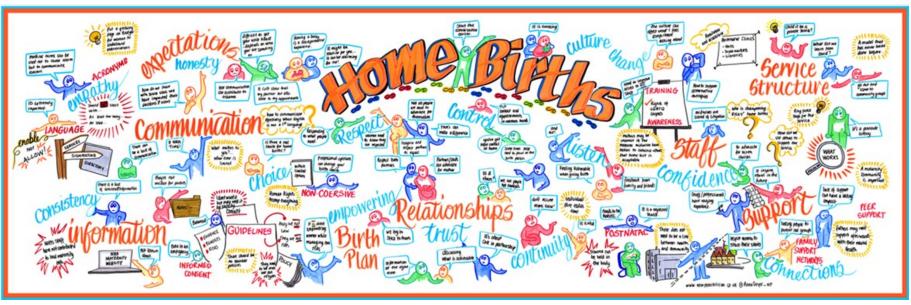


WHAT?

Whose Shoes? Home Birth Workshop

Led by Nottingham University Business School in partnership with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS), Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.



WHY?

During the 20th century home birth went from being the norm, to being a minority activity. In the 21st century we see that most women have come to accept hospital birth as the norm. However, there is evidence that home birth can be a safe and cost-effective option for women who have a low risk of complications and can deliver high levels of service-user satisfaction. In 2020, around 2.4% of births took place at home in England and Wales. However, there is huge variation nationally – in some areas the figure can be as low as 0.4%; in others it can be as high as 10%. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have seen a steady decline in their home birth rates over the last decade and now have some of the lowest rates in England.

The aim of this workshop was to facilitate the participation of multiple stakeholders, especially maternity service users, to contribute to actions that could support the development of home birth services locally.

HOW?

Funding: the main income source was through a 'Mode A' Economic & Social Research Council Impact Accelerator Award grant from the University of Nottingham was used. These grants enable universities to work with other sectors to apply social sciences knowledge to the challenges in society.

Stakeholders: a wide range of partners across the footprint were invited and attendees on the day included clinicians, service leads, support workers, commissioners, local universities, voluntary and charity sector organisations, commissioners, private entrepreneurs, service users and representation from the Royal College of Midwives. Stakeholders booked on via the EventBrite platform. **Room booking:** We used a conference centre with a large room to run the workshop and an additional smaller room for a mobile creche to support attendees with childcare. Catering and refreshments for the day were arranged.

Workshop activities: The licensed WhoseShoes?® game was played at every table containing game cards, scenarios and poems relevant to home birth themes. As participants played, they were encouraged to capture their ideas, thoughts & emotions on post-it notes. These were then dynamically gathered and translated into a graphic record by a graphic illustrator from New Possibilities. A professional actor who is also a retired midwife, was commissioned to provide storytelling interludes relevant to the theme of home birth throughout the workshop to encourage creative thinking and maintain a positive and thought-provoking atmosphere.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We gathered feedback throughout the day on the current situation and future development of our home birth service. these have fed into key recommendations for local maternity providers and commissioners to take forward:

1: Establish a model of care that will provide a reliable and sustainable home birth service that is available 24/7/365 to all women who request a home birth.

2: To increase skills and confidence of service providers and their staff to deliver a safe and supportive home birth service.

3: That local maternity services hold further engagement events with service-users whose voices are seldomly heard or easily ignored. In doing so, working towards culturally competent maternity care that empowers people from all parts of the community.

4: Ensure choice of place of birth is communicated to service-users using the principles of informed decision making, awareness of up-to-date evidence and personalisation.

5: Create a suite of information resources to share with families about home births, which will share the facts and promote the new service.







SHARED LEARNING

What went well? Social media was a valuable tool in publicising the workshop There was clear support from the attendees at the workshop which has kickstarted plans for a dedicated and reliable home birth service to be developed. As a coproduction tool, WhoseShoes? was well received by the stakeholders and has the potential to be used for future events. **Things to consider:** This was a large event with 70 participants. Room hire and creche facilities was very costly. Future engagement events like this would benefit from exploring smaller opportunities in free of charge community spaces.