

HOSC meeting
 15 November 2012

Title	Temporary suspension of births at the Cotswold Maternity Unit, Chipping Norton
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Status	A paper for noting by members of HOSC outlining the current situation with the Cotswold Maternity Unit (CMU) and the proposed way forward.
History	Not applicable.

Board Lead(s)	Sir Jonathan Michael, Chief Executive			
Key purpose		Assurance		

Summary

1	<p>The OUHT has decided to suspend the intrapartum service at the Cotswold Maternity Unit, Chipping Norton for a period of 3 months to enable the Trust to complete a review of the unit. During this time mechanisms will be put in place to properly support the staff and pregnant women in the local area.</p> <p>It is planned to complete the review within 3 months i.e. end of January 2013.</p>
2	<p>During the time of the review when the unit will not be open for women in labour other services will continue. Women will be able to attend the unit for antenatal care, postnatal care, breast feeding support and neonatal hearing tests.</p>

Temporary suspension of births at the Cotswold Maternity Unit, Chipping Norton

1. A number of issues have been raised in relation to the Cotswold Maternity Unit which requires further exploration. These concerns have been identified through internal monitoring processes, the staff and via the Maternity Services Liaison Committee. The issues mainly relate to working practices within the unit but do not relate to one single incident.
2. As part of the monitoring of the maternity service it appears that there is a higher than expected transfer rate of women in labour from the unit to a Consultant led unit, either the Horton Hospital or the John Radcliffe Hospital. It should be stressed that this does not necessarily indicate there is a problem, but the transfer rate in conjunction with a fall in the numbers of women choosing to give birth in the unit may indicate an underlying problem.

The statistics detailed below outline the activity in the CMU over the last four years and the falling birth rate in this financial year.

2.1 Number of births

Year	Births	Transfers
2009/10	159	22 (11.8%)
2010/11	92	17 (11.4%)
2011/12	117	35 (18%)

2.2 Births and transfers - 2012

Month	Women expressing an interest to birth in the unit	Births	Transfers
April	22	5	7
May	19	3	4
June	15	6	2
July	17	6	3
August	19	9	5
September	27	1	4
Total	119	32	26 (47%)

3. The Trust has a duty to monitor trends and investigate outliers and as part of this process it is necessary to review practice in areas where concerns are identified. It is important in this instance that the review involves staff, the local population and other key stakeholders to ensure the future of the unit is secure and safe for women and their families.
4. The rationale for suspending the intrapartum service is to enable the Trust to properly support the staff and mothers during this review. It will be a difficult time for all

concerned and we are keen not to add extra pressure on the staff in the unit which may impact on the outcomes for women and their babies.

5. Review

There is no evidence of poor clinical practice or adverse outcomes for women and their babies. The unit has received 2 complaints in the last 12 months neither of which have been related to clinical outcomes. However in light of concerns raised by staff (including alleged difficulties with some relationships), the evidence of increased transfer rates and a reduction in the numbers of births, the Trust has decided to suspend the intrapartum service for a period of 3 months. This is to enable the Trust to complete a review of the unit and during this time properly support the staff and pregnant women in the local area. The Trust acknowledges that it will be a difficult time for all concerned and will put in place extra support measures for staff and service users.

The review will take place between 22 October 2012 and a report will be considered at Trust Board in February 2013.

6. Conclusion

The OUHT is being proactive in reviewing the maternity service provided in the CMU following the identification of a number of concerns. The intention is to reopen the unit once any recommendations highlighted through the review have been implemented.

Stakeholder engagement is key and will be an important element of the review.

Key points

- A full review of the Cotswold Maternity Unit - to be completed within 3 months i.e. end of January 2013
- Temporary closure of the unit to women in labour during the time of the review
- Meetings to be arranged with staff and community midwives linking with the unit, the local community and GP's
- Involvement of the PCT
- Involve the Chair of the Maternity Services Liaison Committee
- Investigate and understand external influences

7. Wantage Midwifery Led Unit

The Trust is pleased to announce that following completion of the building work and successful recruitment to vacant posts that the unit at Wantage Community Hospital will be reopening for births on the 26 November 2012.

Jane Hervé, Head of Midwifery

25 October 2012