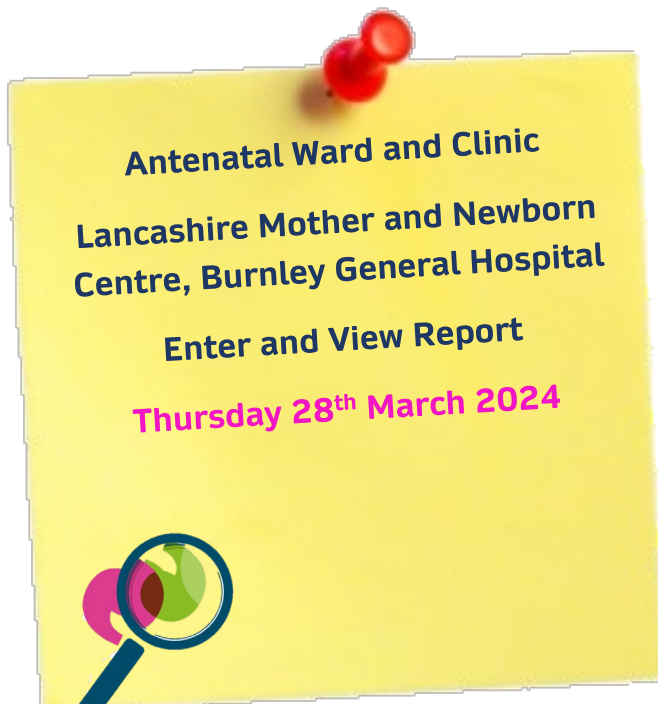




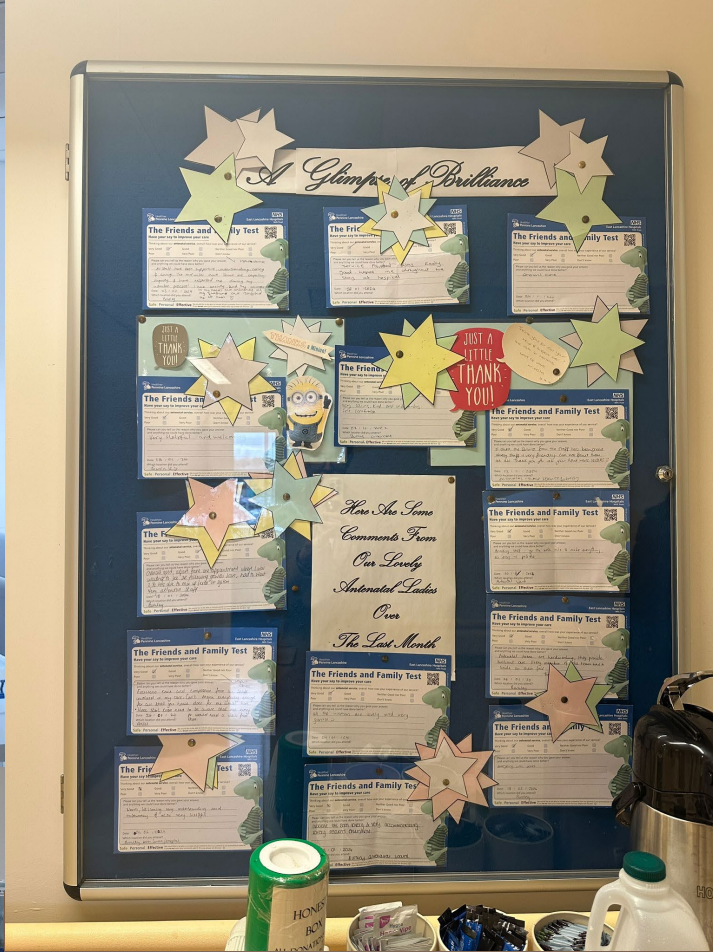
healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.



Antenatal Ward and Clinic Enter and View

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday 28th March 2024 commencing 9am Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen undertook an Enter and View visit to the Antenatal Ward and Clinic in the Lancashire Women and Newborn Centre at Burnley General Hospital.

This was an announced visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's Enter and View programme. The aim is to observe services, consider how services may be improved and disseminate good practice. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from patients and staff. This together with an environmental assessment, staff and patient questionnaires and online research forms the basis of the report.

