

Chorley Birth Centre

Thursday 21st March 2024
10:00am- 12:00pm



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, visitors and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details

Address

Chorley and South Ribble Hospital
Chorley Birth Centre
Preston Road
Chorley
PR7 1PP

Point of contact:

Corrie Edgar-Brailsford Chorley Birth Centre Manager
Laura Thorpe Matron for Midwifery Led Services

Date and Time of our Visit:

Thursday 21st March 2024
10:00am- 12:00pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Jodie Carney- Healthwatch Lancashire Manager
Steve Walmsley- Healthwatch Lancashire Engagement Team Leader

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is the independent public voice for health and social care in Lancashire and exists to make services work for the people who use them. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing the people of Lancashire with opportunities to share their views and experiences.

Healthwatch Lancashire has statutory powers to listen, act, challenge and gather feedback to improve local services and promote excellence throughout the NHS and social care services.

To help achieve this Healthwatch have a statutory power to 'Enter and View' health and social care services that are publicly funded. The purpose of an Enter and View is to listen to people who access those services and observe service delivery.

Following the Enter and View visit a report is compiled identifying aspects of good practice within the service visited along with any recommendations for any possible areas of improvement.

As we are an independent organisation, we do not make judgements or express personal opinions but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is sent to the service provider providing an opportunity to respond to any recommendations and comments before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

The report is available to members of the public along with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations. Where appropriate Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to monitor the progress of improvements and celebrate any further successes.

General Information

Badger Notes

Throughout this report there is mention of the Badger Notes app. This app allows people to view their maternity, child or neonatal records in real time.

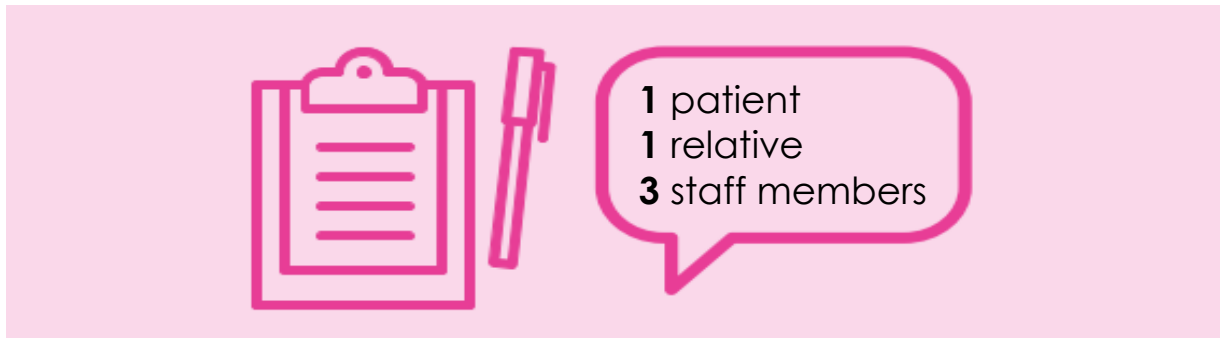
[Badger Notes - Access your healthcare records](#)

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank patients, relatives, and staff, for making us feel welcome and for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.

What did we do?

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View representatives made an announced visit to Chorley Birth Centre on **Thursday 21st March 2024** and received feedback from:



Pre-visit research

Prior to the visit, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives contacted a member of the midwifery team to ask about the facilities, services offered and how women and families are supported at the birth centre.

Alongside this, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives visited the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust (LHTR) website to review information available about Chorley Birth Centre for women and families.

One to one discussion with patients and their relatives

During the visit, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives spoke with one patient and their relative about their experience of the service and the care received from the staff present.

Discussions with members of staff

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives spoke with members of staff about their experiences of working at the birth centre. Questions presented to staff centred around support for patients, celebrating good practice and any improvements staff felt could be made.

Observations

Along with viewing the available facilities, observations were made throughout the visit. This included patient and staff interactions, accessibility measures in place throughout Chorley Birth Centre and the condition and cleanliness of the facilities.

Summary

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives viewed the facilities available for women and families at Chorley Birth Centre, the primary focus of the enter and view visit was the birthing suite, which included three separate birthing rooms along with a triage room. During the visit Healthwatch Lancashire gathered feedback from one patient, one relative and three members of staff.



