WTP-PN-support-FINAL-Version.pdf>

- The MVP has received multiple concerns of local people around the NUH home birth provision, such as "...lack of staffing mean[s] families are unable to have their birth choice accommodated and generally there is an air of disappointment and anxiety within the homebirth community." In the Q&A session published on April 29, 2021, the Interim Director of Midwifery informed that NUH was looking into options to protect the home birth service from suspension. An update is needed to give insight into which option will be pursued by NUH and what improvements will be made to the home birth provision.
- NUH colleagues have reached out to the MVP for support in service user engagement around the following pieces of work:
  - Website improvements (ongoing)
  - Maternity Helpline
  - National Maternity Survey Experience of Care Shared Learning Workshop
  - Parent information leaflets
- MVP resources are probably insufficient to support all these pieces of work. The ask for support with co-production work is likely to exceed the current capacity of the MVP project officer and MVP volunteers at Healthwatch, and MVP chair. I have brought the increased pressure on MVP service user representatives (MVP chair, Healthwatch/MVP project officer and MVP volunteers) to the attention of the LMNS PMO team.
- According to National Maternity Voices, "Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs) should be local, (not LMS-wide) user-led and well-resourced with a team of volunteers out in the community listening well to women and their partners about their maternity experiences and co-producing future care with them."<sup>2</sup> I believe a review of the current LMNS-wide set up of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP is needed to ensure the MVP is best-placed to support service user engagement and co-production in NUH maternity improvements.
- In the meantime, NUH needs to ensure that service users are involved in the development of the maternity services.

**For more information about the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire MVP:**

- Facebook & Twitter: @nottsmvp
- Website: [nottsmvp.co.uk](http://nottsmvp.co.uk)
- Email: [contact@nottsmvp.co.uk](mailto:contact@nottsmvp.co.uk)

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<sup>2</sup> <http://nationalmaternityvoices.org.uk/toolkit-for-mvps/setting-up-an-mvp/> accessed July 11, 2021