

# FIFTEEN STEPS FOR MATERNITY

## MNVP 15 STEPS FOR MATERNITY AND NEONATAL West Cumberland Hospital 7th February 2024





**Attendees:** MNVP Vice lead Jenny Fye; Maternity Representative Liz Simcock; MNVP Service User Representative, Aiesha Drysder; Jan Sibbert, MNISA; 6 Service Users

### Introduction

The 15 Steps for Maternity is a toolkit which was developed with Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs) in mind and aligns with the NHS priorities for maternity care as outlined in 'Better Births' and the local implementation plan.

The toolkit supports collaborative working between all those involved in using, reviewing, designing and delivering maternity services. It is an observational approach whereby small teams of service users and maternity staff explore local maternity settings to get a 'feel' for the space. It is not a performance management tool, nor does it take the place of a formal audit (clinical, quality, safety or otherwise).

The toolkit has been co-created with maternity service users who identified a number of different elements which were important to them in places where maternity care is delivered, including:

-  Welcoming and informative atmosphere
-  Safe and clean environment
-  Friendly and personal professional care
-  Organised and calm setting

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# Honister Ward

## Welcoming and Informative

We met in the entrance area on the ground floor at WCH. Some mums had trouble parking, with one in particular having to carry her newborn as she couldn't get the car seat out to attach onto the pram due to the parking spaces being so tight and no parent/child parking spaces. It was mentioned that this is also an issue when you have a large bump and struggle to get out of the car safely in tight spaces. At certain times of day parking is impossible resulting in having to park off-site and walk which is not ideal when heavily pregnant or with a newborn. Mums said that there is a car parking leaflet given out so that you can pay via an App, however this didn't always work.

There is good signage in the lifts on how to get to Honister, though this wasn't quite as clear on the corridor signage by the café. We were met by the Matron who was friendly and welcoming and encouraged us to ask questions and give honest feedback, both good and bad. We were let onto the Ward without a wait, staff greeted us warmly and mums were able to leave their bags in the staff area.

Straight away the high temperature on the Ward was commented upon: a lack of ventilation, no blinds to block out the sun and inability to open windows were all things the mums had struggled with during their stay. For some this was unbearable, especially during the night and added to the uncomfortableness and stressfulness of the situation when learning to care for a baby for the first time and recover from the birth. It was suggested that fans could be provided on each bay. Matron was obviously aware of the issue and the benefits of the upcoming new build were discussed.

There was a large 'Welcome to Maternity' sign which identifies the Clinical Midwifery Manager by name, has visiting times for the different areas, information on what happens when you are discharged from antenatal and postnatal services, it also mentions chaplaincy and post-natal listening service. There were large 'Friends and Family' boards showing recent feedback and quotes, including what had been positively changed/improved in response to comments and suggestions. There was a large Quality of Care board with up-to-date data from the previous month. There were posters for the CQC Maternity Survey in the toilets. There were posters showing how to give patient feedback; 'Your voice matters'; 'Making decisions about your care' and a poster for the Religious Chaplain. No information was displayed about the MVP or PALS. There were no leaflets visible about after birth thoughts/reflection services and the majority of the mums were unaware of this service or how to access it.

# Honister Ward

It was noted that there weren't any inclusive posters specifically aimed at BAME, LGBTQ or other minority groups. Matron said that they have very few women who need information in different languages so they respond to that on a more individual basis by offering an interpreter and use iPad translators. One mum suggested that there could be QR codes on important posters that could give you the information in a different language if required. This kind of thing apparently is an option on Badgernet however the service often crashes.

The toilets were wheelchair accessible, with a separate one for visitors, however, mums didn't feel there were enough toilet facilities given how many women are sharing them and dealing with issues such as post-partum bleeding etc.

Visiting times were clearly displayed however service users felt like the 8pm cut-off time for partner visiting made life difficult, especially for those who had given birth only a few hours before, with both mums and partners not feeling ready to leave/be left alone with new baby. There was a very long wait for the lift outside Honister after the visit.

## Safe and Clean

Overall the ward was very clean and tidy and women felt safe on the ward. Mums liked that the entrance to Honister needed a staff member to grant access, this made them feel more secure, especially of an evening as a patient being on their own.

