

## Case Study: Driving Quality in Maternity Services through Women's and Families' Stories

This project involved five midwives (four from hospital wards and one community-based ward) and a Practice Development Midwife in seeking feedback from women and families who had received maternity services in order to try and improve the quality of the services. The project aimed to support the midwives to find tools from Effective Practitioner that would help them in seeking the feedback from women and families.

The project participants had two initial sessions. The first took place in November 2012 and was an introductory day to Effective Practitioner and identification of tools that might be useful for their project (patient stories and communication tools). Following on from this first session the participants had some concerns about how they would handle “difficult conversations” if some of the women they interviewed became emotional or who felt traumatised by what they had been through. The second session involved a midwife counselling specialist in working with the six midwives on ways to deal with difficult conversations. The participants gathered stories and a third meeting was planned to involve them in examining and drawing out themes. The aim was to complete the project in April 2013.

### Intended Outcomes

- To raise awareness of the Effective Practitioner (EP) web resource and the benefits and support it could offer staff if used.
- To evaluate the EP resource through staff feedback.

### Specific Outcomes

Using the learning resources within the Effective Practitioner web resource Midwives and Maternity Care Assistants would examine methods that they find most appropriate for gathering stories from women and families within their care.

Feedback within these stories would be analysed by the group and strategies formulated to determine what tools and how best to use them to drive care quality improvements across Maternity Services.

## **Desired Impact**

### **Short Term:**

Raising awareness of the importance of capturing care experiences to highlight the quality of care.

### **Mid Term:**

Women and families will feel engaged with Maternity Services and have a way of feeding back that at present is unavailable to them.

Midwives will be better able to have directed and focussed communication with women regarding their care stories.

### **Long Term:**

Issues arising from the content of women's and families' stories will be examined and utilised to drive forward quality of care within the Maternity Services.



## **How was Effective Practitioner used to support the project?**

First session (November 2012): an introduction to the Effective practitioner web resource for six midwives who had signed up to be involved in the project. This was to allow them time to trawl the web resource and evaluate its usefulness to themselves as practitioners. The first session lasted a whole day: the first half of the day was an introduction to the web resource allowing the participants to navigate round it and see all the resources available; the second half of the day was used to access the person-centred resources with a specific look at the content around patient stories and communication tools.

The second session (February 2013) involved a midwifery counselling specialist working with the participants on how to handle difficult conversations.



## **What has the impact of the project been?**

To date the impact has been on the staff involved mainly rather than women and their families. They have become familiar with the EP resources and have had specialist input on communication skills from the midwifery specialist counsellor.

The Midwifery Practice Developer had undertaken three conversations with women to gather their stories and she reported that the women appeared to have been pleased to have the opportunity to provide feedback. The main theme in terms of service improvement from these has been around how women feel in the post-natal stage in terms of the level of staffing (having been used to a much higher level of staffing in the pre-natal stages).



## **How did the Effective Practitioner facilitate this impact?**

The Patient Stories and Communication resources have been identified as useful for the purpose of gathering women's feedback. The Feedback Cards have been used in the interviews undertaken to date.

Working together around Effective Practitioner stimulated good discussion for the group who comprise four midwives in the hospital and one based in the community.



## Learning for the future

There are difficulties in accessing computers and none of the computers in the clinical areas have sound cards so the videos and podcasts cannot be listened to unless you go to the computer suite.

The informal conversations between the Practice Developer and project participants between the sessions had been important too.

The group discussion at the first session was important and provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their work.

There are always difficulties in bringing people who work on different shifts together and this has provided a real opportunity for that.

Find more work-based learning activities on the effective practitioner website at [www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk)