

Hikmat Healthwatch Hub

Maternity Services Gateway Request – January 2014

Focus Group Respondents - Women (14) in black

Structured Interviews - Women (9) in blue

Structured Interviews – Men (6)

Information on Respondents in Table Format



Seeing your GP

1. *How long did it take you to go to your GP?*

Most saw their GP between 1 and 3 months. 1 saw a Senior Nurse and not a doctor. 1 was delayed as her GP was away and she wasn't offered an alternative.

N/A x 4. 1 Week x 2. 2 weeks x 1. 1 X 1 month.

2. *Was the GP sympathetic/understanding?*

There were mixed views with how sympathetic/understanding the GP was. One doctor expressed their delight with an unexpected/unlikely pregnancy, joining in with the mother's joy. Another who had had complications conceiving was unsure of the GP's response and was left not knowing if she was considered at-risk or not. One mother reported that her GP was "careless, dismissive and uninterested". All others reported a good visit, including one respondent who said that the GP supported her as her husband didn't want a baby, and he reassured her by saying "You are having the baby, not your husband".

YES X 6. N/A x1. Understanding x 1

3. *Did your GP provide you with enough information?*

Apart from one participant who was irritated because her GP refused to answer her questions at the time of her appointment, and referred her to the midwife, who he said would “tell her everything”, everyone was content with the information they received. This mostly included leaflets and signposting. Those who had an interpreter (2) were *not* offered leaflets and felt more unsure.



No X 2. Lots including info on breast feeding. Yes they did x 3. 1 X not enough.

4. *Did the GP check your English skills and signpost you to relevant support?*

At only two surgeries did the GPs ask if they required an interpreter (Mount Pleasant and Southernhay). One always had her husband with her, and the GP assumed she was happy with him interpreting. She wasn't, however, and felt distressed that she could do nothing about it. A few presumed that their level of spoken English made it clear that they had no need for an interpreter.

Yes x 3. yes - telephone interpreter. N/A x 2. No x 2

5. *Did the GP check that you have family or close friends?*

Most were asked if they had close family or friends to support them. Two were not asked, and they were the ones relying on their husbands for interpreting. They both found this upsetting. One was asked the names and addresses of the people who would be supporting her.

Yes x 5. No x 3

6. *How long was it between visiting your GP and hearing from your mid-wife?*

There was a considerable range of time that it took for people to hear from the midwife; the fastest was 2 weeks, others reported 4 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months. One client felt anxious and worried waiting so long, she reported feeling guilty because she wasn't doing anything for the baby. Another participant was unhappy and tried to change her GP, but was told this was not possible.

Yes x 5. No x 3

Seeing your midwife



7. How long did it take you to go to your mid-wife?

Four had to make contact with mid-wife for the first appointment themselves, 3 were phoned by midwife to arrange appointment, and the remainder received letters.

Not long x 2. few days. 2 months into pregnancy. 1 Week later visited the house. 1 Week. 1 x After 3 months.

8. Was the midwife sympathetic/understanding?

All except two had a good experience with their midwife. Two thought their midwives were professional and efficient, but remote and distant, not personal, and one found her completely unhelpful and had to keep going back to her GP. Of the others, one had the same midwife for her second child, and said having a background of relatedness was very helpful.

Yes x 5. Very sympathetic and understanding, knew a lot about Islam and how we are with New born child (Shaving the hair/praying in the ear etc...). Sometimes. No x 1.

9. Did your mid-wife provide you with enough information? Where you offered a home birth?

Most respondents agreed that they were offered enough relevant information by their midwives. Four were offered a home birth, and four were offered a water birth. Three were very happy with the midwife phone service when they became worried about something.

She provided lots of info but not sure about the home birth she may have mentioned it to my husband. Yes x 5. Yes but not about home birth. All the info I needed and was offered a home birth.

10. Did the mid-wife check your English skills and signposted to relevant support?

Nobody was offered an interpreter by their midwife. One respondent asked for an interpreter and the mid-wife said "No", the consultant eventually insisted. Two participants experienced added distress by not having extra support from someone who spoke their language; the woman whose husband didn't want the baby and a woman who suffered a miscarriage.

She was aware I could not speak English but did not provide any interpreter. Yes x 2. N/A x 2, No x 3

11. *Did the midwife check that you have family or close friends?*

Only two participants were asked if they had family/friends for support. Two said they were not signposted to additional, even though the midwife knew that they didn't have family or friends.

yes x 7. No x 1

Before the birth

12. *What was your experience around the first scan. Did they give you a due date?*

Ten of the participants had a positive experience of their first scan. However, one woman received scan appointment letter 2 weeks after she had miscarriage, even though she had been in hospital for some days, which was distressing. Most had the scan explained and were given a due date (which often turned out to be wrong). One couldn't remember.

