

East Kent Maternity Services Review: Implementation Update

Background

The East Kent Maternity Services Review consulted with all stakeholders between 2011 and 2012 and last June presented its findings to this Committee who accepted the recommendations of the review that Option 1 was the most sustainable option that delivered on safety, choice, equity and resource utilisation.

Option 1 provided women with the choice for birthplace at:

- Home
- Ashford Midwifery Led Unit (AMLU)
- Margate Midwifery Led Unit (MMLU)
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital (QEQMH) Labour Ward
- William Harvey Hospital (WHH) Labour Ward

The option also recommended that Canterbury and Dover birth centres would be reorganised to provide a range of day care services for pregnant and postnatal women but would no longer provide birthing facilities. The reorganisation of services was associated with an investment of £700,468 in midwifery staffing to increase the number of midwives by 16.8 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE). This option was accepted by the HOSC on the 1 June 2012 and it was requested that an update be provided to the committee within 9 months.

Reconfiguring the service

Option 1 was implemented on the 24th of September, 2012, this led to:

- The Midwifery Led Unit at QEQMH opened as place of birth for low risk women
- The Midwifery Led Unit at WHH continued to operate
- The full range of antenatal, labour and postnatal services continued at both the QEQMH and WHH sites.
- The Dover and Canterbury sites provide 7 day a week antenatal and post-natal day care services.

Staffing

The recruitment of additional midwives was successfully achieved by September 2012. This recruitment has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of times the Ashford MLU has closed in the last four months (Table 1). The change at Dover and Canterbury has also released staff to move to the Ashford and Margate sites and this has been achieved with very little upset and all staff are now in place.

Table 1: Closures at Singleton Midwifery Led Unit

January	9
February	16
March	27
April	14
May	16
June	7
July	14
August	3
September	5
October	3
November	2
December	1 to date (12.12.12)

The midwife to birth ratio has also improved and the use of midwifery time is set to improve further with a doubling in the number of maternity support workers at both sites in January.

Birth to Midwife ratio

October 2011	34:1
October 2012	30:1

Birth place

From the outset the MLU at Margate has been very successful and based on the current figures is on course to have in excess of 700 births a year. The first baby born in the unit was from Dover!

Births at Midwifery Led Units

Month	Ashford	Margate
Oct	75	40
Nov	84	61
Dec	26 to date	28

As a result of improved staffing and the resulting reduction in closures the birth rate at the Ashford MLU has also increased. The unit is on course to achieve and accommodate an increase in its predicted annual birth rate from 600 to over 800 (603 in 2011 – 2012).

Choice

The information booklet 'Your Birth, Your Choice' is being given to all women explaining the range of birthing options on offer to women in East Kent. During the review of maternity services in East Kent we identified that there were four most commonly spoken languages. In order to ensure this information is available to them translated versions of this leaflet were produced. The leaflet is available to all women from their GP, Children Centres and organisations such as Home Start. In addition to this leaflet the Trust have produced a series of short films providing women with

information to prepare them for birth; 'The Journey' and is available from the Trust website and YouTube.

In addition to the above and in response to information received throughout the consultation period women at all venues can now have their partner (or a significant other) remain with them throughout their stay. The feedback from women and families to this initiative has been unanimously positive.

Postnatal Care provision

Postnatal provision has adapted to fit the new model and women can attend either Dover or Canterbury Maternity Centres for a range of support and advice; in particular, breast feeding support is available throughout the day.

Monitoring 1 to 1 care in labour

The Trust have identified that the 'Birth Rate Plus' Acuity tool will enable them to monitor progress against their ambition to deliver one to one care to labouring women. As such, the Trust is looking to purchase the software in the very near future.

In the meantime we will be monitoring this standard by gathering the incidence of 1 to 1 care for a period of five days in each 4 week period.

Accessibility

Both Dover and Canterbury birth centres have now been renamed as Maternity Day Care Centres.

The venue at Buckland hospital has changed and the Centre has now moved into the main building. This new venue is on the ground floor and is much more accessible particularly in the winter time.

Opening times at both venues are:

- Monday to Friday – 8am-8pm
- Saturday & Sunday – 9am -5pm

The local press have been involved in promoting the current service (Appendix 1) and ensuring women and families are fully aware of the opening times. An open day has recently been held at the Buckland site providing the local public with an update on the development of the new build. In relation to travel women on benefits are advised how they can reclaim travel costs. Information leaflets and application forms are held at both centres.

Births before the arrival of the midwife (BBA)

In the period from September 24th there have been 17 BBA trust wide.

This is similar to the same period for last year. There have only been 2 such births for Dover women.

Births from Maidstone area

The number of women birthing in East Kent from the Maidstone area has remained unchanged (table below). It is possible that once women feel confident that the MLU at Ashford will be open when they need it the numbers could increase.

