

Local Members' Interest

**Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Monday 9th August 2021**

Maternity Services update

1. Recommendation/s

- 1.1 To receive the update around the Temporary Closure of Free-Standing Midwife-led birthing Services.
- 1.2 To review the contents of the report and to advise on any additional information that is required by members to feel assured that due process and sufficient involvement activity will be undertaken.

Report of NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups

Summary

2. What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

- 2.1 To receive the update around the Temporary Closure of Free-Standing Midwife-led birthing Services.
- 2.2 To review the contents of the report and to advise on any additional information that is required by members to feel assured that due process and sufficient involvement activity will be undertaken.

Report

3. Background

- 3.1 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) undertook engagement activity in summer 2019 with patients, public and members of the workforce. This information was utilised to develop and refine the clinical model of care that was included in the options appraisal process which took place from November 2019 through to February 2020. A full report of the feedback compiled from these engagement events was shared with commissioners and providers to inform the future models of care. However, before work could progress further, the associated Transformation Programmes were placed on hold in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 3.2 In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Phase one guidance, both University Hospital North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) and University Hospitals Derby and Burton NHS Trust (UHDB) made the decision to temporarily close the freestanding midwife-led birthing units (FMBUs) at County Hospital, Stafford and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, Lichfield in order to consolidate their workforce and service provision on the acute sites at Royal Stoke University Hospital and Queen's Hospital, Burton. In addition to the closures of the FMBUs, there were temporary service closures to the home birth service each provider delivered through the community midwifery teams.
- 3.3 This involved redeploying birth centre staff, who were senior midwives, in order to consolidate resource into the main maternity units. These changes impacted a small cohort of low-risk women who would previously have been offered a birth at the FMBU. Previous year (19/20) data shows that (from Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent) 95 women gave birth at County FMBU and 163 at Samuel Johnson FMBU, out of a total 11,283 births across all settings. Throughout the pandemic, all antenatal and postnatal services delivered at the respective trusts have continued and have remained at their original location.
- 3.4 Both UHDB and UHNM completed their respective Trust's Quality Impact Assessments (QIAs) for the temporary closure of their FMBUs and their homebirth services. Homebirth services were later re-introduced at both trusts. The UHDB homebirth service was suspended on 13/03/20 and reintroduced on 25/05/20. The UHNM home birth service was suspended on 23/03/20 and reintroduced on 15/06/20.
- 3.5 The Trust QIAs indicated no significant impact on quality, safety, patient experience and protected characteristic groups from the service changes. All QIAs for temporary closures were reviewed by the CCGs' Quality and Nursing Directorate and recorded internally for audit purposes, in order for a full QIA to be undertaken post COVID-19.

4. Understanding service change

- 4.1 Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems (LMNS) were asked to move back to delivering a more complete range of objectives to make maternity care safer, more personalised and more equitable. Operational Planning Guidance of 25th March 2021 set out key priorities and deliverables for LMNS' for 2021/22. The first LMNS deliverable outlined in a letter dated 7th May 2021 is to reopen any services that have been suspended because of COVID-19, in line with pandemic recovery. There is no specific date outlined in the letter for when services should be reinstated by.
- 4.2 All maternity services within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have been reintroduced other than the re-opening of both FMBUs in Lichfield and Stafford. It is important to reiterate that all antenatal and postnatal care continues to be delivered by providers from County Hospital and Samuel Johnson Community Hospital, however the birthing element available to only low risk women is currently suspended.
- 4.3 Despite the easing of the lockdown restrictions, both UHDB and UHNM are continuing to report significant staffing pressures as a result of COVID and non-COVID related absences. Staff who were redeployed from the FMBUs during the first phase of the pandemic continue to be essential within the acute units, enhancing the senior

midwifery presence and supporting Ockenden safety recommendations. The full Ockenden report can be found at: [OCKENDEN REPORT - MATERNITY SERVICES AT THE SHREWSBURY AND TELFORD HOSPITAL NHS TRUST \(donnaockenden.com\)](https://www.donnaockenden.com) .