At the time of the visit, clinic appointments were running at the birth centre, patients and families were observed within the waiting area, and Healthwatch Lancashire representatives witnessed patient and staff interactions during this time. Members of staff, throughout the visit, were observed to be attentive to patients and reactive to

situations that arose.

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives reported the birth centre to be clean, free of clutter and secure for families and babies. Birthing rooms were seen to have space for families to stay together following the birth, along with a birthing pool and ensuite bathroom. The private garden area at the end of the birthing suite corridor, allowed for women and families to relax and use the space as they wish during their stay.

Feedback received from one patient and their relative was positive, including comments about the quality of care received from staff and the condition of the facilities.

Staff who provided feedback, highlighted concerns that staff members from other sites are reluctant to work from the centre. Overall, staff stated that they enjoyed working at Chorley Birth Centre, especially when they have time to connect with patients.

Service Overview

Chorley Birth Centre is a midwifery led facility within the Lancashire Teaching Hospital Trust. The purpose of the birth centre is to provide care to women during their pregnancy, birth, and postnatal care. Staff at the birth centre include a team of midwives and maternity support workers.

Location and public access



Chorley and South Ribble Hospital is situated on Preston Road, Chorley and is on a main bus route with a bus stop located centrally within the hospital grounds for patients to use if required. Located within the grounds of Chorley and South Ribble Hospital, Chorley Birth Centre is its own freestanding building.

Upon arrival of the hospital grounds, signs can be seen at the entrance of the main visitor car park. These signs indicate where departments on the site are located, including Chorley Birth Centre.

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives parked in the main visitor car park and followed the signs to the birth centre on foot. The signs take visitors into a residential area, Healthwatch Lancashire representatives were conscious that this may cause confusion, as it wasn't clear from entering the residential area that the Birth Centre is situated at the end of this area.

External Environment

Located at the front of Chorley Birth Centre, is a car park allocated for the use of people attending the birth centre only, and there is a sign clearly stating this upon entering. The car park included dedicated parking bays with signs displaying **“Maternity Birth Partners Only”**. This allows for people using the facilities to park directly outside the birth centre and provides reassurance that they have a space when they need to attend.



The sign indicating the main entrance to the building was visible from the car park and could be seen clearly when approaching from the residential area.

Services available



Within the birth centre there are two main areas situated on one ground floor level.

There are two midwife led clinics that run every weekday and 1 midwife led clinic each day at weekends to see antenatal and postnatal women and babies. There is a maternity support worker clinic each day which offers newborn blood spot screening, weighing and feeding advice.

The second area is the birthing suite corridor, where three separate birthing rooms are located, along with a triage room, kitchen, and private garden space for families to use.

People have the option to choose Chorley Birth Centre as their preferred place of birth following risk assessments and individualised care planning. Parents can also choose to use the Birth Centre if they live outside of the area if they wish.

It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that women who give birth at Chorley Birth Centre, have more than likely attended their antenatal appointments here.

“We know all of the women usually that come here as we have been here at every step of their journey”.

In the month of March, there had been **11** births at the centre at the time of our visit, the matron present explained that the increased induction of labour rate nationally, has seen a national decline in births within birth centres.

As Chorley Birth Centre is a midwifery led centre, if any complications during birth occur whilst at the centre, patients may be transferred via an ambulance to Royal Preston Hospital. Reasons why people may need transferring include: requiring an epidural, concerns about the baby or the baby requires additional observations. Patients can also receive postnatal care at Chorley Birth Centre.



It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives, that every morning a midwife from the centre attends a virtual ‘staffing huddle’ with the team at Royal Preston Hospital to share information about what is happening at each site and discuss staffing levels.

Enter and View observations

General Access



The main entrance was a pull door and didn't have any automatic access into the building, this may cause difficulty for people accessing the building, especially if heavily pregnant, using a pram or wheelchair. (Recommendation 1)

Once through the main door, there is a holding area with a telecom system to alert the reception of your arrival. When through the holding area, there is a reception desk with a member of staff to greet visitors, and it was clear where people needed to report to initially.

Waiting Area

In front of the reception desk and next to the main entrance door, is a small waiting area with three chairs. Due to the space in this area, there is little room for any further chairs, and limited space for wheelchairs and prams.

