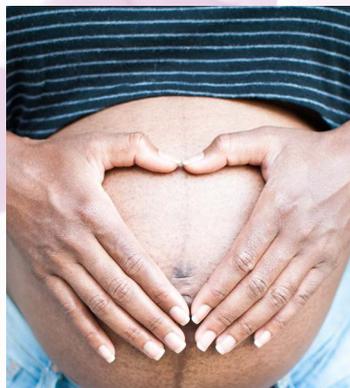


15 Steps Challenge Oxfordshire

2023



OMNVP
Oxfordshire Maternity & Neonatal
Voices Partnership

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Introduction

What is the 15 Steps Challenge?

From the NHS toolkit, “the NHS is committed to putting service users at the heart of what we do and it was a mother’s comment at a patient and family involvement workshop that kick-started the 15 Steps Challenge. She told us about her daughter, whose condition needed frequent inpatient stays. She said, I can tell what kind of care my daughter is going to get within 15 steps of walking onto every new ward”.

The 15 Steps Challenge allows participants to explore the maternity service in Oxfordshire through the eyes of service users and visitors. By using their senses only, they feedback on what they can see, smell and hear as they walk through a ward.

For 2023, Oxfordshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (OMNVP) embarked on a 4 day trip around different maternity settings in the county, and this report is the outcome of those sessions.

Across November and December 2023, we visited:

Levels 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 at the JR Women’s Centre in Headington, Oxford. Wantage Maternity Unit Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre.

During planning stage:

- 36 participants signed up
- 17 NHS staff
- 11 service users and OMNVP reps
- 8 antenatal educators

In reality:

- 17 participants attended
- 8 NHS staff
- 8 service users and OMNVP reps
- 1 antenatal educator

In this report, you will find each ward’s feedback in sections. Starting with Level 1 at the JR, moving to the Midwife Led Unit’s outside of the city.

In each section, there will be areas of celebration, areas of improvement and questions that our participants had.

With massive thanks to everyone involved in this process, from the participants, to the staff for letting us pop heads in and make notes!



Ruba Asfahani,
Vice-Chair, OMNVP

Level 1 – Outservice users

Monday 13 November 2023

7

Participants

3

Service Users

3

OMNVP reps

1

NHS staff



*Our OMNVP reps are service users, but for the purpose of this report, we have separated those who specifically and regularly represent OMNVP with those who volunteered for the 15 Steps Challenge.

“I feel like I am a sick person,
rather than a pregnant person.”

“There was a trainee on
reception and it was openly
explained to everyone waiting to
be seen which was great to see.”

Quick Wins

Improve navigation around the space

Make sure areas are clear of unused cages and trolleys

Improve diversity and inclusivity in posters

Make it clearer which part of reception to use

Improve the offering in the waiting room

Celebrations

- Very clean and quiet
- Seems busy but productive
- Mental health / wellbeing display
- Signs in toilet to help with urine specimens
- Very friendly at reception desk, explaining clearly about the staff member being trained
- The garden space is lovely, gives a break to all the white walls
- Inoffensive smells throughout
- Someone spilled coffee and it was cleaned up quickly (but no wet floor sign)
- The safety boards and research offers show engagement, interaction and a two way partnership with staff and service users
- Paint colour on the walls is a nice touch
- League of Friends adds a warm atmosphere to the space

Improvements to be made

- Unclear which area is which or where to go
- Interactive feedback tablet was out of order
- No interaction with staff
- Lots of people around and I didn't feel very welcomed
- I feel very much like I'm in a hospital setting - very bright lights
- Not clear where to leave urine specimen
- Friends and family signage not visible enough
- The OB called a service user without smiling
- No instructions about how to navigate the space
- While waiting in reception, it was unclear which side of reception was for what appointment - people had to be redirected multiple times to different sides of the desks because it wasn't obvious
- Ensure signage is not blocked - the complaints/compliments board was covered by a cage
- Increase font and general size of mental health posters / info boards
- Out of date information e.g. Flu jabs handwritten 26 October (3 weeks out of date)
- As a main entrance to the maternity centre, all participants were concerned with how many unused cages and trolleys were left lying around looking redundant and/or dumped



Questions

- Which side of the reception is for what?
- Is anyone signposted to the display boards because there is good information on there
- Can the reception screens be taken down now? Or do they have to stay up for health and safety?
- Could waiting times be listed, even approximate, on the screens?
- There was an “adrenaline” room labeled but it’s not clear who or what it’s for

Recommendations / Action points

- Baby feeding / changing room could be better signed as it’s an important room
- Remove Covid “keep distant” signs on the floor as they’re very worn
- Give a better indication for what the coloured lines on the floor are for
- Ensure leaflets are kept topped up - rota for receptionist?
- Improve the signage - reduce and focus - it was very overwhelming
- More inclusive for languages - we only saw information in English
- Could there be better signage towards ultrasound as this seemed to be the bulk of the questions to the receptionist
- More casual publications on waiting area tables such as magazines, including children’s books

Level 2 – Main entrance, Delivery Suite & Observation Area, MAU

Monday 27 November 2023

As Level 2 covers a wide variety of areas in the maternity service, this section will be broken down into the following:

- The main entrance and foyer
- MAU
- Delivery suite & the observation area

6

Participants

3

OMNVP reps

3

NHS staff



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“I really liked the knitted goodies on the table at the entrance. It warmed my heart and immediately made me feel I was in a baby friendly space.”

“I feel quite daunted because it's a hospital setting but there is no human interaction to help reassure or guide me.”

