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From Professor Donald Peebles and Donna Ockenden

Co-Clinical Directors for London Maternity SCN

Dear colleagues, friends and other interested parties,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the Maternity Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) priorities and outputs over the last year.

It's been an exciting year for the SCN, with a large number of projects getting underway that will improve the outcomes for pregnant women and their babies across London. Key priorities have focused on reducing stillbirth, reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and improving women's experience of maternity care. The programme has also provided advice and guidance on safe and efficient models of maternity services for London, such as the increased use of midwifery led units and improving continuity of care.

Central to the work plan for 2015 will be working with NHS England to implement components of the Care Bundle to reduce stillbirths, standardising processes around investigating maternal deaths to improve learning and prevention strategies as well as developing initiatives to improve women's experiences of our maternity units. Having over the last year issued guidance and a number of toolkits to help develop safe and efficient maternity services, a major aim for this year is to support their implementation and we will be working closely with local maternity networks to make this happen as well as collecting the data to demonstrate an improvement in outcomes as a result. New work streams include a real focus on how to improve postnatal care, a source of much dissatisfaction for women in London, as well as working closely with other stakeholders to improve perinatal mental health provision. We will work closely with our London Maternity Commissioning board to develop a common specification for maternity services across London.

Part of our role is to be outward facing, responding to and engaging with national developments in maternity. There is likely to be much change related to the *Five year forward view*, particularly around the relationships between acute providers and community based services, that is directly relevant to maternity services in London and calls out for innovative thinking and leadership. Similarly, the recently launched national maternity review is a welcome initiative that we would very much like to engage with in a collaborative manner to improve our services. Finally, we see much of what we do as being around developing good working relationships with all involved in providing and leading maternity services so that what can look like a confusing landscape of disconnected developments is given strategic cohesion.

We look forward to the challenges ahead and working with you over the coming year as together we improve the maternity experience and outcomes for pregnant women and their babies in the capital.



Our key achievements in 2014/15

Publication of the following 'best practice' clinical toolkits and resources:

- » Reducing stillbirth through improved detection of fetal growth restriction
- » Improving outcomes for major obstetric haemorrhage in London
- » Increasing the number of women who receive continuity of care
- » Increasing the number of births at home and in midwifery led units
- » Outpatient induction of labour in low risk women
- » Early access referral proforma for accessing antenatal care services
- » London quality standards and metrics resource

Stillbirth

- » Delivery of Perinatal Institute Growth Assessment Protocol (GAP) training day to trusts in north east and north central London implementing GAP; Health Education England (HEE) funding secured in north east, north central and south east London to support immediate GAP implementation.
- » Support for a formal randomised controlled trial (RCT) study of the GAP programme in London.
- » Contribution to Saving Babies' Lives, the national stillbirth 'care bundle' project.
- » Audit of provision of intrapartum cardiotocography (CTG) training and competency testing offered throughout NHS trusts in London.

Maternal morbidity and mortality

- » Review of four maternal death reports at Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
- » Establishment of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality working group and development of a pan London serious incident process for reviewing and learning from maternal deaths.

User experience

- » Completion of five pilot user experience workshops using the *Whose Shoes?* concept with local action plans focused on service improvement and a 'train the facilitator' day to support wider roll out of the approach.
- » Audit of user engagement and involvement in the development and improvement of maternity services across London.
- » Development of a maternity user experience training film for improving health professional practice.

Wider network activities

- » Clinical leadership and input provided from the SCN clinical directors through the reference group supporting the [Shaping a Healthier Future](#) transformation project in north west London.
- » SCN regional event to launch stillbirth and postpartum haemorrhage toolkits and early access referral form, September 2014.
- » Support for development of South East Maternity Network and ongoing engagement with the five maternity networks across London.
- » SCN advice and recommendations for 2015/16 maternity commissioning intentions, including the adoption of the GAP programme for detection of fetal growth restriction and the implementation of the post partum hemorrhage toolkit.



User experience and engagement

User experience pilot workshops

As part of our strategy to improve women's and families' experience of maternity care, the SCN held five user experience workshops using the [Whose Shoes?](#) approach between October 2014 and March 2015.