Above two of the chairs in this area is a positive affirmation quote on display, ***“Laugh, dance, sing, glow, let the oxytocin flow”***.

At the time of the visit, people within the waiting area were attending clinics appointments.

The member of staff at reception, was observed greeting visitors entering the birth centre and reviewing the signs and symptoms of measles with each person, as there had been an increase rise in measles cases at the time of the visit. Throughout the enter and view, this member of staff could be heard answering calls in a timely manner, with courtesy and providing additional signposting information where required.



“I will update your badger notes and it will be on in the next ten minutes”.

It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the reception was staffed during the day and managed the phonelines for maternity enquires. The out of hours phoneline is manned by the midwife and a maternity support worker in the Birth Centre.

The limited space in the waiting area meant that visitors could hear what was being discussed at reception, and there were occasions during the visit where some confidential information could be heard. (Recommendation 3)

There is a toilet available for people attending the centre, situated opposite the reception, this is clearly signposted and situated in a convenient place for people in the waiting area. The toilet is adapted with handrails and space for a wheelchair/mobility aid, however there was no baby changing facility in the toilet.

Staff members present, were clearly identified by name badges and wore different coloured tunics, along with a display in reception explaining the different roles and which members of staff were on duty that day.

Internal Environment

Following past the reception desk are the Birthing Suites. Rooms are situated behind two double doors which are clearly signposted and can be seen as soon as you enter through the main building door.

Three separate birthing rooms, a triage room, an emergency bay, kitchen area and private garden can be found along one single corridor with key-fob access only to ensure security and privacy.

The birthing suites corridor is decorated with canvas' with images of babies.

The triage room is used as an initial place where women attend to be assessed before entering their own birthing room. Inside the triage room, is medical monitoring equipment and a bed. To maintain a relaxing atmosphere, there is soft lighting throughout this room to try and make it as comfortable as possible. Fairy lights are above the bed with another positive affirmation quote, "**Where the mind leads, the body follows**".



The three birthing rooms are named after local parks in the area; **Worden**, **Cuerden** and **Astley**, the midwife on duty explained that this was because the people giving birth in those rooms would likely be visiting these parks in the future with their babies and it gave a more personal feel to the rooms.

At the time of the visit, there had been two babies born overnight which meant that two of the birthing rooms were occupied. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives viewed the facilities in the 'Cuerden' room, although it was explained that the facilities and layout is the same in all three rooms.



Inside 'Cuerden' room is a stand-alone birthing pool in the centre of the room, it was explained by the matron that most people using the birth suites will use the pool as part of their birthing journey.

The room is spacious with active birthing equipment such as a birthing ball, a sling and floor mats available. Inside one of the cupboards was a pull-down double bed, which allows partners/family members to stay where applicable. The matron explained,

"We really try to create a home-from-home feel for people".

The layout of the birthing rooms and equipment storage match those within

Preston Birth Centre as staff can work between the two sites and means that equipment needed can be easily located.

Lighting within the room can be adjusted to the patient's personal preference, along with music and aromatherapy where needed to create a relaxing atmosphere. Within each room is an ensuite with toilet and shower facilities which were clean and well maintained.

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives asked one of the members of staff how long a patient may stay at the centre following birth, it was explained,

"There is a 24 hours maximum stay here and mums are aware of that"

A kitchen is available within the birthing suites corridor, for people in the birthing rooms to use as they wish, this is a shared space with staff members. Hand sanitising stations could be seen throughout the building and within each room.

At the end of the corridor is a private garden area, which can be accessed for people within the birthing rooms who may need fresh air. This area was tidy along with seating areas. During the visit, one of the women who had given birth that evening wanted to go outside. They were encouraged by a member of staff to use the private garden space and supported to go outside.

Throughout the birthing suites corridor, the space was free of clutter, well maintained and clean.



Patient Interactions

During the visit, two members of staff were on duty for the birth suites: a midwife, and a maternity support worker. It was explained that at any point day or night, the minimum staffing level for the birth suites was two members of staff. Within the birthing suites area, the midwife on duty appeared unhurried with a calm attitude and was observed knocking on the room doors before entering.

Three midwives and a student midwife were covering the clinics that day, a matron was also available on site.