Quick Wins

Main Entrance and Foyer

Major improvements in the public toilets needed

Rota staff on reception or remove the desk

Improve diversity and inclusivity in posters

Delivery Suite

Major improvements on the Delivery Suite entrance

Improve atmosphere on Delivery Suite

Celebrations

- There was a section celebrating MSW day, which was lovely to see
- The corridor and walk through gets better as you get further into the building
- SSNAP displays are brilliant and helped make the area feel more welcoming
- Quiet and calm atmosphere, inoffensive smells
- Signage to lifts and departments on that floor were good
- The walkway was clear to the lifts
- Sign on entering says “Maternity and Newborn Services” rather than “Women’s Centre”
- Lots of space for people to sit and wait



Improvements to be made

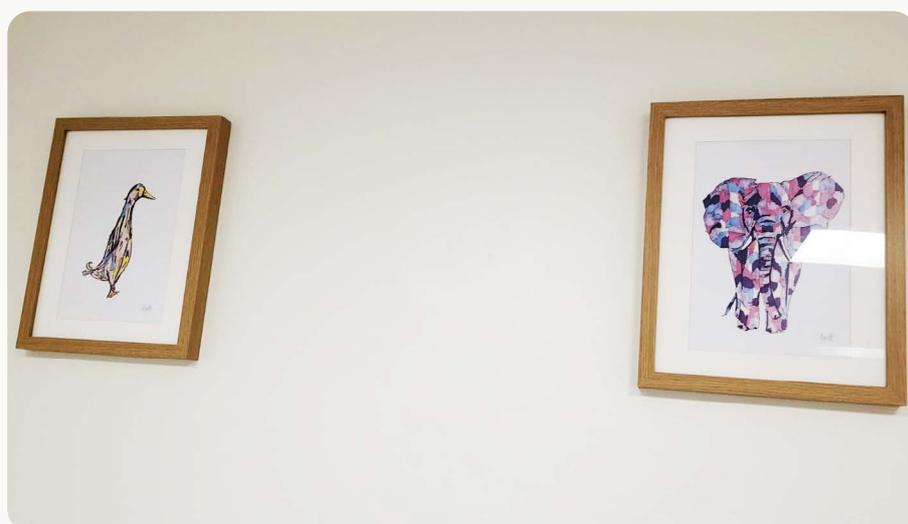
- Too many A4 signs, as this is a walk through area, they need to be much bigger
- Very random advertising unit which included leaflets for shows and activities - it doesn't feel like this is an appropriate place
- Ceiling tiles were stained and grotty, some were dark brown
- Ensure antiseptic gel is topped up and fixed
- Noticed a few abandoned cages
- Too many notices at the lifts, felt overwhelmed
- The board between Silver Star and vending machines is an odd one - it's at an angle so hard to stand in front of it, and it had a weird array of information - some related but some not.
- More languages available as it's a main entrance, only saw English

Questions

- Why is there a reception area if it's never staffed and not used for any departments?
- Does the taxi phone work?

Recommendations / Action points

- Remove the old mask dispenser, it's empty anyway
- Ensure the dumped shopping trolley is disposed of
- Increase poster and font size
- Toilets - major improvements needed. The mens urinal had a massive piece of wood in front of it and the toilet was blocked. The women's toilet; one was blocked and the other had a sign saying the broken seat was reported on 8 November, almost a month before our visit.



MAU

“I noticed there were a lot of staff working, but it felt calm and quiet.”

“I respected how the doors were always closed after entering to see a service user, and they knock before entering the

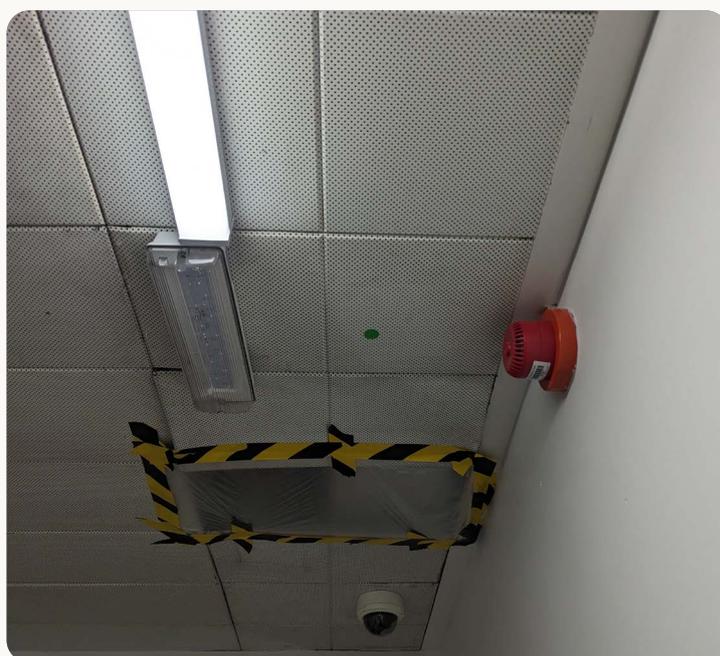
Celebrations

- Cleanliness rating was 5*
- Inoffensive smells on entering the space, not clinical
- Very calm
- The rooms which were occupied all had their doors firmly shut, so it felt like service user privacy was being taken very seriously
- The receptionist kept her voice low when speaking, was very friendly
- All staff were very friendly and smiling, seemed caring
- The triage room looked very clean and ready to be used
- Staff information updated and available
- Dividing panel for reception is a nice touch
- Water cooler was kept maintained by receptionist while we were there
- Plenty of seats available in the reception area
- Drug room locked!
- Nice sign about service user identification
- Security checked who we were and what we were doing
- Secondary curtains in the rooms so if door is opened, no one in the corridor can see in
- Good inclusion and diversity poster

A note about our visit to MAU. Unfortunately, as we entered, we could all hear a serviceuser shouting in one of the private rooms. As we were finishing our 15 Steps through MAU, the same service user was at the reception desk and there were some tense moments with them retrieving their blue notes. All volunteers were aware of this. Ruba spoke to the receptionist from a safeguarding perspective and was told that all was in hand. We tried to ensure this experience did not impact our feedback below.