This Enter and View was part of a wider programme of work carried out by Healthwatch Together (HW Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Lancashire and Westmoreland and Furness) engagement project which will investigate the experiences of women and families who access maternity and neonatal services within Lancashire and South Cumbria, and whether people feel they have choice and personalisation in their care.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank the staff and patients at the Lancashire Women and Newborn Centre, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit and particular thanks to Anj Lord for spending time with the team.

METHODOLOGY

An Enter and View visit was arranged to speak to patients and staff attending the Antenatal Ward and Clinic at the Lancashire Mother and Newborn Centre in the morning of Thursday 28th March 2024.

This was an announced visit with contact being made in advance by email.

We had 5 fully trained representatives present on the day. These were clearly identifiable by a Healthwatch ID badges.

Representatives were sensitive to the issues that may arise from the visit, and signposting to NHS mental health services was available if required. All responses were anonymous.

We spoke to x patients, 1 relative and gathered feedback from 7 staff within the constraints of the clinics routine, people's willingness, and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around information available in pregnancy, decision making and general experience of the visit to the birth centre.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities. The visit was intended as a snapshot of the patient experience on that day.

Team Members

Sarah Johns HW staff (Lead)

Katie Merry HW staff

Jenny Hayes HW staff

Liam Kershaw-Calvert HW staff

Michelle Livesey HW Volunteer



SUMMARY

The antenatal ward and clinic in the Lancashire Women's and Newborn Centre at Burnley General are bright, warm, calm and welcoming spaces for expectant parents. The antenatal ward had lovely touches throughout which made it feel less clinical and it was good to see positive feedback from patients on display as well as a 'You Said We Did' board. The patient rest room however, was rather sparse and would benefit from more comfortable furnishings to make it more relaxing for patients.

There is a good range of health information and information about different local services available in both areas, although some of this needs updating, particularly in the antenatal clinic, and is in small print so might not be suitable for patients with learning difficulties or disabilities or with visual impairment.

Parking was an issue for several of the patients we spoke with on our visit, not being able to find a space near to the Centre.

Staff morale comes across as generally high amongst the team from their feedback, particularly under a new manager in the Antenatal ward. There were concerns about levels of staffing when people are off sick but we are aware that the manager uses a workforce software tool now and liaises with other departments to try to maintain good staffing levels as far as possible.

Feedback about care and being involved in decision making about their care was generally very positive from patients we spoke with, many finding the staff supportive and friendly. However, it is important to ensure that this is consistent for all patients and that support and communication is person centred.

Waiting times in antenatal clinic was raised as an issue by both staff and patients we spoke with, with delays of an hour and a half on the day of our visit.

Whilst patients found the Badger notes app beneficial and easy to use, there are some areas for improvement such as notifications for changed/cancelled appointments (also raised as an issue by staff), and lack of detail about appointment types and location.



WHAT WE SAW

Pre visit

Representatives first undertook an overview of the hospital website - <https://elht.nhs.uk/services/maternity-and-newborn-services/place-birth-choices>.

There is really useful information about the maternity services on the website with details of choices of location of birth. Whilst there is a virtual tour for the antenatal ward, on review this is an introduction to induction and does not showcase the ward itself. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDKbje3vhfE>. An updated video might be helpful for patients to watch prior to their visit to make them more comfortable about coming to the ward.

The maternity services at Burnley General are rated as Good by the CQC.



Location

Access and Parking

Burnley General Hospital can be accessed by 3 bus routes which operate regularly 7 days a week and there are bus stops located just outside both entrances to the hospital site on Casterton Avenue and Brierfield Road. There is a free shuttle bus service from Royal Blackburn Hospital to Burnley General which runs regularly 7 days a week between the hours of 6am and 9pm. However, travel to Burnley General for patients coming from Blackburn with Darwen can be problematic, requiring at least 2-3 buses or an expensive taxi journey. Trains cover East Lancashire and across to Preston, however the station is located in the centre of town therefore patients would need to then catch a bus or taxi to attend the community diagnostic centre. Patient transport services are available for patients.

There is carparking on site with 3 designated blue badge bays which are free for badge holders. Parking is payable at £2.60 for 0-3 hours, £4.20 for 3-8 hours and £6.30 for 8-24 hours. Feedback from patients was that parking could be problematic with few spaces available at times.

There is a drop off point directly outside the building entrance and there are appropriate ramps on site to avoid steps for any patients with mobility issues.