For people attending the clinics, when it was their time for the appointment, the appointed midwife came into the waiting area to personally greet them.

One person was observed attending the birth centre, they explained to the member of staff on reception, that they had been advised to attend one of the clinics that day. As soon as they had checked in, they were then asked to provide a urine sample using the toilet next to the reception. They were provided with an open container for the sample and had no option other than to sit in the seated waiting area with their sample for approximately ten minutes until they were collected for their appointment. (Recommendation 4)

When the midwife came to collect that person for their appointment, there was some confusion as the midwife couldn't find their appointment on the system, however this was observed to be dealt with swiftly and in a calm manner, and the midwife was accommodating to the patient's needs.



When babies are born at the birth centre, they are provided with a tag to wear, to keep them safe and secure. If this tag is removed or a baby is removed from the birth centre before being discharged, an alarm will sound throughout the building.

This alarm sounded during the enter and view visit, staff were seen to react swiftly, and each member of staff present stood next to an entrance/exit while the alarm was investigated. It was quickly resolved, as the tag had been removed by a midwife who was

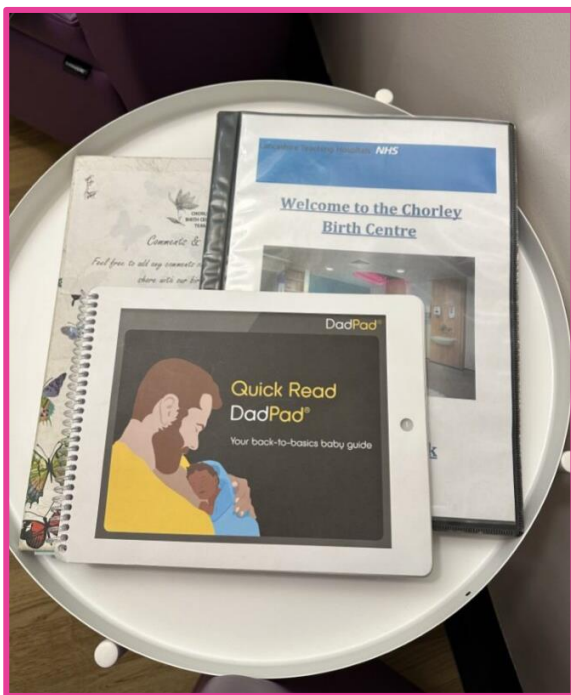
conducting a hip movement check of the baby. It was pleasing to witness the speed in which all the staff reacted to the alarm.

Between the staff themselves, there was a positive attitude in their interactions with each other and supported one another in ensuring that people within the birth centre were seen in a timely manner.

Patient Involvement and information

Chorley birth centre has a Facebook page titled “Chorley Birth Centre Midwives”; this is a public page with information about the centre along with a video of the centre facilities.

Between the chairs in the waiting area is a small side table, which displayed the following:



- **Comments & Feedback book**- This is a book filled with handwritten comments from people who have used the service, and those who have given birth at the centre. Comments included birthing stories, names of babies born there and positive feedback about the care that they had received.
- **Information pack**- This is a file which includes information about the birth centre, procedures around the baby tags and PALS (Patients Advice and Liaison Service) information.
- **Dadpad book**- this is a guide with illustrations included about ‘baby basics’ aimed at expectant fathers, such as holding a baby, changing, sleeping and crying.

Information about how people can provide feedback or raise any concerns to the PALS team could only be seen by Healthwatch Lancashire representatives within the information pack in the waiting area. Unless a person knew to look in here, no other information about this is on display within the centre. (Recommendation 5). Throughout the birth centre, colourful and inviting information displays could be seen on the walls. At the time of the enter and view visit, it was “**Safer Sleep week**” and to promote this, was information about safe sleeping for the baby and an example using a doll of how a baby should sleep.



Additional wall displays included information about the team at the birth centre, how many babies had been born in February and how to access antenatal classes on the badger notes app.

Each hospital trust has a Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP), which is an independent working group, that amplifies the voices of women and families who have accessed maternity and/or neonatal services via the trust. This group helps to celebrate best practice and shape any improvements needed. Information about the Preston, Chorley and South Ribble MNVP was displayed in the toilet, however if people didn't access the toilet, they wouldn't see any information about their local MNVP. (Recommendation 5).