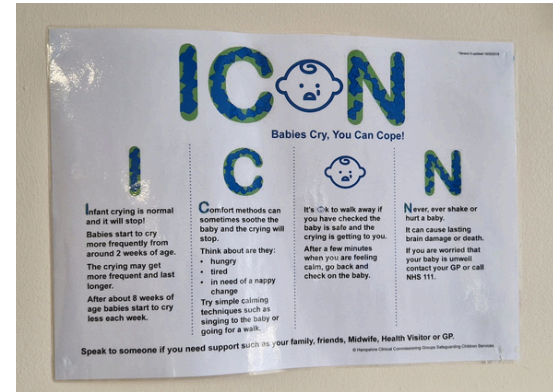
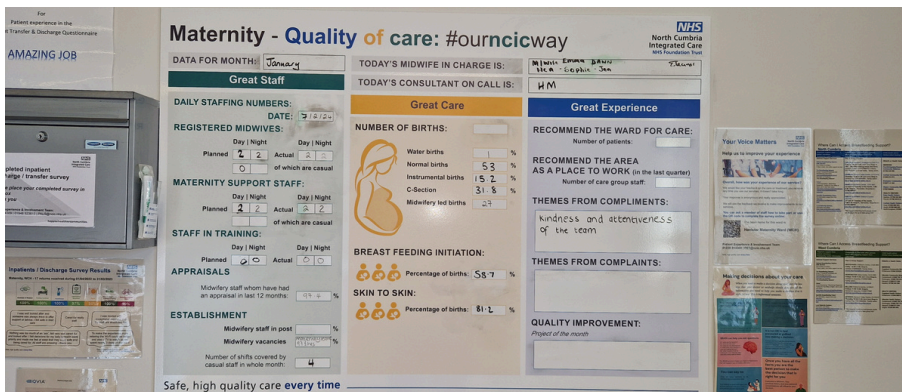
There were evidence-based information breastfeeding posters up on the walls and leaflets available as well as a great ICON poster (about crying babies). There weren't any posters about skin-to-skin benefits or safe sleeping advice, though mums said this was available on Badgernet. There weren't any discreet posters in the toilets relating to domestic violence or professional midwifery advocates, or who to contact confidentially if you needed a concern/issue escalated.

There were baby changing facilities in the hospital itself but none up on the ward. Mums found changing their babies on the bed very difficult, especially when recovering from a c-section. They struggled with clearing a space and bending over the bed, so a changing table at the correct height would have been appreciated. Is there such a thing as a portable changing mat that could safely slot on to the top of the cot perhaps? One mum had to change her child while we were looking round and, whilst the midwives were helpful in finding her a cot to use, it would make sense to have proper baby changing facilities.



# Honister Ward

Staff were seen washing hands and using sanitising stations regularly. There was uncertainty around the protocol for new mums showering, questioning who stays with baby? Is someone with the mother in case of fainting/to help with wound care etc? Although all patients have a buzzer, the importance of regularly checking in in-person was highlighted, for example; one mums buzzer had fallen down behind the bed and due to having a c-section she couldn't bend down to reach it.



## Friendly and Personal

All the staff we met were positive, kind and many remembered the mothers and babies and stopped to talk and catch up with them. All the staff we met were either midwives or HCP's, we weren't introduced to or approached by any Consultants Obstetricians or Doctors. There was a Senior Team photo poster the wall, but no photos of the midwives, which the mums would have found helpful during their stay. There was a suggestion of even just having a poster describing the different uniform colours and what their roles were would be very helpful.

Praise was given to the midwives on the post-natal ward who were really helpful and mums felt like they could trust them. All staff contributed to one mum having a positive, happy birth, despite an emergency section. Active reassurance that it's still ok to buzz for help even when you are on day 3,4,5+ would have been appreciated as mums sometimes felt reluctant to buzz for help after being there a few days.

One mum felt that all the HCP's were well-informed and supportive with her attempts to breastfeed.

# Honister Ward

## Organised and Calm

The overall feeling was that it is a very calming and quiet space. It was commented that even when busy they seem to run very efficiently. Equipment was stored in designated places, everything seemed tidy, well-organised and clearly labelled, both on the corridor and in store cupboards. There wasn't unnecessary clutter around and everything seemed to have a suitable place.