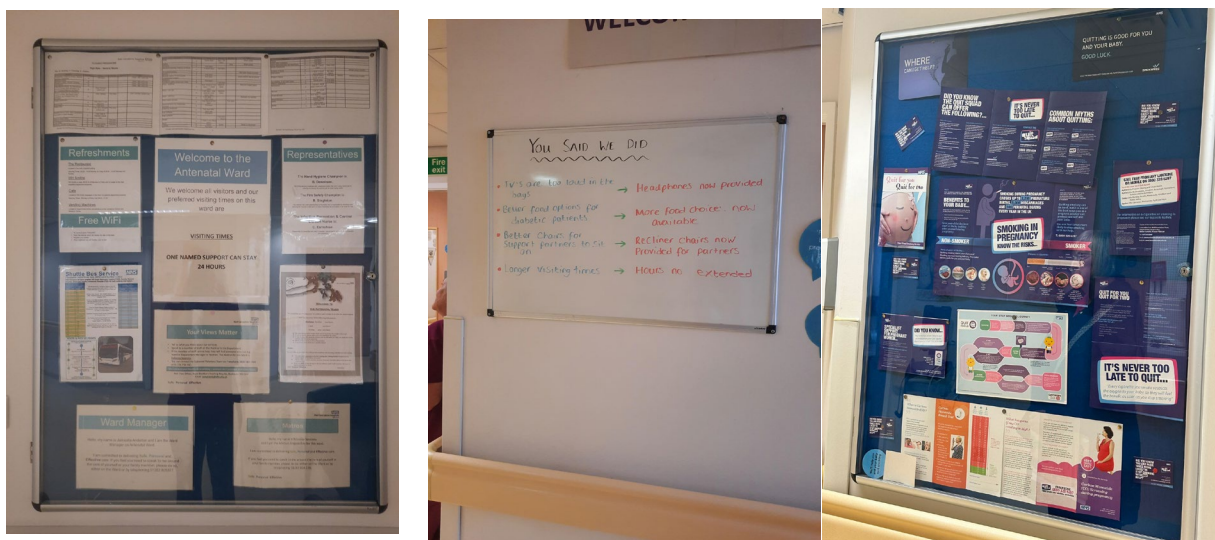


Inside the Antenatal Ward

The team were initially welcomed by the Ward Manager and Matron. Anj Lord, the Ward Manager then spent time with our team and gave an overview of the ward, how they manage staffing levels and how they support expectant mothers with additional needs. She explained that they had introduced a new role of Patient experience midwife following her interest in making improvements based on patient feedback.

Her enthusiasm and pride in her work and that of the team was evident and the staff room had a noticeboard which was full of motivational quotes along with the necessary reminders and to do lists.

The ward was bright, clean and welcoming. There were noticeboards with relevant health promotion information for expectant parents as well as information about the different roles within the team. It was good to see a 'You Said We Did' Board as we entered the ward listing changes made following patient feedback. Recent patient feedback was also displayed on a 'Glimpses of Brilliance' Board.



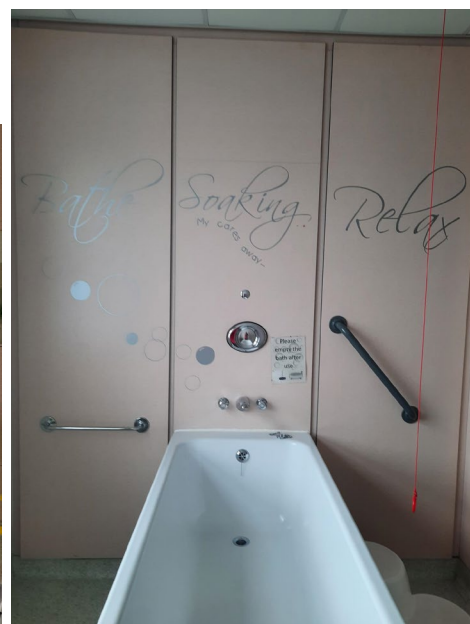
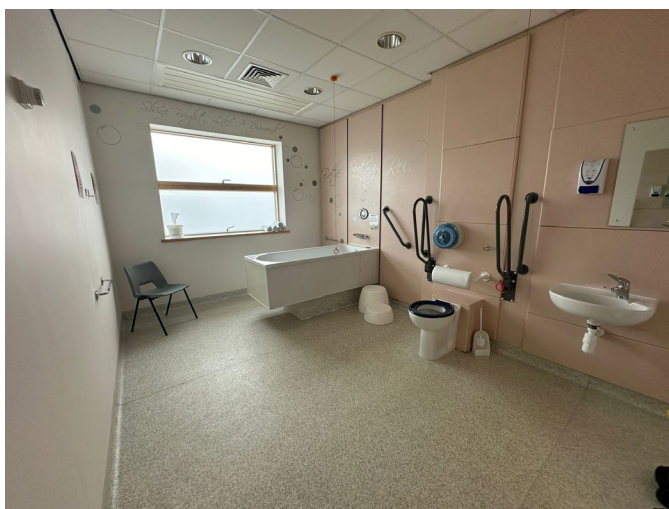
There is a patient rest room available, however this is rather sparse at present and could be made to feel more relaxing and comfortable for patients. ELHT & Me might be a source of funding for new furniture and furnishings.



