

New film aims to improve capital's maternity care

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A film has been created to try and improve standards of maternity care in London.

London's Maternity Strategic Clinical Network has launched a project to give midwives and other maternity healthcare professionals greater insight into the effect of their actions on women.

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Bernie Nipper

It noted maternity outcomes were worse in the capital than in some other parts of the country and that many women reported poor experience of care, particularly around communication and consistency of caring attitudes.

The emphasis of the project has been to ensure that people using maternity services are treated with dignity, compassion and respect at all times.

Building on a series of workshops, a short three-minute film has been created depicting real-life examples of how the actions of NHS staff members have affected women in their care.

It explores every stage of pregnancy, encourages maternity professionals to stand in the shoes of women and their families to promote understanding, compassion and improve professional practice.

Kath Evans, head of patient experience for maternity, newborn, children and young people at NHS England, said: “What we really want to do with this film is to bring on that light bulb moment.”

She said she wanted it to help midwives and doctors remember that giving birth was a “momentous occasion” and to treat everyone as an individual, consider their needs carefully and spend time talking to them with patience and respect.

“Even the most helpful and caring people have off days but with this film we are hoping to give staff another reason to reconnect with the people they come into contact with every day,” she said.

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Bernie Nipper, supervisor of midwives at Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Trust, added: “When you're working in a busy maternity ward, it can be very easy to forget that the women and families in your care are experiencing one of the most special, but potentially nerve-wracking, moments in their lives so far.

“Watching this film has helped me to think more carefully about how my words and actions affect the people around me and I would strongly encourage my colleagues across the country to watch it,” she said.

The London Maternity Strategic Clinical Network was established in April 2013 to provide expert clinical advice to commissioners and bring about large-scale improvements in healthcare for pregnant women and their babies.