

New Workforce Models – Keeping You Informed Edition 6

Your Guide to **SWeET** **S**trategic **W**orkforce **E**ducation and **T**raining

This edition of the 'Keeping You Informed' bulletin concentrates on the **Midwifery Support Worker** role, a new position designed to support **Community Midwives** visiting mums and mums-to-be in their own homes.

The Midwifery Support Worker (MSW) Role – Linda Gustard, Divisional Head of Midwifery



I'm delighted that our first four MSWs have come through their training and have started to see ladies in the community independently of their mentors. It's going to make a big difference to mums and mums-to-be as our MSWs will be able to devote more time to them in a focussed meeting in their homes. Our community midwives might not always be able to dedicate 45 minutes of their time to assess and observe these ladies because they may be mindful of other duties that require a qualified midwife's attention. The time MSWs can give is far more protected and takes away those tests and observations that don't necessarily need to be carried out by a fully qualified midwife.

It will also be of benefit to our midwives and the plan is to assess how much time they have reclaimed thanks to the work done by the MSWs and how much of that can be redeployed back into the Birth Centre. At the moment we have 35 community midwives and they are all asked to do one day a month of clinical shifts back here at the Royal within the Birth Centre. My hope is that we can increase that to two per community midwife which would give us an extra 35 qualified midwifery shifts; that will make a big difference in terms of the quality of care and support we can give our ladies during labour.

We've just recruited two more MSWs and once they have been trained up and ready to work independently we will be looking at using their skills on Trinity ward so that they can provide support seven days a week. This will help to support infant feeding, preparation for discharge and baby observations to free up more midwifery time and help our maternity assistants; we can also look at support in antenatal clinics.

I'm so pleased to welcome the ladies into our team and the feedback I've had from our community midwifery team has been very positive. The ladies who have qualified have put a lot of work into this, the benefits are clear to see and I'm looking forward to seeing how their roles develop further in the future.

The Midwifery Support Workers – Laura Carr, Nina Crowther, Frances Reed and Kate Swindell

The Maternity Service at Chesterfield Royal Hospital has introduced a new role to allow midwives more time to carry out the duties that only midwives can do.

Four midwifery support workers have completed their twelve week induction and competency assessment to enhance the care that our midwives already provide, working with midwives out in the community.

The Midwifery Support Workers – Laura Carr, Nina Crowther, Frances Reed and Kate Swindell



Sarah Petty is the Senior Matron for Midwifery, she said: “The aim of this new role is to enhance the care that our community midwives offer by providing support in tasks that don’t necessarily need to be performed by a qualified midwife. We talked through the support role with our midwifery team and identified areas where they felt support would be beneficial for them in terms of freeing up time to carry out tasks that only a midwife can do.

“We now have four whole time equivalent midwifery support workers and they have just finished their three month induction and training programme. They were supervised by a midwife during home visits throughout that

period and can now carry out those visits on their own, talking to new mums about feeding support, carrying out the heel prick test and weighing babies. These tasks, whilst of huge importance to the baby’s development, take community midwives’ time away from more complex queries and this new role bridges that gap perfectly.”

The group, Laura Carr, Nina Crowther, Frances Reed and Kate Swindell, started as Midwifery Support Workers in December and are now able to carry out their duties independently. Before then they were mentored and supervised by community midwives with each of them assigned to one of the midwifery bases.

Laura said: “We’re thoroughly enjoying the job and it’s great to be a part of the antenatal and postnatal care. As well as the clinical work, antenatally we have been trained to carry out meaningful conversations with regards to healthy eating and lifestyle, talk about birth plans and feeding. Postnatally we will see new Mums on day three and five to have further conversations about infant feeding as well as looking for signs of things such as jaundice or if the baby is passing water and stools properly.”

Frances added: “For the Mums it’s a case of taking bloods, checking blood pressure and checking their BMI as well as being able to carry out the Glucose Tolerance Tests. In terms of the baby, our visits are very much about the general wellbeing and we’re able to answer questions ourselves or take the more complex queries back to the midwives.”

Nina said: “What is interesting is that, as we’ve now been doing this for more than three months, we’ve started seeing some of the ladies, who we initially saw antenatally, with their babies and they’ve recognised us. For me that’s a real pleasure and demonstrates that our role in their pregnancy has been significant and worthwhile so I’m looking forward to building on that. The experience we’re getting from seeing these ladies in their homes is invaluable and we’ve received good feedback from them and from the midwives who have been mentoring us.”

“That’s been one of the most pleasing aspects,” added Kate. “I’ve worked at the Royal for a while so for me it’s a developmental role and the midwives have really welcomed us and been incredibly supportive with the training and advice. They’re used to having students with them so the mentoring side came very naturally but, from the feedback we’ve received, it’s really going to play a part in taking the pressure off and give them more time to concentrate on the work that is specific to their qualifications.”

The Trust have just taken on another two Midwifery Support Workers who have just begun their twelve week training programme. They will be fully qualified and join Laura, Frances, Nina and Kate in June.

For more information contact:

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