We noted a beverage trolley with access to hot and cold drinks as well as toast for patients. The ward pantry was stocked with provisions to provide toast/cereal etc. so staff could provide for patients outside mealtimes.

The side rooms were all in use but were all clean and well maintained and women had sufficient privacy and dignity with curtained bays.

The bathrooms in each of the side rooms were clean and well maintained and the main bathroom on the ward was bright, welcoming and had attractive decoration.



Inside the Antenatal Clinic

The antenatal clinic was busy at the time of our visit with appointments running an hour and a half late. Despite being busy, the clinic waiting room had a calm and welcoming atmosphere. A member of staff announced this to the waiting room and apologised for the delays and stated that if patients had any questions regarding their appointment to go to the reception desk.

The reception desk was manned by two members of staff and was a good height for wheelchair users and we noted a hearing loop was available. However, it did not appear to be very private for patients being located in a large waiting room with seating nearby.

The waiting room was bright and clean and the seating was adequate and included a range of seats with arms.

There were two televisions in the waiting room which were quite loud and at times it was difficult to hear the nurses calling patients to their appointments.

There was a good range of information available including health promotion and promotion of Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership and Family Hubs around the waiting room but some of this looked cluttered and some notices were out of date. Many were small print and only readable close up and the large number of posters would make it difficult for a busy team to maintain and too much for patients/ family to take in.



There was a noticeboard to inform patients of waiting times, staff and consultants on duty however most of this had not been filled in that morning.

WHAT STAFF TOLD US



We received feedback from 7 members of staff who work in the antenatal ward and clinic, with their responses outlined below.

Do you feel supported to carry out person centred care?

All 7 members stated yes. Some expanded saying,

“Yes on the whole”

“Well supported and great team who work together”

“Yes well supported by my colleagues to carry out person centred care”

“Yes if not then I feel comfortable speaking to my team leader”

“I do our new manager is always looking at new ways to improve the care we provide.”

Do you feel that there are enough staff available to meet the needs of your patients?

Overriding feedback was that at times they did not feel adequately staffed.

“Sometimes. Depends on activity and needs of women. BR+ helps now {workforce planning software}”

“Mostly depends on staffing at times.”

“Depending on workload. At times very busy”

“Not always”

“Without sickness there is enough staff but unfortunately staff sickness can’t be helped and cover is not always able to be found.”

“Not enough clinic capacity for the amount of patients.”

What is currently working well?

“Clinics run within Antenatal Clinic that run to their own diary work well”

“Our new manager is listening to patient and staff feedback”

“Fetal Medicine Unit, Preterm, rainbow clinics, midscan and Antenatal Day Unit”

“New ward manager who cares and listens to her staff and supports staff”

“Our new manager is very supportive to the team. Always ensures staff have the time to take breaks even at the busiest of times and supports meal breaks.”

“Great manager currently in post who listens and acts on concerns/problems which is a great improvement to the last manager.”

“New manager - proactive and cares, makes sure staff get breaks, supportive with any issues.”

Are there any changes that could be made to improve the experience for families at your service?

“More staff at busier times”

“Continuing support and staffing levels increased”

“Continuity and staffing levels to be increased at times”

“I feel we are a very family friendly unit”

“Better eating facilities. The canteen hours and options are limited. The WHS shop has now closed. There is no onsite shop and the nearest one is the local garage.”