A member of staff explained that they have access to an interpreting service if needed for people who speak another language. When asked about people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and whether an interpreter would be provided, this member of staff commented that they hadn't encountered this. (Please see provider response).

“I am sure that someone would be made available for them [BSL interpreter]. We have received an email recently to all staff about BSL awareness training available”.

Patient & Relative feedback

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives spoke with one person who had given birth earlier that evening at the birth centre. Their experience is outlined below.

Everything so far has been really good and the staff have all been amazing. I arrived here at about 9pm last night and it was explained to me that I would be examined in triage first and that transferred into the birth suite. I knew what was happening throughout giving birth, this was a completely different experience my first child, during their birth I was transferred over to Preston.

During my first child's birth, I had a birth plan in place but ended up going completely off plan. I decided not to have a birthing plan in place for this one, we just decided 'what will be will be', we used the birthing pool this time.

I received all the information that I needed and had the same midwife all the way through my pregnancy who I could contact if I had any questions, which is a good thing as my friends who live out of area have had a completely different experience to me.

The whole time that I have been here I have felt safe and comfortable, the staff cannot do enough for you. The environment to give birth has been great.

Healthwatch Representatives spoke with one relative of a person who had given birth earlier that evening. Their feedback is outlined below.

I cannot fault it here; we have been kept informed about everything that has been going on throughout. Even as my partner has been giving birth, I have been offered support at appropriate times. Luckily there hasn't been any decisions that I have had to make about my partners care, but I knew what was happening at every stage. Couldn't fault the support we have received at all really.

The facilities have been brilliant, everything is really clean. We both stayed here over night and everything was really comfortable, being able to take a breath and chill out here after she has given birth is completely different from being on a ward, and not what we experienced with our first child, it just feels so much calmer.

The whole team have been great and really friendly. This birth centre has been a great model to follow, it has felt more like a private medical practice and has been absolutely amazing.

Staff feedback

Three members of staff at Chorley Birth Centre provided feedback to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives. Below are the questions asked and their responses.



Do you feel supported to carry out person centred care?

All three members of staff said that they felt supported to carry out person centred care.

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

It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that at times members of staff at Royal Preston Hospital are required to work at Chorley Birth Centre to support with staffing levels.

“During the day it is fine. At night we will have less staff which I feel is not safe”

One member of staff felt that the Royal Preston hospital site is better supported due to higher numbers of staff that work there. (Please see provider response).

What is currently working well?

Responses from staff members explained that patient care and experience was currently working well. Comments from the feedback included the welcome that patients receive when they arrive at the centre was a positive and when it wasn't too busy, there was time for staff to have conversations with patients and get to know them.

“Having someone here to greet people helps and it is important that there is someone to show parents where to go.”

What is your experience of working here?

All three members of staff complimented the relationships between staff while they have been working at the birth centre.

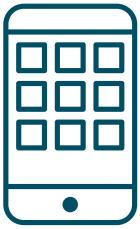


“Chorley is a very nice place to work, I love my managers and we are very forward thinking”

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

One member of staff highlighted a concern that there are occasions where time spent with individual patients is limited due to staffing levels at the centre. They commented that at times there is reluctance from members of staff who are required to move between the Preston and Chorley site.

“Midwives don’t like coming here because they feel isolated. I feel that this is becoming a norm and people are reluctant to move between settings.”



It was discussed that at Chorley Birth Centre used to facilitate breast feeding workshops, however staffing levels meant that there was limited time to offer breastfeeding support to families, and that more work was required regarding education for parents. (Recommendation 8).

The use of the Badger Notes app was discussed with another member of staff. They mentioned that at times the use of the app felt impersonal with patients and that some of the referrals on the app don’t always work.

“It takes away from the face-to-face interactions and there is no substitute for that.”

One staff member commented that they have, at times, had to have confidential conversations with patients over the phone in reception, as the phone isn’t transportable from the reception desk.

“.....sometimes have to have sensitive discussions with people like social workers or the police which is not good when other people can hear details”

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based on observations of the environment and feedback gathered from patients and staff.

