



whittington health maternity voices  
listening to parents:  
change through partnership



**Whittington Health**  
NHS Trust

Whittington Health Maternity Service Liaison Committee  
(Maternity Voices)  
Annual Report  
2016-17



## Contents

Letter from the Chair	Page 2
The function of an MVP	Page 3
What we have we done this year	Page 4-5
Future plans	Page 6
Conclusions	Page 6
Posters – what women want, Whittington MVP	Page 7-8

### **Letter from the Chair**

We have had four meetings this year, with follow-up interim meetings after each one. Meetings have been lively and enthusiastic, with a diverse range of health professionals, teachers, and volunteers coming together to discuss positive ways forward that will benefit everybody. At ‘half time’ we have enjoyed delicious cakes and tea and then been joined by local parents who have shared their thoughts and ideas with us, with the added bonus of bringing their lovely babies to remind us of what this is all about.

Meetings have been a real example of co-production, bringing together many voices who all respect each other and their work. Everyone is dedicated to improving the experience of women and their families around this exciting and vulnerable period in their lives.

We have seen a strong national movement to bring Maternity Voices to the fore, with our groups very much a part of Better Births. Whittington is an Early Adopter; Whittington Maternity Voices will work closely with all involved and feed into any new initiatives throughout next year.

I would like to thank everyone who attends and takes an interest in Maternity Voices. Your support is much appreciated.

Thanks also to:

Archway Children’s Centre for enabling us to hold our meetings in their beautiful space.

Anne Odling-Smee from [design-science.co.uk](http://design-science.co.uk) who gave her time for free to create our fantastic new logo in consultation with our user reps.

We are always delighted to welcome new service users to the committee. If you have had a baby in the last three years at the Whittington, or have an interest in maternity and would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you. Our email address is [maternityvoices.whitthealth@nhs.net](mailto:maternityvoices.whitthealth@nhs.net)

Author: Roz Webb, Lay-Chair, Whittington Health Maternity Voices Partnership  
December 2017

## **The Function of a Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP)**

An MVP is an independent, multi-disciplinary advisory body, made up of local parents, representatives and professionals. Our committee includes representatives from Haringey and Islington CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups), children's centres, HealthWatch, Home Start, midwifery managers, the NCT (National Childbirth Trust), BfN (Breastfeeding Network), Active Birth Centre, Birth Companions and doulas. At each meeting we have a number of service users who have used Whittington maternity services; some come only once but others return to further meetings. The Maternity Voices Partnership exists in order to plan, monitor, develop and improve maternity care for women, partners and families at the Whittington.

### **What we do**

We meet four times a year to discuss key issues for Whittington Maternity, from pre-conception through to antenatal care, birth and postnatal care and recommend changes and improvements where these are needed, with a particular focus on 'quick wins'.

Meetings are held in Archway Children's Centre, N19 5HE, which is close to the Whittington and provides a welcoming environment for parents. Around 20-25 people attend each meeting, with around 60 people on the mailing list. Many of the 20-25 attend every meeting although some may only attend particular ones to give a presentation about what they do, for example. All documents are posted on drop box, which anyone can ask to join. At least a third of attendees are user reps and we are joined for our workshops by around 5 mothers and their babies and sometimes partners each time.

When possible or appropriate the Chair, with volunteers, 'walks the patch' and attends baby clinics at Children's Centres to collect feedback and also receives and collates feedback by email. As many of our members work with pregnant women and new parents they also can provide a great deal of information about current experiences and feelings. We are working hard to make links with 'seldom heard' groups and have user reps who attend meetings on their behalf.

The Chair, with volunteers, also carries out '15 steps' (first impressions) reports, as well as attending North Central London Maternity Voices and other meetings as appropriate. The Chair liaises regularly with other MVP leaders on a national forum.

We have had a number of presentations at the meetings, from local and national groups who support parents such as the NCT, IAPT, Health Visitors and 'Working with Men'. This enables everyone in the group to get a sense of what is going on the area and where women and their families can be signposted to. We welcome anyone who wishes to share their work with us.

## **What we have done this year**

'The Whittington MSLC [Maternity Services Liaison Committee] was started 18 months ago and has achieved a lot in a relatively short period of time. They are lucky to have a very skilled and passionate Chair who is clear about her aims for the group and is well connected with national MSLC groups and best practice. The ethos of the MSLC is to make changes through positivity. The format of the group is well designed to be inclusive and facilitate and encourage women to share their views.'

*Lay Auditor's Report, LSA Annual Audit 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016*

'Thanks for having us to the meeting today. It was great to see the MVP in operation and to hear insights from women and professionals – true people power in action!'

*Vicky Fobel, NCT Public Affairs and Campaigns Officer*

**I would like to thank Victoria Lemmon (user rep), Katherine Jaques (user rep), Mayani Muthuveloe (user rep), Lynn Murphy (user rep/ Active Birth Centre) and Agnes Leger (user rep) for their help and support with these activities and achievements.**

### **In meetings**

At every meeting the HOM presents an update.