“If appointments are changed the patients should receive a notification on Badger.”

What is your experience of working here?

“Busy and varied but I enjoy that.”

“I love working on the ANW. I love supporting the women who are inpatients on the ward whether antenatal care or for an induction”

“Mostly good unless clinic is running very late”

“Very rewarding work. Good teamwork. “Work family””

“Lovely unit to work on, can have some bad shifts but feel this is normal as all lines of work will at times have off days”

“Great team who always support each other”

“Very good supportive team on ANW/triage. Rewarding work”

Are there any changes that can be made to improve the patient experience?

“Staffing at times could be better. Staff being moved to unfamiliar areas is a negative for patients”

“Phone on triage to be manned by a midwife enabling patients to receive care more efficiently”

“Phone lines on triage to be staffed at all times. Extra person to answer all calls. Phone not answered at busy times always due to staff being busy seeing patients in triage. Patient care can be delayed at times in triage due to staff being busy/tied up on the telephone.”

“The badger app needs to work in a way as to notify patients of any appointment changes - an alert”

“Less IT problems and paperwork. This will enable us to spend more time with the women and complete documentation. Updated patient lounge”

“More doctors and or midwives should be able to see patients that don't need to see a doctor. Waiting times too long in clinic.”

How satisfied are you with your role?

Six members of staff scored their satisfaction in role with 4 scoring ‘very satisfied’ and 2 scoring ‘satisfied’.



WHAT PATIENTS TOLD US



We spoke with 15 patients during our visit to the Birth Centre, with their responses to our survey questions below.

Please describe your experience here so far

“They’ve been good everytime I have come here.”

“Really good. The Badger App is ok and I’ve been getting my appointments through.”

“The midwives are lovely but when I was moved down the labour ward I felt that they were quite rude telling me I’m not in labour. I keep getting different opinions from people when they examine my cervix and it’s frustrating and not good for my mental health.”

“Been fine, no issues”

“Ok so far, I’ve been waiting for appointment today for over an hour though.”

“It’s all been fine so far the midwives have all been really nice, my only point to make would be it’s been a different midwife each time. I would prefer to see the same midwife at each appointment.”

“Good, midwives are all nice and lovely.”

“Been on the ward two days now, my care has been really good. All midwives are really friendly, always happy to help.”

“Generally everything ok. The midwife has introduced herself this morning, the night staff were brilliant. I’ve been seen by 2 doctors this morning, staff have explained the process and I know what to expect.”

“Burnley is much better than Blackburn, the staff there were pushing me to have an induction. I didn’t want this and felt it wasn’t needed. I had complications with an induction during my previous pregnancy. I have been reassured and the staff are lovely. The consultant was really kind and understood me straight away. She said I was right and that she’d taken over my care. All the staff here are very good. Communication here is really good.”

“The service is good so far. My appointments are usually on time, the current waiting time notice is blank so I’m not sure. The staff are very caring and do not rush us.”

“It’s been good, very polite staff, care has been fantastic and I’ve just been induced today.”

“Really good, the staff have been really helpful.”

“This is the first time here for me, I’ve just come over to Burnley from Blackburn. I felt like I was waiting for an opinion for ages.”

“This is my second pregnancy. It’s been ok, waiting times can be too long, up to two hours. But they’re good at rearranging appointments if I need to around other commitments.”

Have you received information in a way that is easy for you to understand?

Twelve of the 15 patients felt that they had received information in a way that was easy for them to understand. Some expanded on this saying,

“I get appointments on the Badger App”

“They always make sure they explain everything as my English isn’t great”

“Everything has been explained well. I can ask any questions I have. I feel I could ask again if I didn’t understand, and they would re-explain if needed.”

“Staff here make sure you are ok and understand what’s happening. They are straight to the point.”

“We get very clear information and can ask any questions”

“Badger notes has been really good.”

However 3 patients felt that they had not received information in an easy way to understand, stating:

“Not really, they didn’t explain to me what anterior and posterior cervix means and haven’t explained what’s going on. My labour keeps starting and stopping.”

“Not really no. I’ve found it difficult in the 7 previous appointments because I couldn’t understand the consultant {‘s accent}. Had to get another appointment with someone else to be able to understand what the consultant had been explaining.”

