



LINCOLNSHIRE

Maternity & Neonatal Voices

Working in partnership to improve maternity services



March 2025



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Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership

A Maternity and Neonatal Partnership (MNVP) amplifies the voices of women and families who have used maternity and/or neonatal services. MNVPs work closely with staff at their local hospital, local service users, community organisations and commissioners to coproduce improvements to services based on what women and families are feeding back. One way that MNVPs gather feedback is through '15 steps for Maternity'.

What is 15 Steps for Maternity?

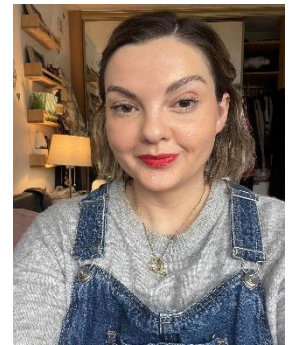
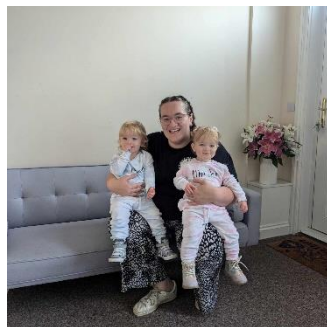
'15 Steps for Maternity' enables MNVPs to involve a wide range of people in reviewing and improving maternity services. It was inspired by a mum, whose daughter was regularly admitted to hospital, who said she could tell what kind of care her daughter would get within '15 steps' of walking on to a ward. Using the 15 Steps toolkit, service users go to look at different areas of a hospital where women and birthing people are cared for, and then they share how these spaces made them feel. Volunteers are encouraged to make notes about things they notice, in relation to four main themes. 1. Welcoming and Informative 2. Safe and Clean 3. Friendly and Personal 4. Calm and Organised.

What did we do?

During March 2025 the current MNVP lead (Beth Cooke) was joined by a variety of service users and staff to complete a 15 Steps visit at Lincoln County Hospital (19th March) and then Pilgrim Hospital in Boston (25th March). There was a real effort to ensure a diverse range of attendees with a variety of viewpoints. The visiting team was made up of current and previous service users, including;

- A Mother/ MNVP volunteer with lived experience of the Neonatal unit (Lincoln)
- A Mother/ MNVP volunteer with lived experience of twins/ Neonatal unit (Boston)
- A couple having their first baby/ students from India
- A Mother/ Nigerian background

We made notes and took pictures and then discussed the areas we had visited as a group. We considered how things looked, felt and sounded to each member of the group, hearing about each person's unique experiences. We discussed our recommendations for change and improvement. At the end of our visits, we gave feedback to the leadership teams at each of the hospitals about our findings and our initial recommendations.



At Lincoln County hospital we visited;

- Antenatal clinic
- Community midwives centre
- Antenatal Assessment Unit
- Nettleham ward
- Bardney ward
- Nocton ward- tier 2 Neonatal unit

At Pilgrim hospital Boston we visited;

- Antenatal clinic
- Boston Community Midwifery
- Antenatal Assessment unit
- Maternity ward
- EPAU
- Labour ward
- Tier 1 Neonatal unit

Background

The last 15 Steps visit was in 2023. The 2-year gap gave the trust an opportunity to implement recommendations from the last report and acquire the funding and implementation of new displays boards and digital screens. In 2023 the following recommendations were made;

Welcoming and informative

'Busy' display boards / lack of 'easy read'/ cluttered/ disorganised/ objective of board unclear (staff and patient)	There has been huge improvement in terms of the continuity of the display boards. They are now consistent in terms of font/ design etc. and feature a wide range of useful and relevant information for families
Lack of LGBTQAI+/'BAME'/those with disabilities representation	Some positive changes but could still increase representation
Lack of information on choice, rights and personalised care	Many improvements/ boards However, the BRAIN infographic could be added too
Lack of support information (mental health support, birth after thoughts service, domestic violence).	Excellent changes in all aspects of support information
It was not clear how to feedback (see Feedback section) along with 'you said we did' information	Superb changes in all aspects of how to feedback
Information on alternative infant feeding (pumping/ formula/ mixed)	N/A- not possible due to accreditation constraints
Scan token machine for ultrasound/ unclear situation regarding cost	Scan token machine for ultrasound/ unclear situation regarding cost Ensure 'out of order' sign displayed for clarity- Lincoln only
Some information featured in alternative languages but some not/ inconsistent	Excellent changes in all aspects of language access

