



LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND

Maternity Voices

Working in partnership to improve maternity & neonatal services

NEONATAL 15 STEPS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024

Contents

Introduction.....	2
-------------------	---

What is the 15 Steps for Maternity?

What did the NVP do to undertake the 15 Steps?.....	3
---	---

Who was present?

How did we conduct the 15 Steps?

Leicester Royal Infirmary Neonatal Unit.....	4
--	---

Findings and Recommendations

Leicester General Hospital Neonatal Unit.....	9
---	---

Findings and Recommendations

Next Steps.....	13
-----------------	----

Thank you.....	14
----------------	----

Special Thanks

How to get in touch

Introduction

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (LLR MNVP) is a team of women/families, commissioners, healthcare professionals & community organisations working together to review and contribute to the development of local maternity and neonatal care.

The Neonatal Voices Partnership (NVP) sits under the MNVP and is part of, but also distinct from it.

The purpose of the NVP is to contribute to the development and provision of local neonatal services by ensuring every neonatal parent has a chance to have their voice heard about the service they receive.

What is the 15 Steps for Maternity?

“I can tell what kind of care my daughter is going to get within 15 steps of walking on to a ward”, said a mum whose daughter was regularly admitted to hospital due to an ongoing health condition.

The 15 Steps toolkit was developed and published by NHS England. The idea of the 15 Steps Challenge is to allow participants to explore healthcare services through the eyes of those who use them (service users).

Using an observational approach, participants are encouraged to assess areas based on four key themes. These are;

- Welcoming and Informative
- Safe and Clean
- Friendly and Personal
- Organised and Calm

What did the NVP do to undertake the Neonatal 15 Steps?

Together with UHL Neonatal Unit Managers, NVP agreed a time and date to conduct the 15 Steps at the Leicester Royal Infirmary Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) and Leicester General Hospital Special Care Baby Unit (SBCU).

Who was present?

Through various channels, the NVP recruited parents/parent representatives to participate on the Neonatal 15 Steps Challenge. Participants included parents who had previously had a baby stay on a Neonatal Unit and parents who have had a baby but not had a baby stay on the unit. This decision was made to ensure different perspectives were heard.

1 NICU & 2 SBCU's	2 UHL Staff Members	NVP Lead
9 Participants	13 Parents Signed up	6 Parents Participated

How did we conduct the Neonatal 15 Steps?

The NVP Team held a meeting with participants online to explain what the Neonatal 15 Steps are and what participants should look out for using the NHS 15 Steps Observation Guide for Neonatal units. Some points we discussed were the need to be mindful of parents, babies and staff. In particular, speaking quietly, maintaining confidentiality and considering health and safety throughout.

When conducting the 15 Steps we spent around 20-30 minutes in each area. As we walked around some of the feedback and suggestions from participants were immediately fed back to the neonatal unit managers.

Findings and Recommendations

Leicester Royal Infirmary Neonatal 15 Steps



Welcoming and Informative

- Upon arrival at the LRI Neonatal Unit, we found the space to be welcoming, although it was felt a little more warmth would not go amiss to create a more uplifting environment, particularly when it can be emotionally difficult for parents impacted by their baby having to stay on the Neonatal Unit.
- Recently, the MNVP have provided input into the redecoration of the Neonatal Units. Suggestions on possible themes were shared and the welcome addition of the Woodland theme throughout the units will hopefully add the touch of warmth that is so very needed.
- On arrival, there is a coat stand for use for anyone entering the Neonatal Unit as we were informed coats need to be removed before entering clinical areas. There was plenty of space to sit as well as information on the walls in the reception waiting area. It was suggested some parent leaflets to take away would be useful as not everyone would be sat there for long enough to read everything displayed and may need time to digest the information with all that is going on.