Improvements to be made

- Table under the TV for leaflets etc, was a bit small and looked empty - there could be more there and more information directly related to those who would be on MAU
- The corridor was full of machinery and although we all appreciated that they need to be there, it would make sense for them to all be on one side rather than both. It didn't feel like a safe corridor
- Lots of urine samples in both service user toilets left on the side
- One of the machines in the triage room had tape on it, is it broken?
- Very grotty/leaking light in the reception area
- The staff toilet had a pregnancy related poster on the wall, wrong place!
- There was a urine sample on the windowsill in the corridor
- Very outdated resus kit poster (2021)
- Staff office/area looked very cramped and overwhelming - every bit of wall space was covered



Questions

- Is this the right place for drawings of child birth?
- Is this the right place for a maternity safety board?

Recommendations / Action points

- Reconsider having the TV sound on, as it was quite distracting and jarring
- Change the pattern of the dividing wall opposite reception or do not host posters on it - as it's a busy pattern, any posters are very difficult to read and the background makes it quite inaccessible for those with vision problems
- Move the OMNVP roller banner as it was in a location which is deemed a trip hazard, was leaning against the wall



OBSERVATION AREA

“The observation area was really quiet and calm, the staff checked who we were and made sure their conversations with service users were hushed or paused as we walked through.”

DELIVERY SUITE

“This doesn't feel like a space I would like to come in to have my baby.”

Celebrations

- Birthing balls visible and easy to access in the corridor and in a room
- Very hushed and muted voices being used in the observation area
- In one room there was a ball, a diffuser and a fan - great for birthing
- Lovely photo/sign on door once you get past the corridor
- Staff were very polite and friendly and made sure we stayed in the service user area to protect service user information from being seen - great safeguarding
- Boards in rooms telling you who your midwife is, nice touch
- Room numbers are well labelled and easy to find



Improvements to be made

- All participants felt the space overall was incredibly unwelcoming and bleak. The fact that there was just an open corridor meant that as we entered, we already felt lost and confused within a few steps.
- Felt cold, chaotic and stressful, loads of slamming doors
- The main double doors slam and squeak - incredibly loud
- Waste disposal being wheeled out same entrance corridor and very loud
- Some room doors said "vacant" but we could see people on beds
- The corridor upon entry was not quite a waiting area, but also a bit confusing because there's no real place to go to "sign in"
- While we were doing our challenge, a couple were waiting to be given a room for a C-section. The conversation between them and the midwife was heard by all, not private at all. Asked for their name and date of birth after being admitted, in front of all of us. Shown a room but door left open
- Store Room 2 was propped open with a vat of liquid, anyone could walk in
- AGS pipe was bent in room 3
- The staff corridor looked like a nicer environment than the service user one
- Maternity Safety Board didn't seem like it was in the right place
- It took a long time for someone to answer the buzzer, we ended up having to ask one of our participants to let us in
- One toilet had a sign saying it had been cleaned but the toilet was unflushed and there was paper on the floor
- Air fresheners spotted taped to the wall
- A poster had been corrected/updated in pen rather than redoing it and printing it out again



Questions

- What is a sluice room? Sluice brings up negative connotations, could this be called something else?
- “Switch off mobile phone” signs - are they still needed?
- There are no overnight visiting hours notices on the ward, is it staffed? Is it open?



Recommendations / Action points

- Could do with a proper reception area to sign people in and direct them
- Feels very unwelcoming, could we add more colour, photos, something to spruce the space up? There were 3 black and white pictures but if they were in colour it would be more impactful
- Clearer signage to explain that one of the two sets of doors in the delivery rooms can be locked
- Lockers in the service user corridor could be removed and put on the staff side
- Empty notice boards could easily be filled with images, testimonials, etc - all 4 are totally empty!
- Utilise the corridor to give information to help families who is on duty, or who they will be encountering on the ward
- Ceiling needs repair work

Level 4 – Ultrasound

Monday 13 November 2023

7

Participants

3

Service Users

3

OMNVP reps

1

NHS staff



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“The waiting room is bright and airy, but the corridor feels forgotten.”

“It was nice to see photos of the maternity mental health team.”

Quick Wins

Swap corridor and waiting room information

Ensure no coercive behaviour from researchers and midwives

Reconsider space opposite lifts

Get immediate feedback with a tablet/survey

Improve reception welcome

Celebrations

- No offensive smells
- Main waiting area is nice and bright with natural light
- Reception and waiting area didn't feel busy or crowded
- Reception staff very friendly and welcoming
- Clean waiting area, comfortable seats
- Everything looked clear and uncluttered, no additional equipment in waiting area or corridor
- Maternity Safety Board had a great "you said, we did" section and learning from incidents
- Water cooler was stocked with cups
- Very clear signage on how to get to the Ultrasound dept
- Great to see different languages present in posters
- Clearly labelled service user / staff toilet



Improvements to be made

- Entrance corridor felt a bit bleak
- A midwife was in the space encouraging flu and Covid vaccinations, at times it felt very pushy as there was also a researcher asking people to sign up to things. One couple had barely sat down before being asked one after another. Another couple had the two NHS staff lingering near them til they sat down - felt uncomfortable and slightly coercive
- Lots of leaflets and posters - a bit overwhelming
- Either turn the TV volume off completely or turn it up, it was on but really quiet
- A researcher was doing observations in the corridor including weighing, CO2 and blood pressure but this was felt to be incredibly open and not private for the service user
- The sign that says you're not allowed to bring other children in would be too late for someone already at the door!
- Conversations between staff members were quite loud, could be a bit softer
- The "healthy lifestyles" board was ONLY about smoking - there are a number of subjects that can be added

Questions

- Is there a way of indicating as you arrive that you don't want to be asked about jabs or research?
- What is the waiting area opposite the lifts for? This is currently overwhelmed with posters and roller banners
- What is a beverage room? Need to make it clear it's for staff only
- Is the blood pressure machine out for anyone to use? If not, there should be clear signage

Recommendations / Action points

- Would be good if the info leaflets vs research leaflets were separated
- We discussed in the feedback session whether the corridor is a better place for leaflets and take away print outs, and the waiting area is better for posters and information - the main reason being that if you have been given information about your pregnancy that has stigma attached, you might not be likely to pick up a leaflet in front of people but would in an empty and quiet corridor e.g. breech, downs, pathway
- Put up signs to say breastfeeding is welcome
- Remove the “happy baby” info board as it could be triggering for those not receiving good news in the scan
- Remove any out of date posters and banners (one dated 2010)
- Ensure there are not too many pictures and photos of babies in this department because it could be seen as insensitive
- Reception could be a bit more welcoming by explaining what is about to happen (e.g. 12 week scan) especially at quiet times like our visit
- Could we add a postbox or tablet to get immediate feedback from service users and visitors e.g. how was your visit today, or say thanks here



Level 5 – Postnatal

Thursday 16 November 2023

4

Participants

1

Service Users

3

OMNVP reps

NHS staff



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“I love the ‘I can’t be
spoilt’ poster”

“There were a lot of
open doors!”