It was good to see noticeboards up on the walls, though the walls in the shared seating area were very bare. It was suggested that the MVP have a noticeboard there, also that the space here and along the corridor to Delivery could be brightened up with photography and murals.

The ward felt secure and well laid out. There is now a dedicated triage room close to the entrance giving a necessary improvement of having a separate private space for sweeps and examinations. Though this is countered by the fact it is extremely hot and stuffy as it is small with no windows and not particularly welcoming. There are then large ante-natal bays followed by post-natal bays, plus a separate re-admissions room. The bays are much more spacious having been reduced from 4 beds down to 2 beds per bay, allowing plenty of room around for movement and visitors, whilst also giving the option of privacy with the curtain around, and this made a huge positive difference to patient experience.

There is a large, open, shared space on Honister with tables, chairs, tv, free tea/coffee facilities and a water fountain. This seems an ideal space for patients and visitors to congregate and socialise, and while we were there one dad was using the space with his newborn to give mum some quiet time in the bay. Some mums said they were encouraged by staff to use this space as and when they needed to, others didn't know about it or know it was available all the time. Often patients would mix here at breakfast time but then go back to their own bays. It was discussed how it could be made more appealing and useful and one of the key points were that the chairs were not comfortable whilst pregnant or having recently given birth.

We did not see any handover between staff.

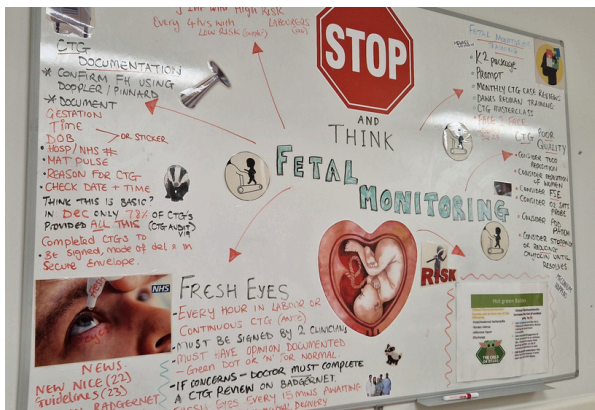
# Delivery Ward

## Welcoming and Informative

The delivery ward had a warm and welcoming atmosphere and was very calm and quiet. There were lots of staff noticeboards up in the corridor focusing on PPH, preterm birth and fetal monitoring data and information, as well as a 'Pebble Board' which seemed like a useful interactive feedback and progress tool. There was an organisational board with staff photos of Maternity, Neonatal and Board Safety Champions along with a Quality of Care data board from December and patient feedback boards. It was lovely to see a 'Women's Experience' noticeboard full of cards and notes from recent service users.

There were posters on 'making decisions about your care' and 'Patient advice and liaison services', however these were by the staff bay and perhaps not in the right place to be visible enough for patients.

There is a waiting room in between Delivery and SCBU with chairs and tea/coffee facilities.



## Safe and Clean

Again, the ward was clean, tidy and uncluttered with handwashing stations and clear walkways. The ward can only be accessed by a member of staff which again, feels safe and secure. There was evidence-based information and posters on skin-to-skin and breastfeeding in the birth rooms, but again, no posters in toilets regarding DV.

The theatre was very clean and tidy, and there was a poster promoting the benefits of skin-to-skin and the golden hour theatre protocol.



# Delivery Ward

## Friendly and Personal

The staff were in the main reception area and were approachable, helpful and friendly. The mums on the visit were offered water and a seat when needed.

Personalisation of birth area was supported and encouraged in the run up to birth, though it wasn't always felt like women had an equal choice in their actual place of birth or that the different places were equally promoted, and continuity of care wasn't always available.

The Bluebell suite is a recent addition which was well received by the mums on the visit (though was triggering for some). This suite is for those families dealing with baby loss. It is a separate, private space with homely touches and a comforting atmosphere. It has a sofa bed, kitchen space and accessible bathroom where families can stay after the birth. A cold cot has recently been donated which will be of great benefit to families experiencing baby loss.

We were able to see a couple of the birthing rooms which were well set up to promote active birth and were warm, welcoming spaces. A birth pool, balls, mats, and stools are available and the beds were placed against the walls so they weren't the dominant feature and there was space for moving around. There was calming artwork and photography on the walls and the option to adjust the ambient lighting, with some rooms having light projectors on the ceiling.

