Maternity matters

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SFHT - you said, together we will…

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Monthly Maternity and Neonatal Safety Champions Walk Round

On Thursday the 23rd of December 2021 and Wednesday the 12th of January 2022 we visited the maternity and neonatal units. This was part of our commitment to the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Champions Agenda. We spoke with staff and the following issues were identified:

- **Abatement planned rule changes and impact on workforce:** It was raised by members of the team that due to changes with the legislation at the end of March 2022 around the COVID-19 abatement a significant number of Midwives will be restricted from working additional hours.

- **COVID-19 Virtual ward:** Since the launch of the virtual COVID-19 ward at the beginning of January the number of cases, reflecting the community rates, has been exponential. This is impacting staffing across the whole service to ensure that the women within this clinic are managed through the appropriate pathways.

- **Staffing pressures, across NICU and Maternity:** All staff areas reported the recent challenges to staffing due to the impact of COVID-19 rates and on-going levels of longer term sickness.

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Midwifery Forum

The planned December 2021 forum was cancelled due to clinical staffing pressures and was resumed on Monday the 17th of January 2022. This forum is an extension of our commitment to the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Champions Agenda, widening the invitation for all to engage.

Summary of issues raised

- Obstetric Ultrasound Capacity
- Abatement planned rule changes and impact on workforce
- Mandatory vaccination
- Clinic planning, noting increased bank holidays for 2022
- Midwifery led Antenatal Clinics
- Staffing challenges and review of unique selling point for SFH
- Amended offer of working patterns
- Triage, impact of COVID Virtual Ward and current rate of COVID-19 rates and the impact on the birthing unit.

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Our response and actions

Maternity Matters | January 2022 Report

- **Abatement:** We have raised this previously through our reporting channels both regionally and nationally as a concern, we are awaiting a further update and will inform the team as soon as this becomes clear.
- **COVID-19 Virtual Ward/ Triage:** The SOP for the Ward has been revised since the launch, in line with established practice within the region. We are constantly monitoring and review this and will provide feedback. The expectations are, looking at the national trending models; this should ease and subsequently allow the role out of BSOTS to continue.
- **Staffing pressures:** The recent Omicron variant has provided significant workforce challenges across the division resulting in exceptional actions. These include the extension of enhanced rates of pay, recall of staff working on both internal and external secondments, ward leaders and Matrons to support clinical duties.

- **Antenatal Clinic: scan capacity, planning and midwife led service:** These have been grouped together and an immediate service review is underway to capture them, with support from our business unit colleagues to understand the size of the issues. We will update on this.
- **Mandatory Vaccination:** Robin Binks provided the current approach taken trust wide and the offers of support within division and externally were re-empathised as to any member of staff who required further support.
- **SFH Maternity:** Unique selling points to be captured and revised within the current recruitment leaflets, the point around shorter working shifts will be explored as part of this.

We thank everyone for their engagement during our visit and hope the information above evidences our commitment to listening and responding to concerns you raise.

Julie Hogg
Chief Nurse

Lisa Gowan
Divisional General Manager

Clare Ward
Board Chair

Paula Shore
Divisional Head of Nursing and Midwifery