Quick Wins

Ensure signs and boards are filled out daily

Improve resus room signage

Close staff door at all times

Fix blinds in rooms!

Improve signage around the ward

Celebrations

- Staff board is lovely to see and next to a beautiful thank you board
- No clinical/offensive smells
- Learning theme of the month is a nice touch and good to read
- Lots of staff about
- Lovely interaction overheard by an MSW and new parent celebrating her first walk around the ward with new baby. Really lovely, not patronising, super supportive
- Coffee station well stocked and looked clean
- Toilets all looked very clean and well maintained
- Confidentiality cupboards are well marked
- Reception was staffed during our entire visit
- A lot of equipment/machines were kept behind a curtained area behind reception
- Room at the back of the ward is lovely! Really open, bright natural light, clean and tidy
- Nice that there are no screens at reception so you feel you can speak directly to someone with no barrier
- Calm atmosphere
- Drug trolley was locked
- Lots of information about infant feeding
- Security cameras by lift made us feel more confident
- Good security check as we arrived
- Contraception with a QR code - brilliant health promotion
- Encountered a staff member reach out to a new parent and told her that she'd waited for her shift to finish and came to visit her. Really beautiful interaction and amazing care/detail

Improvements to be made

- “Welcome to Level 5” sign has a piece of equipment in front of it, looks messy
- Maternity Safety Board feedback section totally empty
- A lot of equipment in the corridors
- On every door where there was a “member of staff looking after you” sign, all of them were empty of any names (6 signs in total, 2 wards had no sign at all)
- Overheard a conversation on one ward (from corridor) asking the parent if the baby had been weighed the day before - something they should know and not have to ask
- Transitional Care wellbeing room looked very basic, could be a bit more enticing
- Fire doors have been kept open
- No clear indication of which wards/rooms are where (but the reception was constantly staffed to be fair)
- A service user was walking down from reception to the end of the left corridor, clutching her partner and also her gown, which didn't fit properly – would have been better if she could wear her own clothes or be given a second gown to cover her body
- Staff room door kept open, we could hear all calls including someone talking about blood loss and c-sections
- One volunteer overheard a loud disagreement between a consultant and a hearing tester in front of new parents
- Audit board needs updating - January 2023 was last addition
- The resus room had a very dirty sink and used containers. As a group, we discussed how service users would feel seeing it as you first enter Level 5. Some think it's triggering, some think it's good to have it so easily accessible. However, it was agreed that at least the door can remain closed and the signage improved.
- Overheard a service user saying she had to strip her own bed that morning because of spilled breast milk and still didn't have sheets, had to ask a midwife again



Questions

- Why isn't there a communal kitchen instead of a coffee station?
- Where is the milk room? (We saw the info on the staff board but couldn't find the room)

Recommendations / Action points

- Rooms 2-5014, 5015 and 5017 the blinds need fixing (5017 in particular is very bad!)
- OMNVP banner to be moved as it looks like its a trip hazard
- Make it more obvious that the room at the back of the ward is open to all and hosts feeding sessions etc
- Visitor sign needs updating
- Could have more information about safe sleeping
- Could the reception desk be higher - we noticed that we could read anything being written as it's so low down
- Could do with more information in foreign languages
- Update the staff info and name board - potentially move it because it has phone numbers for other staff, not service users
- Increase the size of the tailgating sticker
- Make layout of the ward clearer to those visiting and those staying
- Make it a lot clearer that babies should not be carried around the ward but need to stay in cots - we saw 3 newborns in arms during our visit
- Make visiting times clearer
- Add photos/art work to corridors to make them more inviting



Level 6 – FMMU & DAU

Monday 13 November 2023

We split Level 6 across two days. We visited Inservice user, Antenatal & IOL on Thursday 16 November with a different group, please see page 40.

The reason the group was small on this visit was because our NHS staff member was called away in the morning and could not continue their challenge. We were also informed in the morning that there was a clinic on FMMU/DAU that could potentially include poor outcomes for the woman or pregnant person. As we had two service users with babes in arms, they were asked not to attend the FMMU/DAU section of the

6

Participants

4

OMNVP reps

2

NHS staff



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“Everything is clear and clutter free, an effort has obviously been made to make it an inviting space.”

Quick Wins

Move staff board out to be more visible

Turn radio off

Remove perspex from reception

Ensure posters are appropriate for the space

Celebrations

- Calm and quiet (we arrived in between clinics)
- Very clear information on a particular topic - well thought through
- The pathway boards were great
- The maternity safety board was present and complete
- The audit board was complete
- Reception staff seemed friendly and cheerful
- Lovely wall art, bright natural light in the waiting area
- List of staff working helped feel at ease
- Lots of information, and it all felt relevant to those who would use this ward e.g. clever flow chart for GTT and anemia
- Welcome board in lots of languages was so great to see!
- Displays were banded per subject which in turn made them feel more organised - they included questions, not using coercive language
- We all agreed that other departments could definitely learn something and copy the pathway boards we saw - they were absolutely brilliant

Improvements to be made

- The radio was really jarring - as we walked in, it was covering the news including a story about 3 children that had been found dead – not appropriate at all!
- Don't have portrait photo adverts - not appropriate
- The staff board could be more accessible, it was hidden behind the reception desk
- A staff member announced quite loudly to a service user that they still needed to do her blood pressure - could have been more private or hushed
- Smells a bit odd - half clinical, half floral
- One service user in the ward, curtains were drawn which was good, but the bed she was on had a window into a staff room which meant the midwife was staring at her computer, which was looking right at the service user. Felt very non private

