

REPORT ON THE FINDINGS OF A REVIEW OF THE MIDWIFERY LED UNITS IN CHIPPING NORTON

HOSC

25 April 2013

1. Introduction

At the HOSC meeting held on 21 February 2013, members of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust were given the opportunity to explain the review, including details of the process and the emerging themes. As outlined previously the review was instigated as a result of a number of issues that had been identified through internal monitoring processes, staff and via the Maternity Services Liaison Committee.

The Trust reiterates its commitment to the reopening of Cotswold Maternity Unit to births and it is important to note that the Unit has continued to provide a full antenatal and postnatal service to the local community during this time.

2. Review process and themes

A) Process

In order to fully address the scope of the review, a robust structure of interviews, meetings, case reviews and questionnaires were completed. It was also important to ensure the review encompassed an appropriate timescale to determine practice, cultural issues and identify changes any that have been implemented in the CMU. In order to address these issues the decision was taken to focus on the last 4 years (2008 -2012).

B) Initial themes

- Local women and their families are supportive of the Cotswold Maternity unit and want it to be available for the full range of services.
- Women and staff believe that the option of staying for one night after the birth of their child should be offered to all women giving birth in the CMU.
- The need for midwives and local General Practitioners' to work closely together to support each other in the care of pregnant women and to collaborate in the ongoing development of the unit.
- The need to agree staffing ratios and the appropriate skill mix to provide the service at the CMU.
- Concerns raised by staff on the periphery of the units at Chipping Norton about working practices, isolation of the unit and lone working.
- To review the working arrangements to ensure continuity and provision of midwifery care.

3. Presentation of the findings

Paul Brennan, Director of Clinical Services presented the findings of the review to the Trust Board on 13 March 2013. After extensive discussion the findings and recommendations were accepted with a number of further actions. These included:

- The development of an action plan which must be presented at Trust Board in May and June 2013 to review progress with implementation of the actions.
- Leadership – to ensure a consistent approach and implementation of day to day monitoring in the unit with feedback to Trust Board.
- The need to address the cultural issues in the unit.
- Marketing the unit once there is assurance the unit is fully operational and safe to open for births.

There was agreement to fully open the unit by the 1 July 2013 or before if all actions in place. The action plan and progress against the plan will be considered at the June 2013 Trust Board meeting at which the final decision on the timing of the opening of the CMU will be determined.

4. Recommendations

The review identified 31 recommendations and these were detailed in the report in line with the purposes of the review (included in the paper presented to HOSC on 21 February 2013). The recommendations have been formatted into an action plan to ensure each recommendation is monitored, completed and evidence collected to show compliance.

5. Appropriate service model at the Cotswold Maternity Unit

The Cotswold Maternity unit is highly valued by the local community and is an important part of the OUHT strategy to deliver care as close to home as is appropriate. There is a need to review the staffing within the unit, their roles and responsibilities and the links to other community teams in order to ensure appropriate cover and service provision; this is underway. The plan is to fully reopen and provide antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care to the population of Chipping Norton and surrounding areas.

The Trust is committed to maintaining safe maternity services throughout the county. In order to maintain safe and sustainable clinical viability the number of births at the CMU needs to grow substantially. A marketing campaign will be agreed to ensure the population of Chipping Norton and the surroundings areas are fully informed about the CMU and the services available. The outcomes will be closely monitored by the OUHT and commissioners.

6. Conclusion

This review has found that there were problems at Chipping Norton that contributed to the position in which the Trust needed to take the decision to suspend births at the unit. The action plan (accompanying this report) addresses these problems and there is now a need to move on in a positive way with a supportive structure in place to ensure a fulfilling working environment and a successful Cotswold Maternity Unit.

**Jane Hervé,
Head of Midwifery
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