

Board of Directors

Subject:	Homebirth Service		Date: 7 October 2021	
Prepared By:	Lisa Gowan, General Manager, Women & Children's Paula Shore, Interim Head of Midwifery			
Approved By:	Julie Hogg, Chief Nurse			
Presented By:	Julie Hogg, Chief Nurse			
Purpose				
The purpose of this paper is to ask for Board's support to temporarily suspend the overnight Home Birth service for a three month period. The suspension has been supported by the CCG and regional Chief Midwife.			Approval	X
			Assurance	
			Update	
			Consider	X
Strategic Objectives				
To provide outstanding care	To promote and support health and wellbeing	To maximise the potential of our workforce	To continuously learn and improve	To achieve better value
x	X		x	
Overall Level of Assurance				
	Significant	Sufficient	Limited	None
		x		
Risks/Issues				
Financial	x			
Patient Impact	X			
Staff Impact	X			
Services	X			
Reputational	X			
Committees/groups where this item has been presented before				
Executive team 15 September 2021				
Executive Summary				
<p>The purpose of this paper is to seek Board approval for a temporary suspension of the Home Birth Service overnight for a period of three months. The suspension has been supported by the CCG and regional Chief Midwife.</p> <p>There has been good and continued progress made in recruiting midwives to join the acute team based at the hospital. However, recruitment for the community midwifery service (providers of the home birth service) remains problematic. There have been a number of issues that have exacerbated this. The main one has been the concern around the development of the continuity of carer service. Feedback received from colleagues who have left, that their concern is about the impact continuity will have on their own work/life balance.</p> <p>As previously approved by Board, we have paused our continuity of care roll out and whilst we still offer this service in a limited way, we do this via one team. We are currently working across the system and nationally to look at the care pathways that align to continuity and more importantly, we have a working group that has community midwifery representatives involved that will help shape the service for our population.</p>				

Trust Board are asked to approve the following:-

1. The six recommendations made by the senior midwifery team
2. The suspension of the home birth service overnight for a period of three months from the September 2021 until the 31st of December 2021.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to seek Board approval for a temporary suspension of the Home Birth Service overnight for a period of three months. The suspension has been supported by the CCG and regional Chief Midwife.

BACKGROUND

There has been good and continued progress made in recruiting midwives to join the acute team based at the hospital. However, recruitment for the community midwifery service (providers of the home birth service) remains problematic. There have been a number of issues that have exacerbated this. The main one has been the concern around the development of the continuity of carer service. Feedback received from colleagues who have left, that their concern is about the impact continuity will have on their own work/life balance.

As previously approved by Board, we have paused our continuity of care roll out and whilst we still offer this service in a limited way, we do this via one team. We are currently working across the system and nationally to look at the care pathways that align to continuity and more importantly, we have a working group that has community midwifery representatives involved that will help shape the service for our population.

HOME BIRTH SERVICE

On average our home birth service supports 6 births per month. Whilst this number is low, we are acutely aware of the impact not having this facility has on our women. Women will have multiple reasons for choosing a home birth due to the benefits of birthing at home.

Trust Board should note that because of the low numbers of home births there are only two midwives on call overnight for this service. This means we are unable to provide care for more than one woman at a time. This has always been the case and the community midwifery team have always been clear when discussing birth plans with their women.

COMMUNITY MIDWIFERY STAFFING ISSUES

Despite pausing continuity and working hard with our community teams, the below table demonstrates a shortfall of 16.01wte vacancies (based against Birthrate Plus establishment). This equates to 35% vacancy loss for this team which is significant

	BR+ WTE	Current budgeted WTE	Actual WTE
Community (core and caseload)	RM	RM	RM
	43.17	39.61	27.16

The senior midwifery team have reviewed the service and have made six recommendations which they believe will ensure this service remains safe whilst recruitment continues.

1. Suspend the overnight homebirth service for the period of three months, from the end September 2021 until the 31st of December 2021.

2. Contact individually all women planning a home birth during that period and follow up with the agreed letter which demonstrates the rationale for making this difficult decision. This personal contact will ensure we can develop bespoke plans for those women where clinically appropriate.
3. Active Recruitment continues using a rolling advert for Community Midwives. As we receive applications, we will continue to interview on an ad hoc basis.
4. Community Service review, including the role of MSW Band 3 role.
5. Continue to contact recently retired midwives noting that we have two already who have joined our bank to help offer support.
6. Work closely with the Maternity Voices Partnership to ensure they help support our women through this period.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above recommendations which have been discussed at the executive team meeting on Wednesday 15 September 2021, the maternity service asks Trust Board to support suspending the Home Birth service overnight from the end September 2021 until the 31st of December 2021.

The maternity service, via the Maternity Assurance Committee, chaired by the Chief Nurse will continue to monitor the recruitment progress across the community midwifery service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Trust Board are asked to support the following:-

3. The six recommendations made by the senior midwifery team to resolve the vacancy issue in community midwifery
4. Suspension of the home birth service overnight for a period of three months from the end September 2021 until the 31st of December 2021.