Questions

- Is the perspex on the tables for safety?
- Is the colostrum harvesting poster in DAU appropriate? It's a nice display but could potentially be better placed on another ward

Recommendations / Action points

- If there is a certain community attending a clinic e.g. Nepali, then could we consider setting up a table to remind them of home? Going the extra mile for them to feel relaxed
- Consider changing the image of the white, healthy, beautiful baby if we are keeping the portrait photo adverts
- When writing to service users that their appointment will be on this ward, encourage them to bring headphones or a book



Level 6 – Inservice user, Antenatal & IOL

Thursday 16 November 2023

We split Level 6 across two days. We visited FMMU and DAU on Monday 16 November with a different group, please see page 35.

7

Participants

2

Service Users

2

OMNVP reps

3

NHS staff



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“I do worry that there are baby pictures on this ward which may not be appropriate for those with baby loss issues”

Quick Wins

Move boards out to be more visible

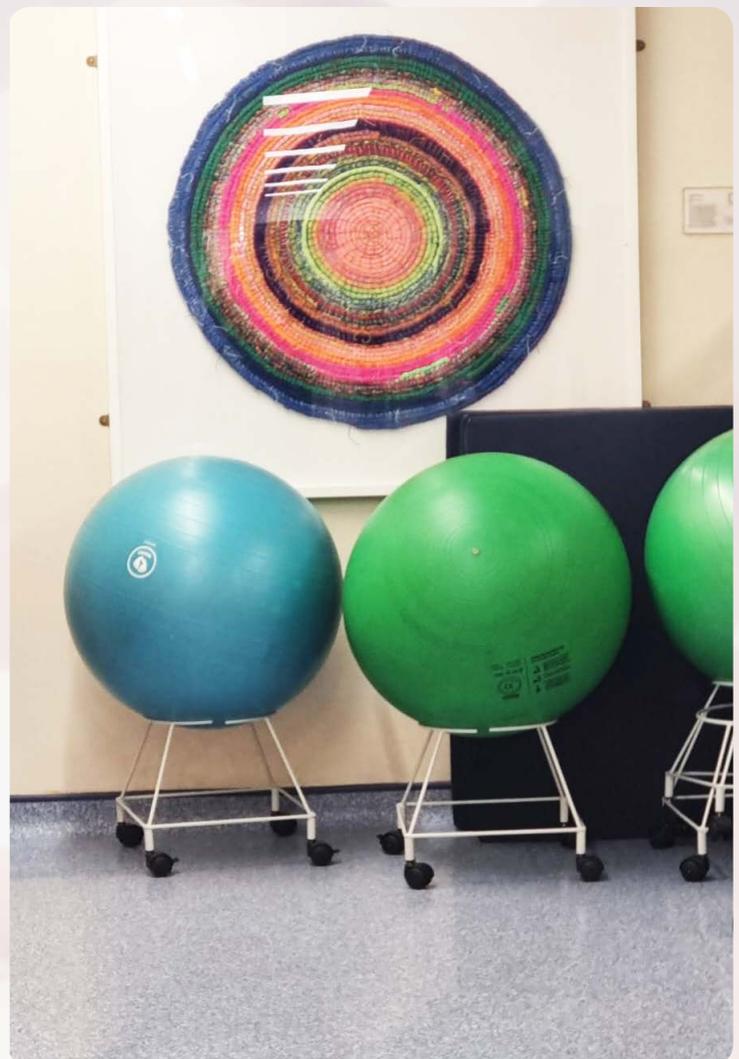
Declutter corridors

Reconsider pictures of babies

Improve IOL waiting area

Celebrations

- We all loved the “liquid gold” display
- Feels calm and quiet, low background of activity
- Staff interactions are good, friendly and responsive
- Plenty of birthing balls easily accessible
- Tea trolley round during our time - the server was jolly and very polite, always knocking before entering
- The maternity safety board was totally full, up to date and useful
- Audit board was up to date in most areas
- The reception area was constantly staffed while we visited
- Lots of nice art work
- The consultant ahead of us would not let us pass without buzzing and checking in with the reception team - great safeguarding
- Linen room was ordered and tidy



Improvements to be made

- Some of the information boards could be better placed, the liquid gold one was on a walkway between the corridors which doesn't look like it's used much
- Corridors feel very cluttered
- "Help Yourself" trolley could be labelled more clearly
- Notice board at entrance is empty
- "Shine for Wine" is an inappropriate title, even though it's for a good cause - maybe put it in a staff area or change the name
- Medical supply cupboard had been left open
- No evidence of service user feedback - some rooms had a QR code but not all
- A heated conversation was overheard in the staff room next to the nurses station
- IOL waiting area looks like a cafe!
- Room 9-6050 had a stale smell
- There is a wire above the maternity safety board that is just duct taped to the wall (see pic)
- In one of the walkways between the two corridors, there was a cleaning trolley, a bag of dirty blankets, bags of waste, all in front of some educational displays

Questions

- Affirmations on some headboards in some rooms - have these been requested? Our volunteers weren't sure that they were needed or appropriate
- Level 6 Team Objectives poster - is this for service users to see? If not, then maybe move it to a staff area
- We didn't think stirrup beds were still in use but we saw one on this ward!

Recommendations / Action points

- Remove the picture of a baby with wings as the connotations are baby loss
- Consider baby pictures in general and whether it's appropriate for this ward
- Remove signs leftover from Covid re distancing
- Ensure any empty notice boards are utilised for information or education
- There was a lot of information about Silver Star on this ward, could it be balanced with other information from other areas of maternity?
- Ensure the Bounty branded images are replaced

Wallingford

Tuesday 5 December 2023

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, we went from having 11 participants to 6 on the day, which left us with no time to invite further participants.