“50%. I was told that I might be induced on Saturday, it wasn’t explained at all. I’ve got loads of questions but I had to ask for an appointment today to get those explanations. I didn’t get much information on Badger for this appointment and it doesn’t tell you what type of appointment you’re booked in for which can be problematic if you want your partner there at some.”

Have you felt informed about any decisions about your care?

14 of the patients felt that they had been informed and involved in decisions about their care but one patient felt that she had not been. Some expanded on their answer yes, stating:

“They explain everything to me”

“It’s been my choice following their advice. I am being induced due to my high blood pressures. I feel confident in the decision with staff support.”

“Since coming to Burnley yes! I have felt involved/informed of decisions. I am happy to travel to Burnley for appointments as I am more confident in the staff.”

“Definitely. I chose Burnley and have been involved all the way.”

“I’ve been able to choose location based on my personal needs.”

“Ultimately I will be able to make the decision about the birth having been given the opportunity to discuss concerns about induction.”



Do you have a birthing plan in place?

8 of the patients reported that they had a birthing plan in place with 7 stating that they had not, however this was due to it being too early in their pregnancy rather than oversight by staff. Additional feedback provided by patients included, “Yes they wanted me to have a section but I want a natural birth as I have 6 other children who I need to look after and get to school. I’m having a planned induction at 37 weeks unless I go into active labour now.”

“I’m not sure I even want to make one because they never go to plan!”

“I did a birth plan with the midwife and planned to give birth at Blackburn birthing centre but was made aware that flexibility may be needed as safety is the priority. Now I am being induced because of concerns about my blood pressure. As I am very near my due date it was sensible to stay here and be induced.”

“This was done here with the midwife. My care needs are specific and need careful planning due to underlying health issues and previous pregnancies. I’m planning to have a water birth at the birth centre here.”

“

Have you felt that your physical and mental wellbeing have been supported? If not why?

13 of the patients felt that they had been adequately supported by staff, whilst one felt she had received mixed support and one did not feel supported.

Positive feedback included,

“They take the time to listen to you.”

“They always check in with me.”

However, negative feedback included,

“Varies between consultants. They have supported me emotionally and spoken to me but I feel like I shouldn’t be here and I’m a burden even though I am getting regular contractions.”

“Because this is my fifth baby and from previous experiences, I have been confident to challenge the Blackburn consultant and team. They did not understand or listen to me. They were very busy and blasé.”

Do you know who you can contact if you need any additional support or information?

All 15 patients felt that they knew who they could call if needed, with most referring to the list of contacts on the Badger notes app or they would use Google or call the antenatal clinic if unsure.



Is there anything else you would like to share with us today about care you have received throughout your pregnancy journey?

“Everything’s been ok, I’ve seen a few different midwives but I don’t mind.”

“I’ve had to come for additional growth scans because I’ve been measuring consistently with one midwife but I had see another this week and she’s measured me differently. Scan has shown baby’s growth to be fine.”

“Pregnancy has been fine but I feel like I’m a hindrance now.”

“It’s been fine, not had any complaints.”

“The care I’ve received from the early pregnancy unit has been really good. I’ve had a really good experience so far.”

“Everything has been fine so far, one thing I would like to mention is the waiting times to see the consultant. I was here for two hours waiting for my last appointment, today I’ve been waiting 1 hour 40 minutes. I was told they booked me an early slot so I wouldn’t have to wait as long. Also parking is really bad here! I think I’ve parked on the women’s and newborns car park once, I always have to walk far to the building.”

“Everything has been good so far.”

“Burnley is brilliant and my midwife. Parking is terrible and it’s a trek from the main car park. We are always waiting for appointments and there is no indication of wait time. I asked at the desk and she said it is a significant delay today. Because I am so happy with my care here I am prepared to wait.”

“Service is much better here than at Blackburn. Everything is very rushed at Blackburn. We are happy to travel. Parking is ok because I use the drop off zone. There are no faults for Burnley.”

“It’s all been really good. I get the shuttle bus from Blackburn but I’m slightly worried about parking being an issue on the day of the birth.”

“The app says this appointment is at antenatal outpatient department. It doesn’t say Newborn Centre on the app, I’ve ended up walking all round the site.”

“I just want the baby to arrive now! I’m struggling a bit now at the end with the induction.”

“I’ve seen a different midwife every time but they’re all lovely and quite nice to see different people. Staff are lovely and it’s generally a good hospital.”

