

MSLC Good Practice

Case study – Tailored infant feeding support using a ‘milk kitchen’ in Hull

What has been achieved?

A ‘milk kitchen’ was set up in the Hull and East Yorkshire Women’s and Children’s Hospital, and the hospital stopped routinely providing cartons of ready-made formula. Mums who intend to formula feed are asked to bring their own supplies. A small stock is kept in case of urgent need.

Why did the MSLC think this was important?

It would ensure mothers who chose to formula feed would get practical support and advice in making up bottles safely, as well as encouraging midwives to be more consistent in their support of breastfeeding.

How long did it take?

It was a long, drawn-out process which took a lot of patience and tenacity on the part of the user reps, and it took several years to achieve.

What barriers or resistance had to be overcome?

There were various barriers, including the health and safety requirements of having separate sinks for hand-washing and bottle washing, the cost and difficulty of making changes to a PFI building, and the logistics of how a milk kitchen would be used.

What facilitated change?

The eventual success was due to a combination of MSLC members’ willingness to work around the difficulties, the hospital wanting to move up a level on the Baby Friendly Initiative, and support from the commissioners when they realised the positives of the proposal. Carolyn Pooley said:

“I noticed when I started attending Labour Ward Forum that the tenor of the meetings slowly changed, to become more woman-focused. I think this is an intangible but vital part of our role, reminding people just by being there and having a different viewpoint that the focus should be about the women rather than risk or protocols.”

Contact: Carolyn Pooley, NCT Practitioner and former MSLC/Labour Ward Forum user rep at Hull and East Yorkshire Women’s and Children’s Hospital