6

Participants

4

OMNVP reps

2

NHS staff



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“The entrance is signed clearly and I feel very secure in the space. I would love to give birth here!”

“It would be nice to have a board saying who is working today.”

Quick Wins

Improve staff room / office

Improve diversity and inclusivity in posters

Make beds!

Celebrations

- Really liked the atmosphere
- The signposting information all feels relevant
- The rooms are lovely and the space smells great
- Liked that the resuscitation unit is very nicely tucked away
- Love the birth rooms all being ensuite and walk in showers, great size
- Appreciated the affirmations in the birth rooms
- A nice cheery Christmas tree
- Bright wall panels, fresh and clean
- It feels bubbly, friendly, lots of open doors, bright and light
- Overheard a service user say she'd seen the midwife throughout her entire care
- Nice active labour posters
- Appreciated curtains around the doors
- Great lighting in the birthing rooms
- Drugs fridge locked!
- The staff door was closed when they were on the phone
- Birthing equipment visible and easy to access (balls, stools)
- Everyone loved the colour scheme
- Super accessible with everything on the ground floor

Improvements to be made

- It was quite noisy but this felt ok because no one was birthing during our visit
- As it's an open kitchen, there are a few cupboard doors banging etc
- Maternity safety board could have a few more things filled in, and updated (October 2023)
- Could be a few more leaflet holders in the waiting area
- No other languages visible except one poster in Arabic
- Staff space is incredibly small and felt cramped - their bags were holding the door open and spilling into the corridor - not safe!
- During our visit it was someone's leaving lunch and they used the postnatal room - which is fine because they don't have their own space - but would have been better to close the door as it was very loud on the ward
- Lots of staff but noticed the phone ringing for quite a while before someone answered
- Improve diversity in images and posters (all white babies)
- Beds were not made - had sheets on them folded ready to go but not prepped
- Waiting area was very cold!

Questions

- The curtain were all dated September/October and we weren't sure how often they are supposed to be changed.
- Can the staff be given a bigger area to work in?
- Are the birthing rooms only for birthing? If not, can the names be changed or those titles removed?
- Can we change the name of the perineal repair kit to just perineal kit - repair has very negative and triggering connotations



Recommendations / Action points

- Move the staff tablet survey, it was in the corridor so felt it was the wrong place
- Christmas tree was far too big to be in the corridor, felt unsafe and couldn't move around it freely
- Donation signs - need to make it clear where the money is going
- Remove Covid info
- Breastfeeding mission/statement in the waiting area is great but hidden, bring it out to be more visible
- Show off more! Everyone was impressed by Wallingford, but felt that there's not enough to showcase how brilliant it is to birth there and have care there



Wantage

Tuesday 5 December 2023

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, we went from having 11 participants to 6 on the day, which left us with no time to invite further participants.

6

Participants

4

OMNVP reps

2

NHS staff



*Our OMNVP reps are service users, but for the purpose of this report, we have separated those who specifically and regularly represent OMNVP with those who volunteered for the 15 Steps Challenge.

“I feel like this ward has its own identity - welcoming, warm, friendly.”

“I didn't see any birthing equipment in the rooms even though they are good sizes.”

Quick Wins

Make the lift more obvious and accessible

Lock on equipment room door

Make beds!

Improve diversity and inclusivity in posters

Add curtains on entry in rooms

Celebrations

- No clinical smell
- Warm, clean and nice entrance
- Receptionist to main hospital was very welcoming and explained that we need to buzz in specifically to maternity, which is on the outside door
- Signposting at entrance is really clear and helpful
- Separate maternity waiting area is a nice touch and closer to the maternity ward
- Conversations in the staff room were quiet - a really nice open space, didn't feel cluttered
- A volunteer overheard a midwife knock on a room door and immediately introduce herself fully - name and title - nice to see this in practice
- Looked like the team all get along and friendly with each other
- Nice touch with Christmas decorations
- Two birth rooms had wall art which was a nice touch
- Waiting room had Christmas books in - shows they've updated and kept things relevant which was really great to see
- Service users are escorted from the waiting area to the ward which means safety/security is in place, and there's no chance of someone getting lost - it's a good touch
- All leaflets in the waiting area felt relevant and up to date
- Love that there were candles in every room
- Found lots of opportunities for feeding back
- Mood lighting in birthing rooms were great
- EDI poster in waiting area - great!
- Service user bathroom was clean, airy, and big
- Good use of storage areas, no rooms felt cluttered and the corridor is narrow but felt clear
- We LOVED the room names after Greek goddesses
- Overheard one staff member say to another, "just shout if you're struggling" which was great to hear - signs of a healthy team culture

- Lift location is unclear - also overheard staff say they weren't sure if it was working
- Equipment room has no lock on the main door, and when we entered, the placenta freezer and drugs fridge were unlocked. When a volunteer returned, they were locked but we found an epipen in a drug cupboard above
- More diversity in languages - nothing seen other than English
- As you enter, the main board for reception has a baby with a bottle as the sign for maternity
- Beds were not made - should be prepped and also made it seem more clinical
- Midwife room needs to stay locked, we entered and found maternity notes on the table
- Resus chart had not been updated
- Maternity safety board needs more information on it to be effective
- Empty wipe-board outside of staff room, could be used to say who staff is or a weekly learning theme etc.
- Lack of diversity in images of babies - all white