The pilot workshops took place in each of the maternity network areas in London, including Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, West Middlesex University Hospital Trust, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust and NHS Whittington Health. Participants have included a wide range of maternity service users and trust staff from all disciplines.

The workshops facilitate discussions on a wide range of scenarios and topics between staff and service users with an aim of sharing best practice and identifying areas for improvement. These are graphically captured by an artist on a "wall" (illustrated in the photograph below). Local maternity services can then draw up action plans with service users to address these key local issues. The emphasis of the project is to ensure that women and their families using maternity services are treated with dignity, compassion and respect at all times.



Some examples of the initiatives being taken forward locally include:

- » Provide antenatal care clinics at more convenient times of the day, including the evening.
- » Review the customer care training delivered at the trust, ensuring it takes account of language including jargon, acronyms, words with negative connotations and body language used by healthcare professionals.
- » Review the format of hand held notes with service users, ensuring they are more user friendly for both healthcare professionals and service users.
- » Produce a film of a young mother who has given up smoking to show on televisions in the antenatal clinic.
- » Provide a service for women who have had a previous traumatic birth experience.
- » Set up activity and peer support groups for women who are not able to access NCT classes.
- » To establish a Maternity Services and Liaison Committee and engage with a diverse range of service users.

A *Train the facilitator* workshop was held by the network in February 2015. Attendees included heads of midwifery from across London as well as national representatives. The focus was on the learning and outcomes from the user experience workshops for wider roll out. As an aid to implementation, a comprehensive workshop guide was produced, which includes a step by step project plan and supporting documents and templates for running a successful workshop locally.

The guide can be accessed via the London SCN website ([link](#)).

The project was featured as one of the key grass root campaigns for NHS Change Day on 11 March.

Key themes and actions are [available online](#).



User experience and engagement

Maternity user experience film

The SCN has produced a user experience film to improve healthcare professional practice, promote understanding of other perspectives, challenge assumptions and harness empathy and compassion. It will be shown at local and national training and education events as well as at user experience events, including *Whose Shoes?* workshops throughout this year.

The film explores the pregnancy journey as experienced by the woman and her family, capturing their thoughts, feelings, concerns and joy as they interact with maternity services. It is underpinned by key messages and themes from the *Whose Shoes?* workshops and informed by user and healthcare professional experiences across London.

Florence Wilcock

Chair of the Maternity User Experience Sub Group

Florence is Divisional Director for Women's Services at Kingston Hospital and has been a consultant obstetrician and labour ward lead at the hospital since 2007. She has a particular interest in medical problems in pregnancy and intrapartum care, with a desire to minimise intervention and keep pregnancy and birth normal where possible. Florence has a weekly antenatal clinic and labour ward sessions, and is happiest when personally looking after and delivering women and their babies. In addition, she has a keen interest in clinical leadership.



Florence is a member of the London Maternity Strategic Clinical Leadership Group and chairs the Maternity User Experience SCN group which has recently focused on the *Whose Shoes?* user experience project and the maternity user experience film. The primary aims of both are to improve user experience and change behaviour.

In addition Florence played a key role in setting up **#MatExp** on Twitter, a campaign to improve maternity user experience. It was selected as one of the main NHS Change Day campaigns for 2015, demonstrating its value as an important way of spreading energy for positive change.



Stillbirth project

Implementation of Growth Assessment Protocol (GAP) programme

London has the highest stillbirth rate of all regions in the United Kingdom. A key priority for the Maternity SCN is to reduce this figure. The SCN aims to do this by improving the detection of fetal growth abnormalities through the use of customised fetal growth charts. These charts provide a more accurate representation of fetal growth and improve the recognition of babies that are pathologically small.

In September 2014, the SCN developed a best practice fetal growth detection toolkit, underpinned by the Growth Assessment Protocol programme (GAP), which is designed to improve quality assurance. Trusts in north central, north east and south east London which were immediately implementing GAP were awarded funding through Health Education England to support the implementation. As part of the bid, funding was awarded for a project manager charged with local implementation. The Perinatal Institute also delivered two 1-day training workshops for participating trusts and the SCN has established a forum for the project managers in order to facilitate learning across the trusts.