Good, Yes they did give me the due date X 4 . Good but outside Devon. Ok – Yes they gave a date. 1 x quite good.

13. *Did you attend pre-natal classes? If yes how many did you attend?*

a. *What was helpful?*

b. *What was missing?*

All but four women were offered classes, although three of those who *were* offered did not attend. One completed 6 sessions and found them very useful when it came to changing nappies, bathing and washing their baby, and talking about the emotional experience (Withycombe Centre, Exmouth). Only one mother had a real baby in the class demonstrations, and all the others said this was the biggest factor missing for them. Others reported that not having fathers was unhelpful, and there was some embarrassment about having fathers and 'lights-out/intimate time'. One did two half days and found having fewer, but longer, sessions useful (West Exe, Exeter). And finally, one participant reported that she was torn between being too afraid to go and regretting not going. She was given no encouragement to attend, or address her fear. Many mothers reported that the classes helped with the actual birth. Eleven women received the Bounty Book and relied on it.

no x 2. Offered classes but didn't attend. Not available at the time only private - £50.

Attended all classes very helpful. Yes attended 1 class, breathing helpful but not enough classes to learn. Yes but not helpful. Attended 1 but nothing helpful.

14. *How many times did your mid-wife visit?*

There was agreement in the room that if the mother was poorly, midwives visited frequently, but if not the visits tended to be sporadic. Many women said they used and were happy with the midwives phone surgery to obtain advise and to get additional appointments; they were responded to quickly.

I visited her about 4-6 times. Few times x 2. 6-7 times. Not often but seen in hospital. 1 time x 2. 1 x 5 times.

15. *How did you know you were in labour?*

Three participants said they did not realise when they had gone into labour, they thought it was indigestion, constipation or overwork. Some reported not knowing until their waters broke, but most said they knew when the contractions started. One participant reported a particularly distressing experience as her husband had not translated any information for her and she thought she was going to die at home. A neighbour took her into hospital in the end and from then on she was looked after very well, and allowed to stay in hospital for 2 weeks.

I was in pain x 3. Started to bleed. Pain. Pain, second child. Induced. Waters burst.

During the birth

16. *How did you get to the hospital?*

Seven respondents went to hospital with their husbands. One went on her own (booked for C-Section). One who went with her midwife (because she was ill) complained of being left at reception. One went to a neighbour in distress, not knowing what to do. The remainder booked taxis when they went into labour, except for one, who went back and forth for 3 days.

car x 5. Friend of husband drove. Friends. 1 x family support.

17. *How did they receive you? What happened when you arrived?*

The respondent who was left at reception by her midwife reported feeling abandoned and terrified as no-one understood her. There were some women who were unhappy about being made to walk to the waiting or delivery room, and felt humiliated to be struggling with contractions in public. One arrived for a caesarean, unaware that the date and time had been changed (her arrangements had involved childcare).

they took me straight to the labour ward x 4. Ok after 3 hours 20minutes. 1 x Nicely. Friendly and clear with what was happening. Was sent home two days running whilst in labour, I was given injections on the second visit. On the third occasion a few hours after I had been sent home I had to go back in as the pain was bad, they tried to send home again but saw how distressed I was they kept me in. The baby was born a few hours later.

18. *What pain-killing options were you offered? Were you happy with that?*

All the respondents were happy with the choices they were given regarding pain-relief. They felt the hospital staff were sensitive to their desire to start with the minimum and work up to stronger interventions, if they couldn't manage on gas alone. Of the sample, 9 remained with gas only, and 5 ended up having epidurals. One was not offered anything.

They gave in a few options, I took Pethadin. Few options given, didn't take any. Yes gas and injection. No- just gas. Happy with options offered x 3. I was in so much distress, I don't remember what they offered me

19. *Did you know you could have someone with you? Who did you choose to have with you?*

Everyone who attended the focus group was told they could have someone stay with them throughout the birth, and they chose to do this. Seven participants chose their husbands, three their mothers, two their sister-in-laws, one their sister and one a friend.

yes x 2. Yes – Husband x 2. Yes partner. Yes Sister In-law and Husband.

No they said you must have the husband.

20. *What was good or bad about the birth?*

Negative experiences in giving birth included: trying to get you to bath/shower too quickly when tired and weak (several reported this), one was left alone after an induced birth and the baby nearly died. The alarm was raised by her mother. One complained of not being told of risks from d & c after miscarriage, and one was given an inexperienced student nurse, but not told before-hand.

Positive experiences in giving birth all focused on staff care. Two respondents reported being enormously impressed at the rapid response either they or their baby received in an emergency, and how doctors persevered to make and maintain contact when they were losing consciousness.