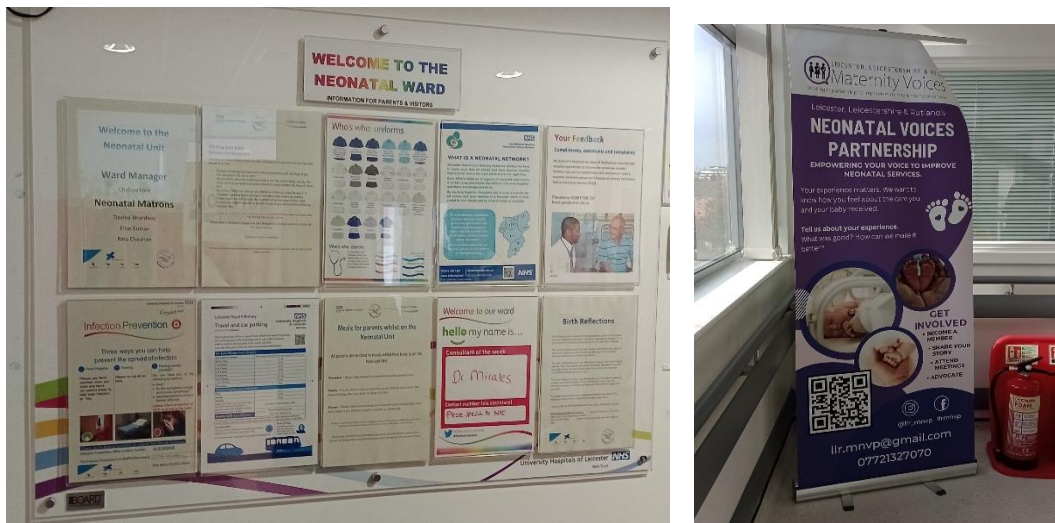
Working in partnership to improve maternity & neonatal services

- Whilst there was information displayed throughout the units, there did not seem to be information in a variety of languages or formats, nor signposting for families to find information accessible to their needs. This is extremely important to ensure families are provided all the information they need to support themselves and their baby.
- It was positive to see the Neonatal Voices Partnership banner displayed, however we have since heard the banner has been removed due to the banner being damaged.
- We were informed that the staff board with details of who is on the unit and who is looking after baby is regularly updated. This is in the corridor where parents will pass by when coming in. We reflected on parents' experiences of being informed their baby has been moved. The usual practice is to call parents to let them know so they are not alarmed by finding their baby is not where they last left them. It was discussed, with Neonatal notes going digital, it would also be useful to have a way to flag this up on the digital notes to make sure parents do not come in unaware. Regular updates on Badgernotes would reassure parents they have the latest information on their baby's care.
- It was encouraging to see information on different services like Birth Reflections and Adapt, the local charity supporting Neonatal Parents around the unit.
- The Family Room was felt to be a good area to utilise sharing information but with careful consideration needed to ensure the space is not made to be overwhelming. It was suggested more leaflets would be good as well as updating the space. A Neonatal parent mentioned the counterspace being limited for the kitchen area and how this can make it difficult if parents are using the kitchen at the same time.
- We were not able to look into the Parent Stay Rooms as they were in use but it was shared how important it is to have this facility for parents to make use of before they are discharged. Rooming in can ensure parents feel more confident, have a chance to ask any further questions and provide vital support for them before they leave the unit. It was agreed that it was a shame more facilities were not available for parents to minimise separation. Also, it was said that the beds are extremely uncomfortable and it would be good if this could be looked into.

Recommendations

1. Redecoration of Neonatal Units to commence as soon as possible.
2. Parent Information Leaflets to be available in reception and parent room.
3. Information throughout the unit to be accessible to the needs of the community by considering different languages and formatting.

4. Please get NVP Banner fixed.
5. Incorporate use of colour in the Parents Lounge, add useful leaflets and provide additional kitchen countertop space for family use.
6. Consider new beds for the Parent Stay Rooms with the view of ensuring optimal comfort for parents.



Safe and Clean

- Overall, it was agreed the cleanliness of the unit was good.
- Two occasions were pointed out as possible safety hazards. A bin propping up the door in between the two clinical areas in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was not ideal and it was felt this space should be kept clear for staff to easily access the room in case of emergencies. Also, the emergency bags left on the floor in the NICU were observed and pointed out. Whilst it was certainly appreciated that these need to be on hand and easy to get if needed, it was felt that as they were on the floor, it could be a tripping hazard.

Recommendations

1. Replace bin holding open door of clinical area with a doorstep.
2. Ensure the emergency bags are in an easily visible and safe space.