A further 12 units in London have agreed to implement GAP through randomised control trial (RCT) participation. Funding is being sought and the protocol for the RCT has been agreed by the UCLH Clinical Trials Unit and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, SANDS and the National Clinical Director for Women's Health, all of which are fully supportive of this implementation approach.

Maternal morbidity and mortality reduction project

There has been an increase in the number of maternal deaths in London over the past year. In response, the SCN has prioritised this issue. A working group has been set up consisting of clinical experts and with expertise in the serious incident (SI) process to develop an improved and standardised methodology for review panels following maternal deaths in London.

A new SI reporting template is being produced and a pool of clinical experts is being established to sit on the review panels and assist the trusts in their process. This will ensure responsive, timely reports that provide lessons for future practice which can be disseminated across London in order to improve outcomes and reduce severe maternal morbidity and maternal mortality.

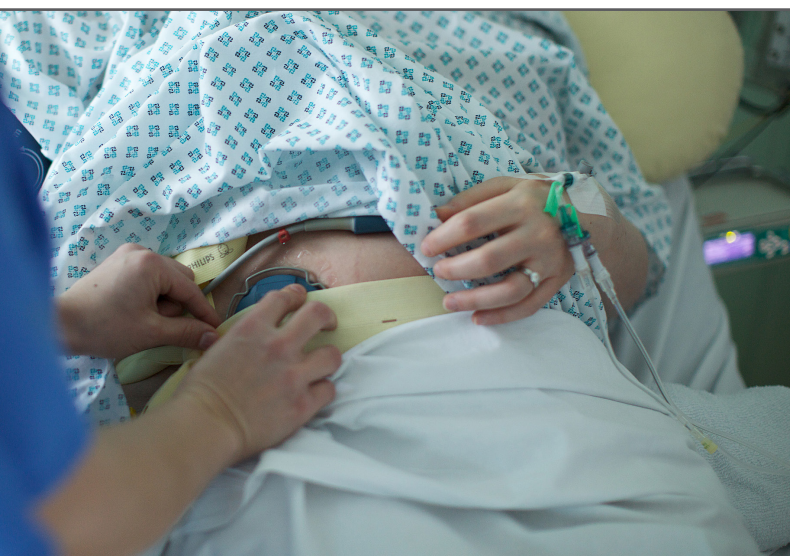
Trusts will be contacted soon to nominate clinical experts from their organisation who would be willing to contribute to this expert panel, as well as known carers and family members who would be interested in assisting the Maternity SCN in this important piece of work.

Perinatal mental health project

The Maternity SCN is working closely with our Mental Health SCN colleagues to address the needs of women with identified mental health issues during and after pregnancy. Much work to date has been focused on the provision of mother and baby units, and the SCN is keen to expand on this work and look at significant issues such as the identification of pregnant women at an earlier stage whom may require intervention.

To this end, we are convening an expert reference group led by Dr Sarah Taha, Consultant in Perinatal Psychiatry at the West London Mental Health Trust and expressions of interest have been sought for membership.

Following membership appointment, an event will be held to bring together maternity and mental health colleagues to develop a 2015/16 work plan for perinatal mental health.



Focus on new best practice toolkits and dashboard

Improving access to midwifery led settings (April 2015)

This SCN toolkit is designed to assist healthcare professionals in increasing the number of eligible women accessing midwifery led units (MLUs) and home as place of birth. It presents the evidence that midwifery led settings improve maternal outcomes, increase maternal satisfaction and use resources more effectively.

It also reinforces Department of Health policy and recommendations from the recent NICE Intrapartum Care clinical guideline CG 190 that pregnant women should be offered a wide range of choice of maternity services, including the choice of where to give birth and information to support the choices available. It includes London-wide definitions for birth place settings, best practice recommendations, referral pathways and auditable standards for implementation.

Continuity of care (April 2015)

Women's access to quality midwifery services has become a part of the global effort in achieving the right of every woman to the best possible healthcare during pregnancy and childbirth. National policies addressing maternity services have often ignored the centrality of the midwifery workforce and how it contributes to high quality and safe care.

In an effort to help address this in London, the SCN has worked closely with clinical and lay representatives across London to produce a Continuity of care toolkit. The aim of the toolkit is to help increase the number of women accessing continuity of midwife care in London.