Good x 3. Not a lot of good, bad experience of the hospital. Good very quick. 1 X they left me alone. Wasn't stitched for about 2 hours after the birth. Bad, not much help during a long labour waiting in the room.

After the birth

21. What did you get to eat or drink after birth?

Ten of the participants were offered tea or coffee. Of the other four, two were offered a meal and two were not offered any refreshments. Four women were offered a full meal and six were offered sandwiches or toast. No-one was offered a faith-specific meal (kosher, halal) but they understand from others that this has recently become available. One was offered a meal in the birthing room. All reported feeling hungry and weak after the birth.

Nothing x 3. Toast x 2. Husband bought food. Tea x 1. 1 x Lots of food, Halal tray.

22. Who was your first visitor and how long after the birth did you have your first visitor? Did anyone ask if you were ready for a visitor?

None of the participants was asked if they were ready for visitors. A variety of friends and relations visited and nobody reported an unwelcome visitor except those who had photographers from the Express and Echo. Everyone who had this happen to them experienced it as distressing; they were unannounced, the mother felt dirty and dishevelled, and they were usually alone in the room and felt vulnerable and unable to say "No".

My brother who came a few hours after the birth. My Friend. Didn't stay long enough, was there for less than 12 hours gave birth 2am, left before 2pm – they offered me option to stay, I didn't. Didn't stay long enough. Yes, friends. No, Mother In-law. Couple of friends – no notification was ok. Yes they asked me if Grandmother and grandfather can come in.

23. Did they try to treat you or your baby for medical complications? Were any problems explained to you?

Three mothers had been told to prepare for their baby to be born sick, including one with a heart defect, but on all three occasions a ventilator was ready and treatment was immediate. They were very happy with the care given. One of these was sent away from the neo-natal department, but good explanations were given to the mother. One had critically high blood pressure and was treated wrongly, and one had low haemoglobin - the baby's health had been checked but not the mother's. One mother was told that she couldn't do as she wished and stay by the side of her baby who was in a ventilator, as she needed rest herself. She was upset at the time, but understands why now.

No x 6, BCG injection for baby offered but strongly recommended.

24. *Is there anything else you want to say about your hospital treatment?*

There was a common thread to complaints about routine times giving no choice for showers, toilets etc. It was felt that schedules are fixed and there is no choice, which left the woman feeling more like machines than human beings in a vulnerable situation.

no x 4. I was not happy with the treatment. Post natal, poor to respond to the bell. Very good treatment. Wasn't good.

25. *Did you see a Health Visitor after you got home? How long after?*

All participants reported receiving a health visitor within 2-4 days.

yes about 3-4 days after I got back home. Yes 2-3 days after I got home x 2. Yes x 2. Yes 3 weeks later. 2 X 2 weeks later.

26. *Were you happy with the care you got from your Health Visitor?*

Some had visits from their midwives for a few weeks, and this was a positive experience for them.

yes x 7, No, without appointment she came.

When asked if there was anything else they would like to say about their experience of maternity services in Devon, four of the female respondents who completed structured interviews reported the following:

1. The only think I would like to complain about is that I asked for an interpreter, and I did mention it to them a few time that during labour I would like an interpreter because both me and my husband do not speak English that well but they just said I would be fine and that I did not need a interpreter present.
2. Yes I would like to say that the experience I received from ND Hospital was appalling. If I lived in Barnstaple or nearby I could understand and except them sending me home when I was in pain. I live near Bideford 14 miles from the hospital, my husband doesn't drive so we have to depend on a friend to take us and bring us back from the hospital. I was not offered an interpreter even though I asked for one a few times during and before labour. Instead they said they could translate for me what they wanted to say (I think they typed the questions into the computer which translated it into Bengali). Il understood the first few questions but after they didn't make sense, I could not understand what they were saying. I was in so much pain but they didn't care.
3. Considering my normal health situation, everything was better than expected.

4. The delivery room was very cold and uncomfortable. After the birth I was left with the baby and my friends in the delivery room for 1 hour and then they took the baby and left me for 4 hours before I got cleaned up because of staff changeover of shifts. Staff did not explain that my baby wasn't well when they took my baby away, for 6 hours after the birth.

Structured Interviews - Men

Question 1. Were you given time off work to attend maternity classes before your baby was born?

Three men were offered time off work, one did not get time off and another self employed could not take time off. Good support was offered by the midwife team for all families people felt welcome and looked after. Yes-2

Question 2. Were the needs of your wife/partner met during the delivery of your baby and were you kept well informed of the situation?

One family experienced an emergency birth. Four families were well informed and had their needs and the needs of their partners and wives met. Wonford Hospital is singled out as a good hospital, offering good advice.

