**Having a baby in Scotland**

**2013 Scottish Maternity Care Survey**

Report prepared for Susan Fraser, General Manager – Planned Care, NHS Fife

### Situation

The results of the “Having a baby in Scotland” study (funded by the Scottish Government Patient Experience Programme and the Maternity Services Child and Maternal Health Division) were published at end January 2014. The national findings of this Scottish Maternity Care Survey are the first for 15 years and provide valuable information on the quality of maternity care services from the perspective of women who gave birth in Scotland.

Results for individual Boards were published alongside the main findings.

The survey was undertaken in partnership with the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) Research Unit, University of Stirling.


In addition, a survey of user opinions was sought, as required, for the LSA – NHS Fife audit undertaken on 23rd October 2013 the results of which were released on 24.02.’14.

### Background:

The survey was commissioned by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Patient Experience programme. 4,964 women who gave birth in February or March 2013 were surveyed in May 2013. The response rate was 48% - 2,366 women.

It provides high quality data on women’s experiences of maternity care. The results provide benchmark data for NHS Boards in relation to the principles and service descriptors in the Refreshed Framework for Maternity Services (1) the overarching principles of which are:

- Reducing inequalities in maternal and infant health outcomes.
- Promotion of maternal and infant health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring that all women have access to safe and effective maternity care.
- Mutually beneficial relationships between those providing and those receiving care as evidenced by respect, compassion, continuity of care, and clear communication and information to support shared decision making.
- Reduction of wasteful or harmful variation in care provision.

It is expected that the results will inform improvement in maternity services as outlined in the NHS Scotland Healthcare Quality Strategy. (2)

The survey asked questions about women’s experiences of:

- antenatal care
- care during labour and birth of their baby
- postnatal care in hospital
351 women who gave birth in NHS Fife in February or March 2013 were sent the questionnaire. 133 / 351 women returned feedback on their experiences of care - a response rate of 42%. Of those women willing to provide information about themselves: 18% were under 25 years old; 58% were aged 25-34; 23% were aged 35 or over. Moreover, 38% were first time mothers.

Part of the LSA – NHS Fife audit process involved distributing and gathering user questionnaires with regards to users views of maternity services and midwifery practices. Each supervisor of midwives (x14 in total) was required to distribute 10 questionnaires to users.

Assessment:

The survey has highlighted many areas of good practice and examples where the recommendations of the Scottish Government’s maternity care policies are being achieved. Responses within the document relate to the percentage of people who answered ‘yes, definitely’ which is calculated as a positive score. (Other categories of responses were ‘no’ and ‘yes, to some extent’).

At each stage the majority of experiences of care were positive. However, the survey also brings to light areas where care may be improved. It is acknowledged in the report that some of these are long standing issues which seem resistant to change despite efforts at health policy and practice levels. Multiple factors are likely to form barriers to change; these may include individual and societal attitudes, expectations and traditions as well as service issues and resources. Broader approaches to change may be also required including working with women, families and communities to co-design services and solutions to improve their experience of maternity care.

NHS Fife should be justifiably proud of it’s long record of providing safe, effective and woman-centred care as very clearly highlighted in the survey and which compares extremely favourably with other NHS Boards.

Women in NHS Fife were significantly more likely to provide positive feedback on the following questions:

- If you saw a midwife for your antenatal check-ups, did you see the same one every time? (70%; + 8)
- When you called did you receive assistance within a reasonable time? (86%; + 8)
- Thinking about the care you received in hospital after the birth of your baby, were you given the information or explanations you needed? (74%; + 13)
- Thinking about the care you received in hospital after the birth of your baby, were you treated with kindness and understanding? (76%; + 9)
- Thinking about your stay in hospital, how clean was the hospital room or ward you were in? (89%; + 20)
- Thinking about your stay in hospital, how clean were the toilets and bathrooms you used? (86%; + 26)
- Overall, how would you rate the care you received in hospital after the birth? (89%; + 6)
- During your pregnancy did midwives or the midwifery team provide relevant information about feeding your baby? (78%; + 9)
- Did you feel that midwives and other health professionals gave you consistent advice about feeding your baby? (70%; + 13)
- If you contacted a midwife or midwifery team were you given the help you needed? (92%; + 6)
- If you saw a midwife for your care at home after birth, did you see the same one every time? (70%; + 19)
- Was [the midwife you saw for care at home after the birth] your named midwife? (63%; + 11)
- Did you see the same midwife for both your antenatal and postnatal care? (72%; + 10)
- Did the midwife or midwives that you saw take your personal circumstances into account when giving you
advice? (88% + 10)

Did you have confidence and trust in the midwives and midwifery team you saw after going home? (86%; + 8)

Did a midwife tell you that you would need to arrange a postnatal check-up of your own health? (Around 4-8 weeks after the birth) (96%; + 3)

62 Women in NHS Fife were significantly less likely to provide positive feedback on the following questions:

During your pregnancy were you given a choice about where your antenatal check-ups would take place? (14%; -7)

For the LSA – NHS Fife survey, responses fall under the general headings of communication, attitude, care provision. The report does not advise of the number of questionnaires returned.

**Recommendations:**

Nationally the results will be used to target healthcare improvements and inform future maternity policy direction.

NHS Boards are required to use the findings to identify areas for improvement locally.

The experience of childbirth impacts on women’s feelings about themselves and their relationships with their babies and partners. A good birth experience has far reaching effects on the health of the family unit. NHS Fife’s Action Plan will, in the very first instance, focus on increasing the Board’s positive % score where it falls below 70 with priority being given to the only x1 response where the difference is statistically (negatively) significant. Focus will be then be targeted at those responses scoring a response rate of between 71 – 79%.

A short life working group, which will include supervisors of midwives, will be set up to agree and progress the actions required.

For the LSA – NHS Fife survey, responses are very specific rather than generic and, while negative responses are based on individual opinion, these will be considered within the overall recommendations.

Improvement outcomes will be measured in October ‘14 when all women who give birth (with a positive birth outcome) in September ‘14 will be asked to comment on service provision identified as requiring (highlighted red & yellow) action.

Post October ‘14, action will focus on those responses highlighted green as in ensuring high quality service provision, our aim should always be to ask ourselves: “How will the woman and her family remember this?”
References:

   [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/11122123/0]


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