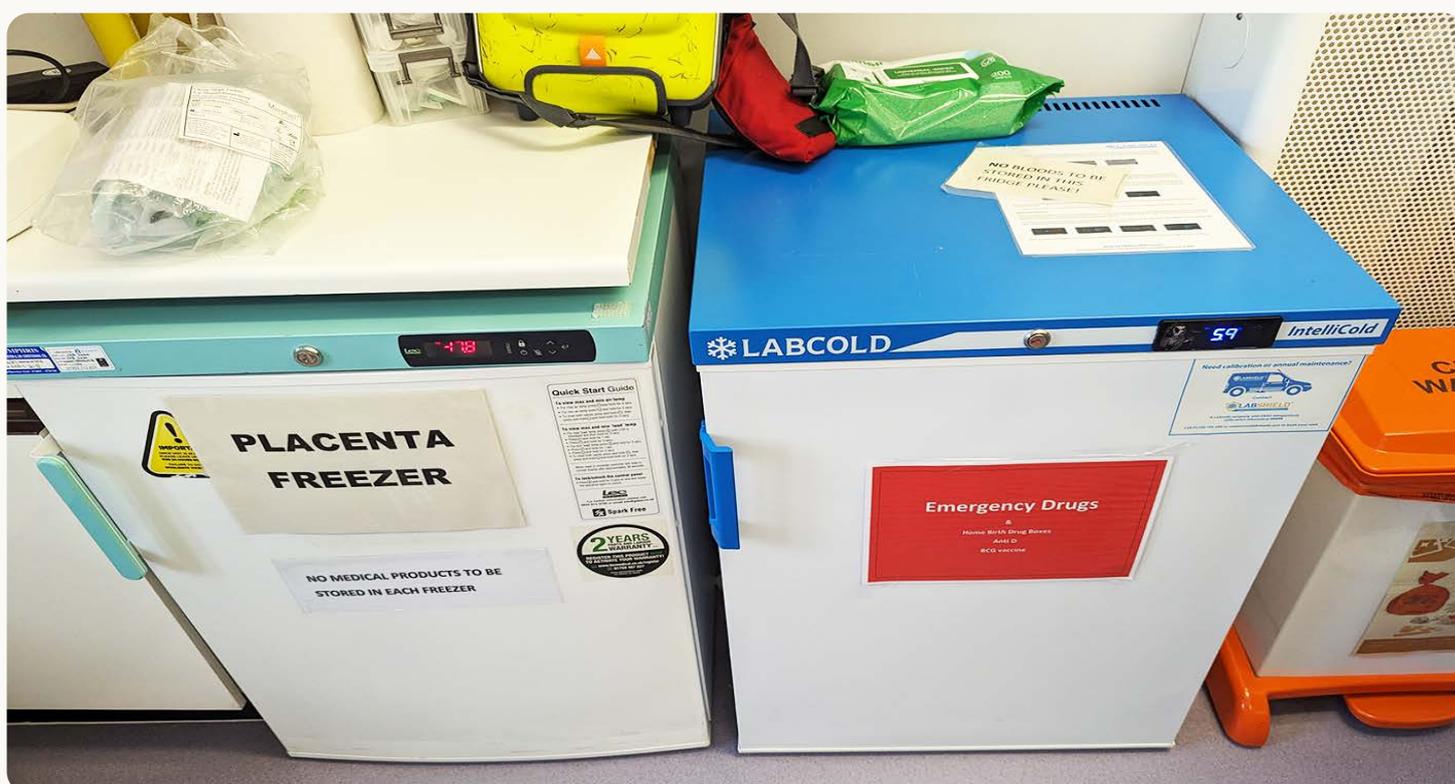
Questions

- What happens if the lift is out of action??
- Is the resus machine used in the equipment room or wheeled out? If it stays in that room for use, then perhaps consider having a curtain or screen as there's a viewing window in the door
- Parking is a nightmare - are service users and visitors warned of this and given alternatives?
- What is the donation piggy bank for? Put a sign up or remove it
- Can the scales not be in the corridor? It's very exposing to do it here
- Where is the evac chair if the lift isn't working? We couldn't see it
- Are the observation lights still hanging because it costs too much to remove them? Or are they still used?

Recommendations / Action points



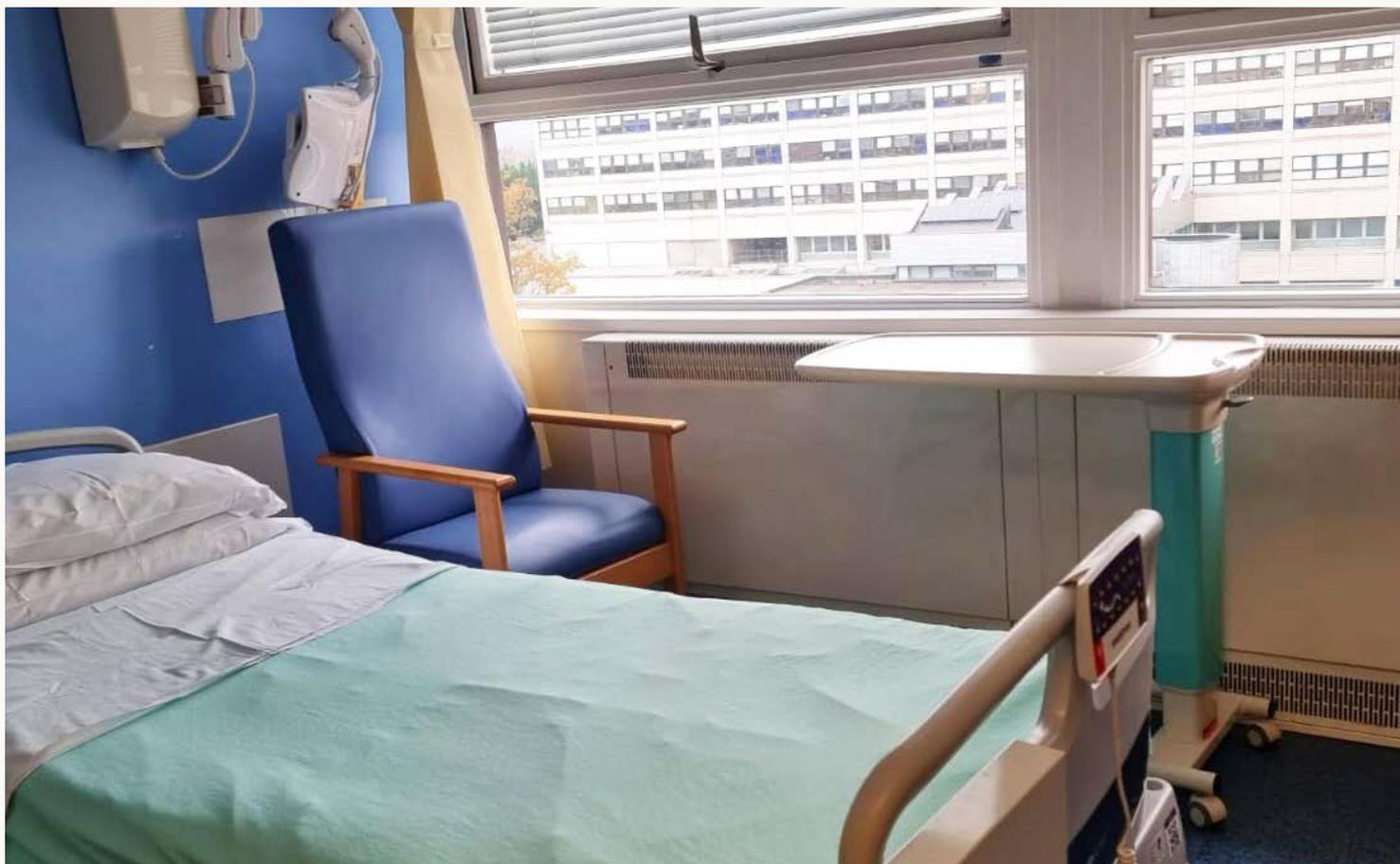
- Always offer the lift to service users - whether they are birthing, coming for an appointment, or leaving with a baby - for safety more than anything
- Rooms could have curtains upon entry - one room had paper towels stuck to the window for privacy
- Add more information on vaccines - not just whooping cough
- Spend a little bit of time each day tidying up the leaflets in the waiting area
- Could we add signs about “who your midwife” is today or something like that on the rooms or in the waiting area?