The toolkit presents evidence that continuity of midwife care improves maternal and infant outcomes, improves maternal experience of care and uses resources more effectively. In order to aid implementation, several case studies are also included, providing learning and experience from several sites across London.

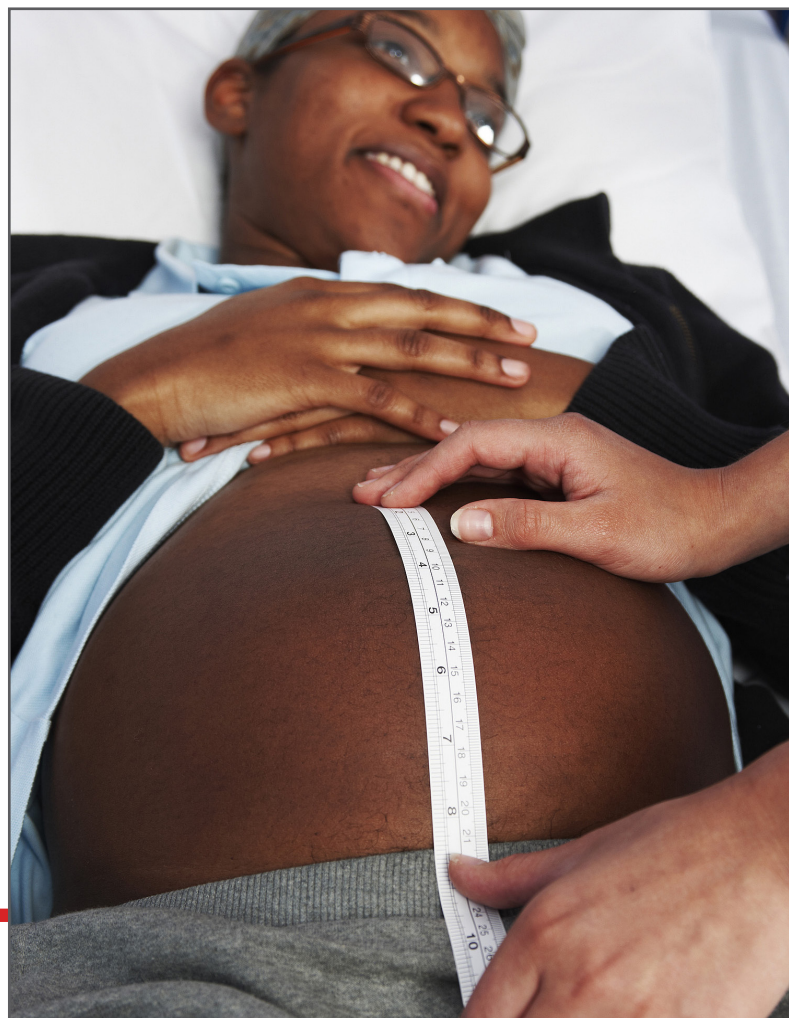
Outpatient induction of labour (April 2015)

A baseline audit conducted in 2014 by the SCN found that outpatient induction of labour was being implemented in some provider units in London and it was agreed that a best practice toolkit should be developed.

The toolkit is intended to cover women with uncomplicated pregnancies and at low risk of developing intrapartum complications. It presents the principles underlying the practice of outpatient induction of labour, rather than being an exhaustive guideline. It is envisaged that all units across London will develop guidelines in line with these principles.

Implementation of toolkits

The implementation and outcomes from the introduction of best practice toolkits across London maternity services are intended to be led and monitored by the five local maternity networks. The Maternity SCN receives updates on changes in local outcomes regularly through the established relationships with these networks.



Links with commissioning

Martin Wilkinson



Martin Wilkinson, Chief Officer at NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group, became chair of the SCN Maternity Commissioning Advisory Group in November 2014.

Martin Wilkinson is Chief Officer of NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group, Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Maternity, Children and Young People for South East London and the CCG SRO for the Children and Young People work stream of the Healthy London Transformation Programme. Martin has a commissioning background and has worked in south east London for nearly 20 years. His previous roles have included Director of Strategy and System Management, Director of Commissioning (both for NHS Lewisham) and Director of Modernisation (Bexley Care Trust).