One family experienced a good service with the birth of their first baby but not the second baby.

Question 3. Were you and your wife/partner supported after the birth of your baby at the hospital or home birth? Did you feel welcome to help?

Yes 4, health visitor care and visit us, staff wonderful well supported and cared for staff checked everything ok. Discharged on the same day. Wife stayed 4 days, resting with baby with nurse care

Question 4. Did you and your wife/partner continue to receive support after your wife and baby were discharged from hospital and were you informed of where to access more support and services?

All families continued to receive support. A variety of services were delivered including; leaflets, contact numbers for emergency, follow up from children centre for a few months, midwife visited on many occasions.

When asked if there was anything else they would like to say about their experience of maternity services in Devon, five of the male respondents who completed structured interviews reported the following:

1. The hospital staff and midwives were very helpful.
2. We were very grateful for all the help and support that was given to us. They guided us all the time if we didn't know what to do.

3. The doctors and nurses did a very good job and informed us and kept us up to date with what was going on.
4. During the birth of my second baby the service was very bad. My wife was in need of stitches, she was left for more than an hour with blood under her. She found the stitches very painful.
5. Because of the emergency situation the experience was very frightening and scary, the amount of bleeding she had and the baby being pulled gave her more pain

Information on Respondents in Table Format

No of participants: 29

Ethnicities: 11 Ethnicities were represented; Cantonese, Libyan, Egyptian, Mandarin, Fijian, Filipino, Russian, Bangladeshi, Thai, Pakistani, SE Asian Lao

| Ethnicity | Age | Gender | Disability | Religion | Postcode | |
|------------------|-------|--------|------------|--------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Chinese | 44-54 | Female | N/A | Christian | EX2 4NH | Focus group |
| Libyan | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX4 3RG | Focus Group |
| Filipino/British | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Catholic | EX4 6PN | Focus Group |
| Russian | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Christian Orthodox | EX17 1DI | Focus Group |
| Filipino/British | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Roman Catholic | EX2 6BN | Focus Group |
| Filipino | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Christian | EX4 2BU | Focus Group |
| Filipino | 35-44 | Female | N//A | Roman Catholic | EX1 2QD | Focus Group |
| Filipino | 44-54 | Female | N/A | Christian | EX2 6EG | Focus Group |
| Chinese | 35-44 | Female | Physical | N/A | EX4 6JT | Focus Group |
| Chinese | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Catholic | EX4 8BP | Focus Group |
| Chinese | 35-44 | Female | N/A | N/A | EX4 | Focus Group |
| Egyptian | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX4 2LP | Focus Group |
| Pakistan | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX4 | Focus Group |
| Russian | 25-34 | Female | N/A | ? | EX4 6RT | Focus Group |
| Fiji/Chinese | 44-54 | Female | N/A | N/A | EX14 2GR | Focus Group |
| Filipino | 34-44 | Female | N/A | ? | EX4 8DH | Focus Group |
| Bengali | 16-24 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX4 | Structured Interview |
| Bengali | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX4 | Structured Interview |
| Bengali | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX32 | Structured Interview |
| Bengali | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX32 | Structured Interview |
| Bengali | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX32 | Structured Interview |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------|---------------------|-----------|---------|----------------------|
| Thai | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Christian | ? | Structured Interview |
| White SE Asian Lao | 35-44 | Female | N/A | Buddhism | ? | Structured Interview |
| Bengali | 25-34 | Female | N/A | Muslim | EX32 | Structured Interview |
| Chinese | 45-54 | Male | N/A | Christian | EX4 | Structured Interview |
| Chinese | 45-54 | Male | N/A | Christian | EX4 | Structured Interview |
| Filipino | 45-54 | Male | N/A | Christian | EX2 5DD | Structured Interview |
| Filipino | 45-54 | Male | N/A | Christian | EX4 6PN | Structured Interview |
| Egyptian | 45-54 | Male | Learning Disability | Muslim | EX4 8DY | Structured interview |
| Egyptian | 25-34 | Male | N/A | Muslim | EX4 2LP | Structured Interview |

NB

Questions for the focus group and structured interviews with women participants were very specific in order to facilitate a deep discussion, otherwise this would not have been possible, as most respondents are unused to critical thinking about processes which are provided by authorities and agencies.

Those for the men were simplified, as their experiences involved fewer aspects of the service.

It is noted that the experiences of those women who participated through structured interviews were, on the whole, less positive than those who contributed through the focus group. A contributory factor may be that those completing interviews did so predominantly because they required an interpreter. Their poor English may have been a contributory factor to their poor experience.

Respondents came from Exeter and environs, East Devon, Barnstaple, and Bideford.

Appendices

1. Maternity Questions used for female participants
2. Maternity Questions used for male participants