1. Review the accessibility for patients and visitors with the main entrance door, consider if automatic access is required.
2. Consider the use of a screen/divider to support with confidential calls on the reception desk.
3. Provide patients a closed container for urine samples.
4. Display information about the PALS team and way families can provide feedback about their experience, such as through the MNVP, in a prominent space within the waiting area.
5. Celebrate good practice and compliments received from patients with staff members and share with partner hospital sites, by sharing and discussing this report in team meetings.
6. Consult with staff members about how they feel about moving between the Royal Preston Hospital and Chorley Birth Centre sites. Evaluate feedback and explore recommendations from staff.
7. Explore implementing more face-to-face workshops at Chorley Birth Centre for women and families to attend.

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Review the accessibility for patients and visitors with the main entrance door, consider if automatic access is required.	Action reviewed, however, the door access has a limited space within the holding area and the access area outside. During clinic times there is often busy periods of people arriving and leaving when an automatic access may be hindered by people coming and going simultaneously.	-	Women who attend in labour are accompanied by a birth partner. There have been no access issues raised from service users or families. At this time this would not be an action that the service can take forward.
Consider the use of a screen/divider to support with confidential calls on the reception desk.	Review of telephone equipment to consider screen/divider or cordless telephone to enable confidentiality at all times.	31/05/2024	
Provide patients a closed container for urine samples.	To provide a closed urine sample container to women when a specimen is required for clinic.	Completed	Unfortunately, there had been a delayed delivery of urine pots on the day of the visit. It is usual practice for urine samples to be provided in closed pots.
Display information about the PALS team and way families can provide feedback about	Posters to be moved to waiting areas	31/05/2024	

<p>their experience, such as through the MNVP, in a prominent space within the waiting area.</p>			
<p>Celebrate good practice and compliments received from patients with staff members and share with partner hospital sites, by sharing and discussing this report in team meetings.</p>	<p>Friends and family feedback to be added as an agenda item to team meetings for shared learning and discussion.</p>	<p>30/06/2024</p>	
<p>Consult with staff members about how they feel about moving between the Royal Preston Hospital and Chorley Birth Centre sites. Evaluate feedback and explore recommendations from staff.</p>	<p>Recent listening events have taken place with independent facilitators to ensure that staff voices are heard and acted upon.</p> <p>Staff are provided with regular opportunities to provide feedback via meetings with their managers as part of the team, on a one-to-one basis, and during annual appraisal.</p> <p>There is a continuous monitoring of staffing models to ensure that safe staffing levels are maintained throughout the maternity services and recommendations for continuity of carer are implemented to enable the associated improved health</p>		<p>Staff are supported to orientate through the maternity service to become confident and competent to provide maternity care to all women in their chosen place of birth at the point of need. They may need to care for a woman on the delivery suite, birth centre or home environments.</p> <p>These are a limited number of core roles in each area within maternity to provide expertise and advice and support staff within those areas. There are advertised so that each midwife has an equal opportunity to apply for these roles.</p>

	<p>outcomes for women and babies.</p> <p>In current national midwifery staffing crisis midwifery vacancies are monitored and advertised to minimise staffing gaps. Bank and agency are utilised to fill roster gaps where possible.</p>		
<p>Explore implementing more face-to-face workshops at Chorley Birth Centre for women and families to attend.</p>	<p>There is a service review meeting planned for the midwifery led services on 3rd June to identify plans for the reintroduction of face-to-face antenatal education.</p>	<p>3/6/2024</p>	<p>After the meeting there will be an associated action plan which will be monitored at a monthly midwifery led meeting.</p>

Any other comments

“Thank you for visiting the Chorley birth centre, it was a valued experience for the staff and managers. Your independent review and feedback of our service is appreciated and will be used to make further improvements based on recommendations made.”

In addition to some points highlighted within the report Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust have provided some clarifying points to the following sections.

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The individual member of staff hadn't encountered a person who would require BSL. The Trust provides access to online and face to face BSL interpreters. These services can be booked via the intranet. This is being shared at the team meeting to increase midwifery staff awareness.

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At night there is minimum staffing level of one midwife and one maternity support worker at Chorley birth centre. One to one midwifery led care in labour is a national safety standard and when the birth is anticipated, or should a second woman arrive in labour, a second midwife would be deployed from an on call rota or the birth centre at Preston. This is the same standard of midwifery staffing as for homebirth.



healthwatch
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