

MSLC good practice

Case study – Promoting Calderdale Birth Centre to ensure optimal birthplace options

What has been achieved?

First, pregnant women in Halifax were kept informed about the temporary closure of their local birth centre. Second, public pressure in the form of an online petition encouraged the NHS trust to re-open the alongside midwifery unit (birth centre) in the purpose built setting to ensure a full range of options for planning labour and birth.

Why was MSLC/parent activism needed?

An unexpected shortage of midwives led to the temporary closure of Calderdale Birth Centre, an alongside midwifery-led unit at Calderdale Royal Infirmary in Halifax, West Yorkshire, and the relocation of midwife-led care to the Obstetric Unit.

Andrea Wallman, joint chair of the Calderdale and Huddersfield MSLC and an NCT antenatal practitioner, swung into action as soon as she heard of this from the women attending her NCT courses.

Andrea contacted the Trust and prompted them to issue a press release explaining the situation.

Shortly after this Ruth Weston, a member of the MSLC in the neighbouring Bradford and Airedale Trust, raised a petition on the Change.org website to highlight the issue and emphasise the importance of birth centres to women, which attracted nearly 1,000 signatures.

The Head of Midwifery, Anne-Marie Henshaw, was keen to keep everyone involved and put pregnant women's minds at rest, and the Birth Centre re-opened a few weeks later.

Contact: Andrea Wallman, (former) joint chair of the Calderdale and Huddersfield MSLC and NCT antenatal practitioner

Contact: Ruth Weston, member of neighbouring Bradford and Airedale MSLC Twitter: @bornstropy Website: <https://bornstropy.wordpress.com/> Website strapline: Making a noise about things that matter to mums and mums-to-be

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