Friendly and Personal

- Throughout the visit staff seemed to be extremely busy. We did not speak to many staff, other than the Ward Manager conducting the 15 Steps alongside us. A few staff members smiled at us whilst carrying on with what they were doing. Being seen as approachable to families is extremely important, particularly when families need to feel able to ask any questions they may have. Whilst certainly appreciating how much staff have on their plates around physical care of baby, open communication is key. Communication is an area we are aware the Neonatal Team are working on and we hope to continue to see this work reflected in feedback we receive from families.
- There is a room named the 'Interview Room' which is used as a space to have private, and sometimes difficult, conversations with parents about their baby. We all agreed this name needed to change as soon as possible as it could potentially be perceived as quite a negative space for parents. The room also needs updating with more comfortable seating and a warmer atmosphere.
- The Bereavement Room was situated away from the clinical area and it was clear thought had been put into the space.
- The Family Room needed updating to cater for older children. Facilities for older children needed further consideration. It was felt that, whilst there was entertainment available for younger children, there was nothing for older children to keep them occupied. Possible options for entertainment could be VR sets or a SMART TV, iPads/laptops with headsets and also, books for different age ranges .

Recommendations

1. Consider staff approachability around parents.
2. Change the 'Interview room' name and revamp the space to a more friendly, warm environment, with consideration of parent comfort.
3. Ensure there is a water cooler available for parent use.
4. Purchase entertainment catered to older children who may be accompanying their parents to the Neonatal Unit.
5. Purchase books for the various ages.

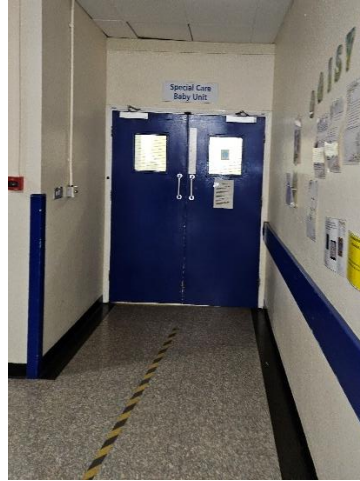
Organised and Calm

- The Breastfeeding room was under renovation but we were able to see the space due to be made available to parents. Extensive discussion was had on the importance of breastfeeding, empowering families, providing support and a comfortable space with a calm atmosphere, and ensuring there is water, snacks and breast pumps available.
- It was felt that the Special Care Unit rooms need more décor to make it look more homely as it looked too clinical, however it was agreed there was a more relaxed feel to the Special Care Rooms than the Neonatal Intensive Care Rooms. It was mentioned the 'Going home balloon décor' and the bell to ring when graduating from the Neonatal Unit are a nice touch. The importance of celebrating this was discussed at length and it was clear Neonatal Parents value this gesture.
- A parent mentioned feeling like the Neonatal Unit was cluttered and needed some organising.

Recommendations

1. Water, snacks, breast pumps and information should be available to support breastfeeding.
2. Remove any extra supplies into storage until needed to reduce clutter, if not done so already.

Leicester General Hospital Neonatal 15 Steps



Welcoming and Informative

- Signs to the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) could be clearer. The sign leading towards the SCBU says Neonatal Intensive Care Unit which made it confusing for service users. Service users felt that, if you had never had experience of Neonatal Care before, you may find this confusing as 'Special Care' and 'Neonatal Intensive Care' can appear to be different.
- On entering the unit, it was discussed that a welcome pack with useful info of the unit should be given to parents, with the offer of a tour when they feel up to it. We were informed there is a parent information pack but it was not to hand. It was agreed this should always be easily accessible to share with parents. It was also mentioned that it is general practice for all parents to have a tour and be provided with the information pack but we know from some parents' experiences this is not always executed.
- It was lovely to be able to conduct our 15 Steps on World Prematurity Day and the decorations to celebrate it were a welcome sight.
- A poster on skin to skin was welcome to see but it was noted that the images were all women. This felt like a missed opportunity to showcase the importance of skin to skin for fathers also.

- We spoke of the fact that if women are on the postnatal ward for their own care, there is opportunity for them to be wheeled from the ward to the SCBU to see their baby. Parents felt this information is not openly available to all and should be made clear.
- The LLR NVP Banner was displayed on arrival into the SCBU.