Relative Feedback

In addition to the feedback received above from patients, we were able to speak to one partner of a woman attending the antenatal ward. His responses are as below.

Please describe your experience here so far

Excellent. The staff have been excellent especially overnight. The staff communicate with both of us and are really kind.

Have you been involved/informed in any decisions that have been made about your partner/relative’s care?

I have felt involved in the decisions made.



What is your view on the facilities?

The facilities are excellent, and the ward is really clean.

How would you describe the support that your family has been provided by this service?

Staff have really supported my partner and me.

Is there anything else you would like to share with us today?

“We are very happy with everything.”

Further Reference

CQC report - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RXR10/inspection-summary#npimaternity>

Date of publication 6/1/2023

Response from Provider

Dear Sarah Re: Enter and View report in respect of Maternity Services at ELHT

We are extremely grateful to the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen team for their visit to Blackburn Birth Centre, Antenatal Ward, Antenatal Clinic, Rossendale Birth Centre and the engagement roadshow across community groups, family hubs and online across our areas in March 2024. Such meaningful feedback offers us as a maternity and neonatal service great opportunities to ensure we hear the voices of women, families and multi-disciplinary team members, further highlighting areas of good practice to inform any improvements as we strive to continuously provide a high-quality service for all our diverse population.

We are delighted to receive positive feedback across the services involved in the visit. We are proud of reports that our areas are welcoming and bright, our staff are friendly, caring, and supportive towards our women and families and staff morale is generally high with a strong sense of teamwork and support for one-another.

In response to feedback included in this report, we would also like to make the following comments:

- We acknowledge feedback raised by both staff and patients regarding the length of appointments and delays to appointment start times that women and families are experiencing. We can assure our service users that this is under consistent review with a recent demand and capacity exercise to facilitate more appointments with particular reference to our diabetic clinics being undertaken. We commit to continue with such exercises to improve this challenging position in view of high numbers of patients requiring both consultant and midwifery-led care. This challenge is nationally recognised within maternity services, ELHT seek to align to any national guidance to inform local reviews to improve antenatal clinic and community midwifery clinic appointment length and wait times. The next direct focus is a demand and capacity exercise on booking appointments and community clinic appointment times.
- We are pleased to receive positive feedback in general regarding the Badgernotes app being of benefit, easy to use, and providing information in a way that is easy to understand. However, navigating the system for diverse groups one example being non-english speaking is an area we wish to focus on and improve, hence ELHT have designed a step-by-step patient information leaflet to be provided in the top required languages for our demographic, detailing the initial important information every women may need about our services from the point of known pregnancy. We continue to review and optimise the system regularly through our Digital Optimisation Group and the comments made within these reports regarding improvements needed will be addressed through this process. We acknowledge that the main improvement evident is with regards to the appointments in terms of detail of appointment type, notification of appointment changes and publication of notes following appointments.
- Maternity staffing is under constant review and managed as per local and national guidance. Any safety concerns relating to multi-disciplinary team staffing would be raised at divisional management boards with escalation to the executive and non-executive maternity safety champions aligned with CNST Safety Action 9 guidance. Such concerns of this nature would be

further discussed at Trust Board level meetings. The review of safe maternity staffing levels is completed using the nationally recognised staffing establishment tool Birthrate+ with the application of professional judgement. ELHT introduced the Birthrate+ acuity app in 2023 which assesses point prevalent staffing levels based on the clinical needs of every woman and infant for most areas of the maternity services. This enables service leaders to determine whether their unit is adequately staffed as safe levels throughout the day and night.

- We continuously review the information we provide to our women and families and look to ensure this is available through a range of sources and formats to meet the preferences and accessibility needs of our women and families. We are therefore pleased to receive feedback that our website is most useful, and that the displayed information on our wards supports understanding of a range of topics such as health promotion and promotion of Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership and Family Hubs. We acknowledge feedback that in some areas there is a lot of written information displayed especially in poster formats. We will work closely with our team and communication colleagues to ensure the posters displayed are relevant, up to date and where possible reduce the number of posters. We are currently working to implement key information being available in digital video formats including being provided in the languages required by our women and families and look forward to hearing the feedback on this new and innovative information channel in future.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank “Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen volunteers and staff for the work undertaken to support the Trust in highlighting positive findings from service user, carers, families, and staff, as well as highlighting areas for improvement.

With kind regards,

Tracy Thompson

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