Safe and clean

"Hello this is me" boards lacking	Project on-going at PBH but could be replicated at LCC?
Update of the bereavement suite at Lincoln country hospital welcomed	Update to come with refurbishment
Space made available to families on the neonatal unit that is private/quiet	In use/ available

Friendly and personal

'Knock' and wait before entering to be ensured	To be implemented
Uniform explanation posters required	Seen in some areas but would like to be seen widespread
Signage to the gender neutral /anybody toilet useful	To be completed

Organised and calm

Lack of standardised displays in terms of reading age/size of text/spacing and colour.	There have been huge improvements in terms of the continuity of the display boards. They are now consistent in terms of font/ design etc. and feature a wide range of useful and relevant information for families
Encouraging quietness and respecting privacy- lack of signage	Signage not seen but overall atmosphere quiet and calm

Lincoln County Hospital (LCC)

Antenatal clinic and community midwives centre

The area were quiet, easy to find and featured helpful and simple displays. There were various posters/banners explaining ways for families to feedback their comments on the service.

The area was welcoming and calm with positive interactions between staff, patients and visitors. There were plenty of smiles, eye-contact and greetings. These aspects helped build confidence and trust in the environment and service.

The environment was very clean with hand gels readily available. It was uncluttered with equipment stored tidily and managed well. There were fire and procedures evident too.

Staff were kind and respectful to patients and were wearing identifications badges.

The new rolling screens show further useful information including wait times. This was encouraging to see at this had been a trend in 2024/5 from service user feedback that communication regarding delays was not always communicated which led to frustration. The screens will help families to co-ordinate family/life commitments whilst waiting (knowing when they might be back at work/ childcare arrangements etc). This will in turn limit stress as they are 'kept in the loop'. There were also plenty of chairs for visitors to sit if there were waiting with family.

The smoking cessation display featured an angry looking cigarette character (blow up). It was questioned whether this gives the right impression in terms of encouraging women who smoke to give up in pregnancy. The STAR team will be contacted to see if they would like an insight of its impression with service users and perhaps there could be a review of its use.

The scan token machine for ultrasound was unclear in terms of the situation regarding cost for photos. It would be useful to have an 'out of order' sign displayed for clarity.

Overall, the clinic was bright, welcoming and very well organised with huge improvements in the displays.



Antenatal Assessment Unit

The waiting room for AAU felt a little stark. There was a large whiteboard with nothing on it alongside a display board where posters had fallen.

The only toys available were for very young children.

Due to this, the atmosphere felt somewhat unwelcoming and is an area that could potentially improve with posters on the whiteboard and the display board updated.

A wider range of toys could be helpful too.



Nettleham ward

As with all the wards, Nettleham was a very clean environment with rubbish/ dirty items and linen disposed of appropriately and not visible. There were protected times for staff to manage drugs and essential equipment.

The curtains were all long enough, closed fully and were in use. The ward featured clear signage for WCs etc.

There are areas of the ward (and the other wards) that do not have particularly well-maintained walls, floors, windows and ceilings (for example, peeling paint and stained ceiling tiles). LCC is under a programme of improvement which is hugely welcomed.

Nettleham ward was welcoming and included signs in different languages. Staff were welcoming, friendly and warm.

Displays were generally clear, consistent with useful information. Again, information regarding feedback was visible which was positive to see.

However, as mentioned previously there could be a greater presence and effort of LGBTQAI+/'BAME'/those with disabilities representation (see whiteboard display below).

Overall, Nettleham ward had an atmosphere that was calm, and the environment was clean and well organised.



Nocton ward- tier 2 Neonatal unit

The general impression on arrival was smart and welcoming. All the information on the boards was clear and visible. Visiting times are displayed along with information regarding who the staff team are.

The family guest room felt warm and friendly with lovely touches such the 'towel swan' and wall stickers.

The displays on Neonatal are bright and enticing to read. The information is useful and interesting. This helped build confidence and makes families feel considered.