This year we had a strong focus on postnatal care, both on the wards and at home.

In **February 2017** we focussed on the postnatal experience, hearing updates from the BFI work and BfN peer supporters. The main presentation was from IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) who informed us about how they support parents with mental health needs. At the workshop two Health Visitors told us about their work supporting mothers and their families and then we focussed on care after leaving the maternity ward.

In **May 2017** we heard more about what Health Visitors do and then discussed how well mothers feel supported with skin to skin and breastfeeding.

In **October 2017** Vicky Fobel and Elizabeth Duff from the NCT came to talk about the NCT's work around postnatal care and their 'Hidden Half' campaign about postnatal mental illness. At the workshop we heard from new mothers about their experiences of postnatal care.

In **December 2017** we heard from Chris Stein and the 'Expectant Fathers' work he runs. Our workshop focussed on our plans for 2018 with a strong link to the Better Births work in North Central London. This meeting was attended by the Chief Executive of the Whittington Trust who was extremely supportive of the work we do.

### During the year

- attended LSA audit. Met with lay-auditor
- collected feedback at Archway and Willow baby clinics and on the postnatal ward
- 15 steps – triage/ MDU
- ‘walked the patch’ Cellier (birth experiences)
- attended all-London meeting for service user leads on MSLCs
- attended doulas/ midwives working together meetings (ongoing)
- created tagul of positive comments about maternity care following feedback
- gave detailed feedback on parent info leaflets for postnatal ward, checking final edits
- wrote postnatal schedule of care in ‘patient friendly’ language
- provided FAQ for new maternity webpages (now online)
- attended NCL Local Maternity System Transformation Plan Development Workshop (12/9/17)
- toured wards to discuss photo displays
- created noticeboard display for triage/ EPU
- attended planned caesarean birth and gave feedback
- attended London- wide Maternity Voices Partnership Development Day
- submitted questions re patient at heart of care for Senior Matron interviews
- created a logo
- walk the patch Cellier (Nov 17)
- began design of photo displays for triage and MDU
- reviewed all previous suggested postnatal actions – 9 completed, 7 ongoing/ work in progress, 1 still to do

## **Future plans 2017-18**

Dates for 2018 have already been confirmed and a poster has been produced. Information will be disseminated on the Whittington website and widely in local venues. The work we have planned so far is as follows:

- support Whittington Maternity to implement Better Births through liaison with workstream leads and PPI lead
- continue to monitor 'quick wins' and other recommendations
- continue to work closely with local groups and users
- reach out to seldom heard groups and hear their voices – link up with PPI user lead
- continue to achieve good numbers of parents attending the meetings
- continue to collect feedback at children's centres and get more volunteers on board to assist with this
- carry out regular 'walk the patch' and '15 steps' with the help of more volunteers
- consider ways to achieve a higher profile, possibly through social media
- review funding options following report from CCG

These are likely to be the main focus of our meetings, as proposed in December 2017 and to be finalised in January 2018:

- Strengthening links
- Improving communication and use of language by HPs
- Review how information is shared with expectant and new parents to reduce 'overload'
- Improve ways to thank staff

## **Conclusion**

Whittington Maternity Voices has had an interesting and productive year. We have asked for, and seen, positive changes in care at the Whittington. The vast majority of women who give birth at the Whittington feel happy about their experiences.

When all the feedback from MVP is distilled it can be summed up as:

women want to feel cared for and listened to

Whittington Maternity Voices can play a strong part in fulfilling that aim.

December 2017

## **Women feel better when.....**

**they feel cared for**

**this is shown through:**

***continuity of care***

***clear communication***

***consistent advice***

***careful use of language***

***empathy***

***breastfeeding support***

***attention to maternal needs and concerns***

***support for skin to skin***

***being clear about where to get support***



whittington health maternity voices  
listening to parents:  
change through partnership

**All of this is cost-free**

*Feedback from Whittington Health Maternity Voices, October 2017*



whittington health maternity voices  
listening to parents:  
change through partnership



Archway Children's Centre, Vorley Road, N19;  
Dates for 2018 – From 11.20 to 12.30hrs  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February      Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September      Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December

## Whittington Maternity wants to hear from you!

Your views are incredibly important to us.  
You can make a difference!

We are a group for new mothers and their families to have a voice in maternity care, taking part in discussions and making real changes. You'll be sharing your views with health professionals and others who work with families around the time of pregnancy, birth and beyond.

The workshops begin with refreshments and then a relaxed chat in small groups about your experiences at the Whittington.

Babes in arms are welcome and we can provide a creche.

*If you would like to come, please contact Roz Webb (chair) at: [maternityvoices.whitthealth@nhs.net](mailto:maternityvoices.whitthealth@nhs.net)*

**NHS**  
Whittington Health  
NHS Trust