Conclusion

Overall, the 15 Steps Challenge has been a great one - we've learned a lot about the maternity service and how to "look" at the spaces our service users and staff use. However, as with any first try, there are learnings which we'd like to improve on for next time.

Most of the wards had their own unique feedback, but some comments kept recurring throughout our 15 Steps Challenges.



Uniforms

Some participants wanted to know what the different coloured scrubs meant, but some participants didn't care. It's worth considering whether this is something we introduce as a blanket informative poster across the maternity services.

Lanyards

We all agreed that it's a nice touch when the staff member wears the bright yellow "My Name Is" badges, but it's not always easy to read them. There are different coloured lanyards, and badges are often hanging low down. We didn't have a solution for this, but with maternity experiences really being about the personable element - we think it's worth considering options of how staff can make service users feel when introducing themselves.

Maternity Safety Boards

These are wonderful additions to wards, but need to be filled out to be effective!

Identity

Across the challenges, as a group, the same question would surface - who is this space for? If the ward was lacking an identity, it was hard to understand who would actually be using it. In many of the spaces we attended, it felt that it was neither focused on staff, nor service user, nor visitor. This should be something all senior leads consider when next walking into a department and worth asking the same question.

Locations

As you may have noticed, not all the maternity services have been included in this year's 15 Steps Challenge. We unfortunately did not have enough participants to visit Level 7 at the JR: Spires and Bereavement. Nor did we have enough to visit Horton or Chipping Norton.

There is a potential to do these separately and create individual reports, or to engage with these locations next time.

We were thrilled when we, compared to other counties, has a lot of maternity locations, and therefore was difficult to find the time and participants to visit all of them.

Timings

We have learned that there needs to be a much longer lead in time - 3 months is the absolute minimum to ensure NHS staff are engaged with the sessions.

We'd also like to trial visiting the wards at different times of the day. All of our visits were done between 10am - 2pm this year. A potential idea would be to split the day into morning, afternoon and evening, to ensure a wider scope of feedback.

Feedback sessions

Part of the 15 Steps Challenge is to invite senior staff/leaders from OUH into feedback sessions directly after the 15 Steps have taken place.

Unfortunately, on the four days we hosted 15 Steps, we were not joined by any senior leaders.

There are pros and cons to this, for example, some of our participants felt they could speak more openly about their experiences on the wards without senior staff present. However, for the reps, it would have been more impactful to have someone from OUH in the room listening and understanding the feedback.

Next time, we could potentially look into hybrid feedback sessions but this is dependent on many factors including time, capacity, location, etc.

We hope that this report will showcase enough to drive change.

Participants

We went from 36 interested parties, to 16, with NHS staff being the biggest group reduced in size (17 to 8).

The participants who took part in this challenge covered a number of diverse characteristics including age, gender, BMI, LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse, those born outside of the UK, those with English as a second language, and those who are not white-British.

Planning for 15 Steps began in the summer, and the expression of interest email went out on 13 July to a huge number of people - it requested to either sign up, nominate a colleague, or to forward on to other people.

Kick off meetings were then held online on the 19 and 25 of September. Recordings were sent to the 36 people on the list.

On 19 October, we sent out the final diary to those on the list. This was approximately a month before the first 15 Steps challenge.

We have spoken to a number of NHS colleagues and they mention that they would have preferred 3 months notice, which we will take into consideration for the next edition of 15 Steps.

Having an OUH staff member with us on one of the 15 Steps days made it abundantly clear the importance of having an “insider” do these challenges. What this person was able to bring was a multitude of benefits on top of the feedback from service users and OMNVP reps.

They were able to question clinically with knowledge the others did not have. It is vital, therefore, that moving forward, there are a larger number of NHS staff members joining us on these challenges.

A note on reimbursement for transparency: we offered £15 vouchers to service users, as well as travel remuneration. OMNVP reps were given their normal rates. OUH/NHS staff volunteered during their working hours so were not offered anything further.

Thank you

We want to give a massive thank you to the 16 people who volunteered their time to walk around the maternity services in Oxfordshire.

Without your eyes and ears, we wouldn't have this wonderful report and action plan to celebrate and improve the service for service users and visitors.

A big thank you also to all the staff who we interrupted at work during our walk arounds! Your kind and friendly attitudes were testament to the service you provide, thank you.

