

MATERNITY SERVICES LIAISON COMMITTEE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the Chair

Perhaps you are pregnant, or you have just had a baby, or maybe you work in maternity services - whoever you are, welcome to the Lothian Maternity Services Liaison Committee 2019 annual report. We have written this for you, to tell you who we are and what we are trying to do and I hope that it will inspire you to join us and get involved in the work we do.

In Lothian, we are lucky to have a well-established MSLC, and yet, not many pregnant women and families know about us. This is something that we want to change. This report is one of the things we are doing to reach out to the local community and to show what can be done when you work in partnership.

Our meetings are open and relaxed. As a lay member myself I am very careful to keep our discussions real and close to women's interests. I do all I can to make everybody feel they can contribute equally to all the discussions.

Change is slow in large organisations and this is often frustrating but you will see in the report that we are, little by little, making a difference to women and their families in Lothian. It is important to say that this positive change could not happen without the trust and support the MSLC receives from NHS Lothian and the dedication of the midwives, obstetricians and everyone else looking after women and their babies.

We are keen to welcome new members to the committee. If you have had a baby recently or have an interest in maternity services and would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you.

Mathilde Peace (Lay Chair) February 2020



Maternity Services Liaison Committee Annual Report 2019

Who are we? What do we do?

- We are a statutory **COMMITTEE** chaired by a lay member, made up of people who all have an interest in maternity services.

We are the **LINK** between the women and families who use NHS Lothian maternity services and the people who deliver these services.

We **LISTEN** to what women and their families have to say about the service.

We **WORK TOGETHER** with NHS Lothian to make changes and improvements where possible.

What did we do in 2019?

- **Mothers' Voices**

The MSLC and the Pregnancy and Parents Centre worked together to organise the first Mothers' Voices event to be held in Lothian. Representatives from maternity services went out to the PPC in Edinburgh to meet with parents who had come to share their experience and explain what was important to them. You can find more about what parents said and the response from maternity services here:

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Documents/Mothers%20Voices%202019%20Report.pdf>

- **New resources on NHS Lothian maternity services website**
 - Information and resources in other languages and formats
<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/TranslatedMaterials>
 - Information about postnatal wards
You will find lots of useful tips from mums and parents about how to prepare for your stay.
<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/HadBabyWhatNext>
- **Partnership project: Postnatal Ward (211) at Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh**
A group of lay members visited Ward 211 to suggest improvements and we are now working with the staff to make changes (new “welcome pack” to the ward, improved choice of meals and snacks, review of discharge process and better information sharing).
- **Supporting women to make decisions about their care:** This is what the MSLC working group is focusing on at the moment. We want women to know their rights and be informed about what options they have. We are working with midwives and doctors to make sure women are fully involved in all decisions about their care. We are currently testing a simple card designed to remind women what key questions to ask when discussing options about their care.
<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/MSLC-Current-Working-Group.aspx>

- **Support for breastfeeding women**

In Lothian a lot of women want to breastfeed and start breastfeeding but many stop when their babies are still small.

In 2019, a task group led by the MSLC asked breastfeeding women if they were satisfied with the support services currently offered. Here is a quick round up of what was said and the changes made:

- Women said they wanted up-to-date information about local breastfeeding groups:
- We now have a leaflet that is available online and updated quarterly. The number of drop-in groups is increasing thanks to NHS partnership with other providers such as the National Childbirth Trust, the Breastfeeding Network, La Leche League or LENS (Lactation Education Nurturing Support).
- Women said they needed more support with breastfeeding in the early days:
- We know that women value the support provided by peer supporters working alongside staff at St John's hospital and in the neonatal unit in Edinburgh and this will soon be extended to all postnatal wards.
- The Best Start, a Scottish Government plan for change is being rolled out in Lothian. It means women will have greater at-home support in the early days from their own midwife or health visitor.

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/feedingyourbaby>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-five-year-forward-plan-maternity-neonatal-care-scotland-9781786527646/>

Ways you can get involved

- **Come to a meeting**

We have 6 meetings a year. Find out more on our website. We just need to know you are coming.

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

- **Tell us about your experience**

Use the feedback page on our website

Anyone can send comments and suggestions about Lothian maternity services. These are read by the MSLC lay chair and remain anonymous unless the person sending comments wants a direct and personal response.

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/Feedback.aspx>

- **Join a parents' support association**

The MSLC has established close relationships with a number of women's and parents' support associations. Among these are NCT (National Childbirth Trust), the Pregnancy and Parents Centre, the Breastfeeding Network, La Leche League, Held in our Hearts (Baby loss counselling and support) and JUNO (Perinatal mental health support). The members representing these support groups regularly feedback women's views and alert the MSLC to specific issues arising across the whole service.

Become an MSLC Ambassador

We will soon be recruiting "ambassadors" for the MSLC: parents (or people who support parents) who cannot attend meetings but would be happy to tell us about their own experience or what parents tell them about maternity services.

Mothers' Voices:

Invitation to a cafe or community centre near you to talk about maternity services with other parents and NHS Lothian midwives, health visitors and doctors. We are planning to hold more Mothers' Voices in 2020 - one in West Lothian and one in Edinburgh.



"We are keen to welcome new members to the committee. If you have had a baby recently or have an interest in maternity services and would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you. "

Mathilde Peace, MSLC Chair

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Maternity/MSLC/Pages/default.aspx>



This is what our members are saying:

"I had a difficult pregnancy and being a member of the MSLC has given me the opportunity to give something back to NHS Lothian. It has been great to meet new people and contribute to discussions, innovations and research around maternity services. My favourite part has been feeding back on what it is like to experience care and seeing changes and improvements made as a result of this. I feel like I have made a difference".

"As the NHS Lothian Child Health Commissioner I value the importance of lay knowledge and find the input of the MSLC an invaluable co-production resource in helping professionals to understand the lived experience of our service users."

"As a consultant anaesthetist working in maternity services it is crucial that we have the concerns of the women we care for at the centre of what we do. Having the opportunity to learn of those concerns and work together to bring about change is the great strength of the MSLC. The lay chair of this group has provided skilled leadership to ensure all views are heard in a balanced way and this is a unique strength of the group in my experience."

"My work with the National Childbirth Trust involves working with parents both antenatally and postnatally. New parents are sometimes reluctant to give feedback directly to NHS Lothian regarding their experience of maternity services. However, they frequently share their birth stories with me. They tell me what worked well for them and also, occasionally, where their experiences were not so positive. As a member of the MSLC, I am able to feed these experiences back anonymously to the Committee. This feedback can help direct changes in services / facilities and, as a result, help improve the experience for maternity service users".