

MSLC Good Practice

Case study - 'Normalising birth' by improving information on birth choices in Lewisham

What has been achieved?

Rosie Newman, service user rep and co-chair, designed a beautiful poster, presenting the birth choices available to women in a visual and easy to read way, which has been distributed to all clinical areas in Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital Trust and community venues such as children's centres. Since this MSLC work commenced, supporting other work in progress at our local maternity unit to normalise birth, the CS rate at LGT has reduced significantly (CS rates: 2012 - 32.9%, 2013 - 32% (data from a presentation by Dr Bhavna), 2014/15- 25.9% (data from maternity dashboard)).

What made the change happen?

In 2014, Lewisham MSLC voted 'normalising birth' as one of our top priorities for the coming year. This was also a priority for our local maternity unit, Lewisham and Greenwich Hospital Trust (LGT) and Lewisham CCG.

We decided we would focus on improving information to women on where they could give birth in line with the Place of Birth evidence (Hollowell, J Birthplace programme overview. 2011). We did this as follows:

- Our MSLC is involved in suggesting Cquins (Commissioning for Quality and Improvement) and we supported a Place of Birth cquin with commissioners and our local maternity trust in 2014/15
- One of the actions was that LGT now use a decision tree which enables an informed discussion to take place between the mother and her partner, the midwife, and the doctor if appropriate. The decision tree is part of the new maternity notes and midwives complete the tree to record that a discussion has taken place on at least two occasions in pregnancy.

What parent and public involvement (PPI) was there?

In 2014, our co-chair, Stephania Manfra-Kara, designed a survey to ask women's experience of the place of birth discussion which went on our Facebook page and got 100 replies within days. This was analysed and presented at our MSLC meeting with actions presented by the Head of Midwifery and her team. The MSLC plans to repeat the place of birth survey to see if women report increased satisfaction with informed discussions on choices available as to where they have their baby.

Rosie Newman designed a birth poster and she and LGT are offering it to other NHS trusts and MSLCs to use locally. A copy is available alongside this case study. Please contact Lewisham MSLC if you would like to adapt it for use locally.

Rosie Newman said:

'I have shared the poster with several other MSLCs around the country who liked it and want to use it too. I really hope it can be part of a positive change in the way women see their

choices. I recently had a wonderful home birth myself, and I wish more women could experience that without so much fear and doubt standing in the way.'

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