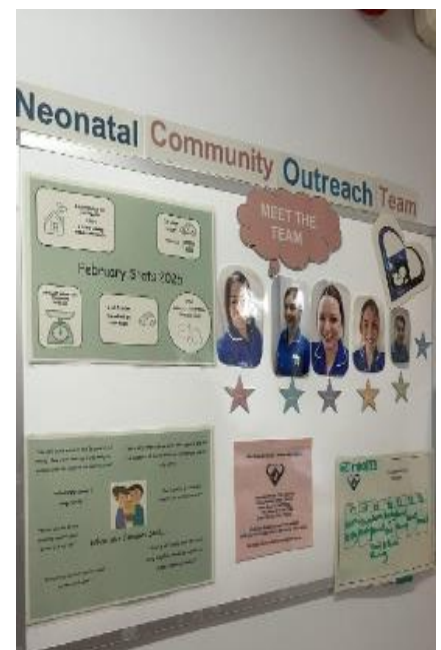
There were only a couple of minor recommendations; 1) The comment box didn't feel like it was in use/ really welcomed comments. It was in a tucked away position and looked rather tatty (see photos below). It would be encouraging to see it in a more prominent position.

Alongside this, the leaflet display was messy, haphazard (languages inconsistent for example) and featured a range of leaflets that families might find insensitive considering the nature of the ward (Neonatal). For example, 'will my baby need a blood transfusion?'

(potential to cause unnecessary worry), 'stopping your baby from falling' (many babies ill and unsure of recovery), 'infant crying and how to stop it' (as before).

It is questionable that leaflets displayed like this are needed now as 'badger net' will be able to provide targeted and personalised information right for each family.

Overall, Nocton ward was welcoming, spotlessly clean with very thought through environment.





Bardney ward

Bardney ward felt hospitable on entering with a beautiful mural at the reception space featuring photos of babies born on the ward and 'welcome' in a variety of languages.

All the boards were clear and visible. Due to renovation work it is understood investment for lockable boards won't be made at this point which is why displays are on whiteboards. All the same, displays are bright, informative and laminated.

Visiting times are clear alongside staff team information. However, it would be great to see photos of staff along with their names for extra personalisation.

Overall, Bardney ward was friendly, warm and impeccably clean.



Final draft



15/7/25



Beth Cooke

Pilgrim hospital

**Antenatal clinic/ Boston Community Midwifery/ Antenatal Assessment unit/
Maternity ward/ EPAU/ Labour ward/ Neonatal ward**

Due to the layout of Pilgrim maternity unit and overall consistency, comments will be made in a holistic sense for the above areas, with photos to follow to further explain comments.

All areas were welcoming including signage in different languages. Staff warmly acknowledged the team with smiles, greetings and eye contact.

Staff interactions observed with patients were always positive and friendly.

Information was clear and visible alongside contact and visiting time information where appropriate.

Display boards are consistent in aesthetic and contained considered information which would be incredibly useful to families.

Information about how to complain/ compliment and feedback in general was visible.

Information regarding who the staff team were and what uniforms meant/job role were clearly displayed.

All areas were impeccably clean with hand gels available at various points. Rubbish/ dirty and linen was disposed of appropriately.

The environment was uncluttered, clean and well maintained.

Appropriate wards had call bells, drinks and side tables for patients to use.

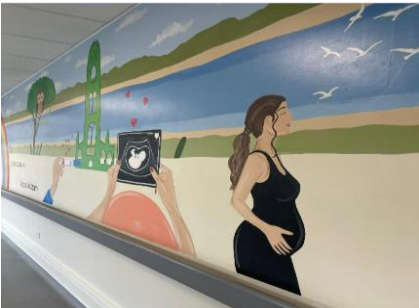



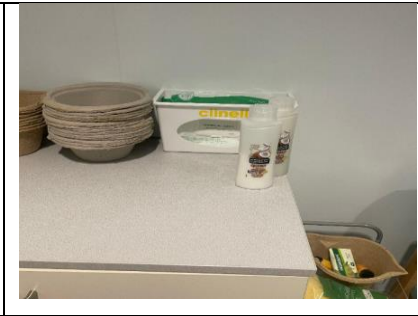

There are protected times/ areas for staff to manage drugs and essential equipment. Meals can be taken in the day room which is bright, clean and welcoming and features 'help yourself' hot drinks/ snacks/ water.




Privacy is well respected with curtains that are long enough and close fully.




There are some wonderful, personalised touches on the ward, for example, LED candles in the bathroom and complimentary toiletries.