The SCN Maternity Commissioning Advisory Group is an important forum in which commissioners can drive forward priorities for maternity services in London. Representatives attend from all of the clinical commissioning groups in London, as well as user representatives. In order to align effectively with strategic planning, membership was extended in November 2014 to include the strategic planning groups.

Commissioners and providers were asked to take forward the adoption of the GAP programme for the detection of fetal growth restriction in commissioning plans for 2015/16 in order to reduce the number of stillbirths across London. Support for the implementation of the SCN post partum haemorrhage toolkit to reduce maternal mortality is also included in the group's work plan.

The next priority is to develop a maternity service specification in order to reduce variation in services across London. This will be included in the September commissioning intentions for commissioning commencing April 2016.

Maternity network news

Launch of South East London Maternity Network

The South East London Maternity Network was launched in September 2014, and the co-clinical directors for the SCN, Donald Peebles and Donna Ockenden, joined the network's launch event to provide an overview on the London Maternity Strategic Clinical Network priorities and work streams.

National labour ward leads meeting

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) hosted the National Labour Ward Leads Meeting in March at the RCOG Council Chamber. The London Maternity SCN was invited to attend the event and provide an update on the Network's activities. This was an excellent opportunity to share learning and best practice gathered from projects undertaken in the last year, in particular, the pilot user experience workshops and the toolkits.

Gaining first-hand insight into trust challenges

The Maternity SCN has formally visited a number of trusts and their maternity services so far this year, including Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals) and Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (Barnet hospital). It was an excellent opportunity to learn first-hand about the local challenges and share learning and best practice with maternity colleagues across the capital. Further visits are planned for 2015.



SCN links with LAS

The London Ambulance Service (LAS) invited the Maternity SCN to their control centre in Waterloo in February for a first-hand look into their operations. This opportunity provided the Maternity SCN project team with greater insight into how the service functions in London.



Amanda Mansfield, Consultant Midwife for LAS, presented at the March Head of Midwifery meeting, where she spoke about issues and challenges faced by the service, outlining practical ways in which paramedic resources might be used in future strategic maternity development.

The Maternity SCN presented Seamless care for women at the LAS event, *Celebrating safe motherhood*, which took place on 5 May, International Day of the Midwife.

Future topics

New work areas for 2015 /16 include:

- » Maternity service specification
- » Perinatal mental health
- » Smoking cessation in pregnancy
- » Postnatal care
- » Care for high risk women

More information will be available in the next newsletter.

Further information

If you would like to give us any feedback or you would like to be involved in any of the work streams, please email us on england.maternityscn@nhs.net.

SCN website

Additional resources and news are available through our website, www.londonscn.nhs.uk.

Contact

SCN Maternity, Children and Young people Team

- » **Tracy Parr** – SCN Lead for Maternity, Children and Young People
- » **Caroline Moren** – SCN Maternity Lead and Senior Project Manager | Projects: Morbidity and Mortality, Outpatient Induction of Labour and Perinatal Mental Health
- » **Sarah Dunsdon** – SCN Senior Project Manager | Projects: Stillbirth, User experience and Improving Access to Midwifery Led Care
- » **Daryl Miller** – SCN Project Manager | Projects: Continuity of Care and User experience

Team member spotlight

Caroline Moren

Senior Project Manager and
Maternity Lead
London Strategic Clinical Networks



Caroline has worked in the NHS for nearly 30 years, starting as a trainee medical secretary in north west London. Her career has included data management, service improvement, patient information and experience and, prior to joining the Maternity SCN, twelve years spent with the North East London Cancer Network.

Caroline has a passion for improving healthcare for London's population. A secondment to Macmillan Cancer Support in 2008 allowed her to work with a group of excellent clinicians to provide 16 translated resources for lung cancer patients.

Caroline attained her master's degree in health information management and library studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 2000, a mature student at that time!

As the maternity lead for the Strategic Clinical Networks, Caroline has vastly increased her knowledge base and is keen to work in partnership with maternity colleagues across London to improve the experience and safety of women during pregnancy.

She has many interests outside of work, mainly Formula 1 motor racing, FIA World Endurance Championships and rugby union -- a recognised speed junkie! She also spends much time with her two wonderful nieces and family.