Clocks in the delivery room are a great addition and the positioning of them behind the bed is perfect so that you are not watching the clock but can keep a rough idea of what is happening when.

There were large posters with tips and photographs on active birth positions and how birth partners can help. There are whiteboards on the walls which were originally meant for women to write up their birth preferences, but these are currently being used by staff for pph monitoring.





# Delivery Ward

## Organised and Calm

The ward is well organised with birthing rooms at one end and then the operating theatre at the other end.

Everything was stored in appropriate places and the whole area was tidy, quiet and calm. The midwife station has large monitor screens up on the walls which had dashboard information monitoring the women in their care. This new technology enables the midwives and consultants to have an overview of the women at all times and is an effectively early warning system for fetal monitoring issues.

There is a waiting area with tea and coffee available.



## Welcoming and Informative

The ward is bright and welcoming, with darker lighting in the bays and rooms. There are large murals on the glass walls and artwork and painting on the walls, along with a lovely memento box of baby's names that have stayed on the ward.

Parents are allowed and encouraged to visit 24/7, which is really helpful to those parents who work shift patterns.

There is a large leaflet stand, plus posters on safe sleeping and Parent Advisory Group information.

## Safe and Clean

The ward was very clean and uncluttered. The ward is very welcoming for siblings, with a Team Evie donated bookshelf, toys, dolls and prams available to keep siblings entertained while parents visit.

There is a helpful staff photoboard to easily identify staff and their roles.





## Friendly and Personal

For those parents who can't stay they use the 'V-create' app and iPad for secure, personal communication between staff and parents. This is great as it enables them to send videos, photos and messages of the babies and allows parents to ask any questions whenever they need to, along with language translation options.

There was a chest of drawers where baby clothes are available for parents to use as they please, as many won't have clothes or nappies etc that are small enough from prem babies. This gives the parents a sense of choice and control over the care of their babies. They also have Cuski fabric comforters available where the mother has one and the baby has another, they keep them close to themselves and then swap so they get the bonding benefits of each other's scent.

They have charitable fund vouchers available that they give out to visiting parents to use in the café, and they are hoping to soon get a complementary drinks trolley that parents can use.

There is a milk kitchen that mothers can access with lockable fridge space where they can store expressed milk. Breast pumps are also lent out to mothers who need them.

## Organised and Calm

The Special Care Baby Unit is situated just across the corridor from delivery ward, which is great that it's so close and accessible for mothers who can request to go over to see their babies at any time.

We were fortunate to be invited into one of the rooms by a mother staying with her premature newborn twins. The room was dark, calm and quiet and they were together in a twin cot which the mother really appreciated.

There is a separate parents room where family can stay overnight and there are plans to get lie-flat beds in all the rooms so that every parent can stay overnight with their baby.

# Ante-natal and Community Clinic

In the waiting area there are staff photoboards and a noticeboard with information on local bumps-to-babies classes. This is the waiting area for those having a Diabetes check, which is 2hrs long, so having a tv, radio or other facilities would be appreciated.

There is a separate waiting area for those having scans, and a private space for those parents who are being given sad or upsetting news.



# Positive Aspects and Action Plan

## Welcoming and Informative

### Positives

- Maternity wards easy to find and accessible
- Overall very warm, welcoming and accommodating
- Lots of current information available on display boards and leaflet stands
- Bright spaces with lots of areas displaying artwork, murals and photography
- Positive feedback from recent service users displayed
- Clear waiting areas and communal areas with tea and coffee facilities available
- 24/7 visiting times on SCBU

What is the issue?	What action is needed?	'You said, we did' Update September 24 February 25
Car parking	-Larger Parent and Child spaces made available close to entrance -‘Pay on exit’ system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger Parent &amp; Child spaces available outside new main entrance</li> <li>• Currently no Pay on Exit plans</li> </ul>
Badgernet crashing and not updating	-Better communication between departments -Appointments/information updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion in Sept MNVP Meeting about putting better system in place for updating records</li> </ul>
Lack of info on safe sleeping, skin-to-skin, and After birth Reflection service	-More posters and leaflets made available on Honister -Patients made more aware of Reflections service through discussion with midwives on ward and in community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaflets available on walls and in day room</li> <li>• Postnatal Listening Service posters on walls in Delivery and Honister</li> <li>• Flier for service placed in red baby books</li> </ul>
Not knowing who members of staff are	More staff photoboards and colour-coded uniform roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff wearing Trust name badge stating name and role</li> <li>• Senior staff photo board in place</li> </ul>