Overall, Pilgrim maternity unit was clean, welcoming with a calm atmosphere. Staff were all professional and friendly

Any recommendations for suggested changes are featured on p.14.

		
<p>A beautiful mural has been painted at the entrance of the maternity unit. It features a wide range of ethnicities and LGBTQ+ representation.</p>	<p>Banners featuring how families can feedback (MNVP)</p>	<p>All display boards were clear, attractive, useful and consistent</p>
		
<p>Personalised touches such as LED candles</p>	<p>Complementary toiletries</p>	<p>Inclusive display showing a wide range of nationalities/flags</p>

		
<p>MNVP teddy with QR code</p>	<p>Attractive display showing staff photos/ uniforms</p>	<p>Calm and welcoming birthing pool facility</p>

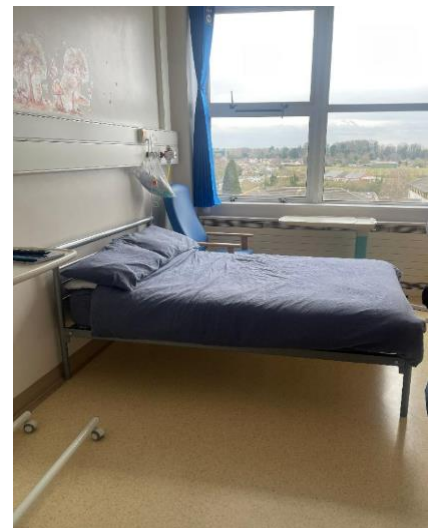
		
<p>Incredibly tidy and organised spaces</p>	<p>All display boards were clear, attractive, useful and consistent</p>	<p>An area of improvement – leaflet display Rather untidy and haphazard</p>

Tier 1 Neonatal unit

Overall, the Neonatal unit is beautiful presented, impeccably clean and very 'well-loved'.

However, there were 3 family areas which could benefit from improvements. 1) The quiet room off the Neonatal ward felt unclear in terms of its function. The toys were rather messy and for only very young children. The leaflets were vast and somewhat overwhelming. It is suggested that the room is streamlined to make clear its functions (a playroom/ a place to relax/ a place to research?).

2) The family room also felt unclear in its function and rather confused in terms of décor. Again, streamlining posters/ toys etc would be welcomed to ensure the environment is calming and comforting. 3) The parent bedroom felt a little stark. Some soft furnishing/decor would be welcomed to make the space feel more like 'home'.



Recommendations- 2025

Welcoming and informative

Suggestions

Lincoln AAU	Improvement to display boards and range of children's toys to make the waiting room more welcoming
All wards/ both sites	LGBTQAI+/'BAME'/those with disabilities representation Increase representation on displays/ posters
All wards/ both sites	Shortage of information on rights BRAIN poster to be displayed throughout
Lincoln Antenatal	Scan token machine for ultrasound/ unclear situation regarding cost Ensure 'out of order' sign displayed for clarity
Lincoln Antenatal	Smoking cessation display. 'Angry' cigarette blow- up character. Investigate if this gives a non- judgemental/ approachable and is encouraging to service users Potentially remove
All wards/ both sites	Ensure display boards with staff names/ photos and uniforms are prevalent
Lincoln Neonatal	Move comments box to area with higher footfall. Smarten up box
Lincoln Neonatal and Pilgrim antenatal	Review patient leaflet area for appropriateness, tidiness and languages

Safe and clean

Lincoln/ all appropriate wards	"Hello this is me" boards . Featured at Pilgrim but would be great to be replicated at Lincoln
Lincoln	Update of the bereavement suite at Lincoln country hospital welcomed and in progress

Friendly and personal

Both sites/ wards	'Knock' and wait before entering to be ensured Reminder cascaded to all staff
Both sites/ all wards	Uniform explanation posters required
Both sites/ all wards	Signage to the gender neutral /anybody toilet useful
Pilgrim Neonatal overnight rooms	Rooms to be given a 'softer' feel. Cushions, wall stickers, table lamps?

Organised and calm

Both sites/ all wards	Encouraging quietness and respecting privacy- lack of signage NB- There has been MNVP feedback to say loud live and phone conversations have disturbed stays
Pilgrim Neonatal	Organisation of family spaces. Streamline leaflets, posters and toys

A huge 'thank you' to all the staff, patients and the MNVP team involved in the 2025 '15 steps'