Recommendations

1. Accuracy of signs to ensure no confusion of where parents need to go..
2. Keep Parent Information Packs available at all times.
3. Promote skin to skin for fathers also.
4. Transparency needed of women being able to be taken to see their baby on SCBU if they are staying on the postnatal ward.



Safe and Clean

- The Parent Stay shower room did not have access to a stool, which was felt to be important for accessibility needs.
- The Parent Stay toilet did not seem accessible for wheelchair users and with the lack of space, it would be difficult to manoeuvre.

Recommendations

1. Purchase stool to be used in the shower when needed.
2. Consider how wheelchair users will be able to access the toilet.

Friendly and Personal

- The Family Room needed updating to cater for older children. Facilities for older children needed further consideration. It was felt that, whilst there was entertainment available for younger children, there was nothing for older children to keep occupied. Possible options for entertainment could be VR sets or a SMART TV, iPads/laptops with headsets and also, books for different age ranges.
- The Parent Stay Rooms need updating and redecoration, with parent comfort as key. Beds were mentioned to be particularly uncomfortable and squeaky. There is no socket near the bed and no bedside table to put nighttime necessities like water, breast pump etc. A mum reflected on her experience of having a c section, and having extreme pelvic girdle pain and then to attempt to sleep on one of those beds, it was said to not be a pleasant experience. It was felt it would be helpful to make parents feel welcome and comfortable by having the feeling of 'a home away from home'. The space felt quite cramped but it was acknowledged that this is an estates issue and could not be changed.
- Throughout the visit, all staff were friendly and seemed calm which is extremely important for families with a baby on the unit.
- The graduation bell and board of Neonatal graduates was seen as a heart-warming touch celebrating the transition home and providing hope for those on the unit.

Recommendations

1. Purchase entertainment catered to older children who may be accompanying their parents to the Neonatal Unit.
2. Purchase books for various ages.
3. New beds needed for the Parents rooms.
4. Add in a bedside table, soft furnishings, lamp, pumping facilities, TV and a socket near to the bed.



Organised and Calm

- The SCBU had a calm atmosphere throughout, which felt in contrast to when conducting the 15 Steps at the Leicester Royal Infirmary Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). However, it was understood the level of care needed is different at both units and therefore the impact of the clinical needs of the babies would affect the activity seen on the unit.
- The Breastfeeding Room was agreed as needing a total revamp. The ward manager mentioned that there are plans to do this. The space does not adequately meet the needs of women trying to establish breastfeeding. It was felt to be a dull, cramped space. The need to create a calm space, with appropriate information on feeding, was discussed at length. The idea of being able to wheel baby into the room when pumping was recommended by a parent. Where possible, being able to see baby when expressing can be really helpful.

Recommendations

1. Redecorate and brighten up the Breastfeeding room. To be able to breastfeed/express, the addition of a good quality armchair, snacks, water/drinks to hand, breast pumps available and having appropriate support information for parents is essential. It is important to not overwhelm by having too much information or clutter in this space.

Next Steps

The NVP will present this report to the UHL Neonatal team and look to create an action plan, alongside the Neonatal Team, to monitor the progress of recommendations made within this report.

It has been positive to see, since conducting the 15 Steps in October, some of the suggestions provided directly to the Neonatal Ward Managers have been actioned.

We look forward to receiving an update from UHL Neonatal Staff on the rest of the improvements made based on our findings and suggestions.

We also acknowledge the need to continue the Neonatal 15 Steps Challenge to document any improvements made and ensure parent voices are at the heart of local neonatal services.

Special Thanks

We would like to thank everyone that supported the Neonatal 15 Steps and worked to make it possible, with special thanks to the ward managers who conducted the 15 Steps alongside the NVP.

And a massive thank you to the parent representatives who joined us, participated and shared their input. Your contributions to improving local neonatal services are truly invaluable.

How to get in touch

To find out more about what we do or to get involved in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership please get in touch.

Email: llr.mnvp@gmail.com

Call: 07721327070/07721379376

Please follow us on social media;

Facebook - Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland MNVP

Instagram - @llr.mnvp

Become a Member of the LLR MNVP by scanning the QR Code Below