# Positive Aspects and Action Plan

Temperature too high on wards	-Fans available in each bay -Blinds on windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New fans purchased</li> <li>• Air conditioning installed on new ward</li> </ul>
8pm cut-off time too early for partners	Later partner visiting times on Honister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>New recliner chairs available on ward</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased visiting hours for partners in place</i></li> </ul>

## Safe and Clean

### Positives

- All wards, toilets and corridors were clean, tidy and uncluttered
- Toilets were wheelchair accessible
- Access onto wards was staff only which helped mums feel safe and secure
- Evidence-based posters were visible on skin-to-skin, breastfeeding, safe sleeping and golden hour
- Staff were seen washing hands and using sanitising stations regularly
- SCBU had a staff photoboard and siblings were catered for

What is the issue?	What action is needed?	'You said, we did' Update September 24 February 25
No baby changing facilities on the wards	-Baby changing facilities made available in toilets on wards -Cot-top removeable changing mats?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains open for discussion on new ward design</li> <li>• <i>Changing table made available in Team Evie rest room space</i></li> </ul>
No information on how to reach out for help confidentially	Discreet posters in toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster in place in staff and patient toilets</li> </ul>
Uncertainty around baby care/personal care	Information given on what to do with baby whilst mum is showering/toileting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information poster displayed on all cots</li> </ul>

# Positive Aspects and Action Plan

## Friendly and personal

### Positives

- All staff were friendly, kind and welcoming
- Staff remembered mums and their babies and were genuinely pleased to see them and catch up
- Cards and positive messages of thanks were displayed
- Personalisation of birthing area encouraged
- Bluebell Suite facilities
- Welcoming birth rooms with appropriate lighting, artwork and equipment
- Posters and photographs promoting active birth, partner involvement and coping strategies
- Tea and coffee facilities available (plus food vouchers on SCBU)
- Milk fridge access on SCBU and feeding support available on wards
- Personal communication between parents and staff on SBCU via Vcreate app
- Baby clothes and Cuski comforters available on SCBU

What is the issue?	What action is needed?	'You said, we did' Update September 24 February 25
Lack of choice in place of birth	Options made clearer to women in antenatal appointments, without judgment or bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>New birthplace choice videos planned for March 25</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Launch of package of materials on informed decision-making, choice and control from LMNS</i></b></li> </ul>
Lack of continuity of care	Women accessing the same midwife throughout their care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Local survey to launch Feb 25 to capture feedback</i></b></li> </ul>
Whiteboards on delivery now used by staff	A dedicated place for women to write birth preferences in delivery rooms if they wish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Boards available in all rooms, multi-purpose use</i></b></li> </ul>

# Positive Aspects and Action Plan

## Organised and Calm

### Positives

- Overall sense of calm and quiet
- Equipment stored in appropriate designated spaces and the wards run efficiently even when busy
- Wards are well laid out with large bays
- SCBU is very close so parents can have easy access
- Large shared area available on Honister
- Fetal monitoring dashboard information station
- Parent overnight room, darker lighting and twin cots available on SCBU

What is the issue?	What action is needed?	'You said, we did' Update September 24 Feb 25
Shared open area on Honister not used as well as it could be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Comfier chairs</li> <li>-Make the space visually more appealing</li> <li>-make it clearer to women and families how they can use the space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ongoing project for new ward</b></li> </ul>
Bare walls in communal space on Honister and between Honister and Delivery ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-MNVP information board in communal space on Honister</li> <li>-More artwork/murals/ photography on bare wall space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noticeboard in place</b></li> <li>• <b>Ongoing project for new ward</b></li> <li>• <b><i>MNVP Noticeboard space available in new postnatal ward</i></b></li> </ul>

Thank you to all the attendees for their time and feedback, and to all the staff who welcomed us.