- 4.4 Both providers describe recruitment strategies which take into account the reinstating of FMBU services and the ambition to provide a continuity of carer service model as the default for all pregnant people.
- 4.5 The LMNS has advised the regional NHS England/Improvement team of the current situation locally regarding the temporary closure of the FMBUs and continue to update them at regional maternity meetings.
- 4.6 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent LMNS Board has been working with both trusts to agree a timeline to reinstate the intra-partum (birthing) service at both FMBUs as soon as possible.

5. What are the service changes that have happened?

- 5.1 The service changes are outlined within the background information above.

6. Material service change

- 6.1 At this stage there are no material service changes. The two freestanding midwife-led birthing units (FMBUs) remain temporarily closed at present. The Committee will be kept informed once final proposals are confirmed.

7. Understanding experiences during COVID-19

- 7.1 People who have accessed maternity services, and their support partners, along with maternity staff and other support groups were invited to share their experiences and views at an online event via Microsoft Teams on Friday 16 July 2021.
- 7.2 The event provided an opportunity to understand people's experiences during COVID-19 and seek views on potential ways of restoring services through an on-demand service that also meets the national ambitions for continuity of carer. It enabled the team to recap and sense check the previous involvement work, to understand any potential negative impact of the proposed model of care.
- 7.3 A short survey has also been developed, to support anyone who could not attend the event to take part in the conversation. An Issues Paper and short video have been produced to help explain the model of care to support people to complete the survey. These are available on the Together We're Better website: <https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/get-involved/maternity-services-transformation>. The survey closes on Sunday 8 August and can be completed online or by phoning 0333 150 2155.
- 7.4 We are also working with the trusts to promote the survey within maternity units and to maternity users, within current social distancing measures. Our Communications and Engagement team are continuing to contact community and voluntary sector groups to promote ways to get involved, in particular to seldom heard groups.

- 7.5 Feedback from the event on 16 July and the survey will support the trusts in looking at how they could potentially reinstate services following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 7.6 A copy of the Issues Paper/Fact sheet from the event have been attached with this report.

8. Transformation programme

- 8.1 As a system we recognise that the ongoing impact of the pandemic particularly on staffing is a risk to the timeline for reinstating services at the FMBUs. Through this process we also recognise that it is likely that there was a shortfall in staffing senior midwifery establishment prior to the pandemic, which coupled with the above has an additional impact on the restoration of services.
- 8.2 Both trusts have reliance on additional recurrent transformation monies to support the roll out of the Continuity of Carer model. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent LMNS will liaise with Derbyshire LMNS in order to explore potential pooling of funds to support UHDB and will continue to support UHNM as described above.
- 8.3 Following the involvement activity, both the LMNS and providers will receive a report of findings outlining the feedback from women, families and workforce which will be formally received and discussed at a system meeting taking place on Tuesday 24th August.
- 8.4 The expectation from the CCGs is that the trusts will then provide revised business cases on how they could reinstate the birthing services to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Maternity and Neonatal Programme Board in Autumn 2021. To support the necessary development and workforce training, the earliest the on-demand model of care could go live is Autumn/Winter 2021.

9. Summary

- 9.1 The CCGs will continue to monitor the quality impact of the temporary closures via the CCGs' Quality Impact Forum. In addition, from September, the revised Maternity and Neonatal Quality and Safety Oversight Forum will be operational and will also monitor quality impact and escalate to the Regional Perinatal Quality Group as required.
- 9.2 The CCGs will provide the Staffordshire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee with further details of the proposals for reinstatement for the birthing services in Autumn 2021.

10. Link to Trust's or Shared Strategic Objectives –

- 10.1 The Together We're Better Partnership has an agreed vision: Working with you to make Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent the healthiest places to live and work:

Our purpose

- If you live in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent your children will have the best possible start in life and will start school ready to learn.
- Through local services we will help you to live independently and stay well for longer.

- When you need help, you will receive joined up, timely and accessible care, which will be the best that we can provide.

11. Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

11.1 Since 2016 the partnership has attended Committee meetings to update on progress against the transformation programme. Today's meeting is a continuation of this ongoing conversation. The most recent update on restoration and recovery to the Committee was in July 2021.

12. Community Impact

12.1 To be determined at a future date once final proposals are confirmed.

13. Contact Officer

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14. Appendices/Background papers

1. TWB Maternity 2021 Factsheet