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| Report Title | Update report to the Merton Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel |
| Meeting date | 12 March 2024 |
| <p>As requested, this report provides an update on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ESTH maternity CQC action plan | |

1. ESTH maternity CQC action plan

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected Epsom and St Helier maternity services on 28 and 29 August 2023. Three urgent concerns were identified and rectified immediately on the day of the visit. This related to one piece of out-of-date equipment on the neonatal unit trolley, Syntocinon storage and a typographical error on an emergency drug box.

Following the inspection, the CQC issued a Section 29A warning notice which was later withdrawn following provision of satisfactory evidence from the Trust.

The following immediate action was taken to address some of the issues highlighted by the CQC. These included:

- The Triage process was refined with dedicated core triage midwife provision to ensure 24/7 cover.
- The service updated its existing triage guidance to clarify the telephone triage process and the responsibilities of the core triage midwives.
- A dedicated triage telephone line was installed on 25 September 2023 and the telephone number was shared with all staff and the pregnancy advice line. The line is now answered by the dedicated triage midwife.
- The estates team undertook remedial works to repair external water ingress and an internal wall in the induction bay.
- A risk assessment was undertaken in conjunction with the Infection Prevention and Control Team to identify whether there are any risk factors for the 35 women and birthing people admitted to the induction bay within the previous 4 weeks of CQC visits and no concerns were identified.

The final report was published on 14th February 2024. Our overall maternity rating was lowered from Good to Requires Improvement.

- Epsom Hospital, safe and well-led fell from 'Good' to 'Requires improvement.'
- St Helier Hospital and QMH, safe has been changed from 'Good' to 'Inadequate.' Well-led was lowered from 'Good' to 'Requires improvement.'

The Trust acknowledges the concerns highlighted in the CQC report and understands that a drop in CQC rating can impact the perception of quality care within the community, especially among women and birthing people. We have not seen any evidence of a decline in the booking figures; however, the trust will monitor booking and attrition on a monthly basis.

The Trust has already made additional changes since the inspection in August 2023 as part of our action plan to address issues identified in the CQC report. These include:

- Investing more than £2m over two years to increase staffing levels in the unit by 8%.
- Ensuring 90% of women are now triaged within 15 minutes of arrival to improve risk assessments, with a new dedicated helpline for women to talk directly with midwives.

- Fast-tracking outstanding estates maintenance work with new doors and blinds fitted to improve privacy and dignity.
- Strengthening oversight to ensure mandatory training and care records are kept consistently up to date which has meant that the trust was able to declare compliance with the year 5 Clinical Negligence ST safety action regrading mandatory training.
- Appointing a new Group Chief of Midwifery who will oversee implementation of the action plan across the group.
- Agreeing funding to provide a transitional care service for mothers/birthing people and new babies who require extra support – this is being implemented from April 2024.
- Matron Weekly Spot checks continue to ensure that any emerging issues are identified and addressed quickly.

Our priority is to ensure women and birthing people receive the best possible care. A recent CQC maternity survey (published 9 February 2024), scored Epsom and St Helier as number one in London for the care provided to mothers and birthing people. The survey found improvements in many areas, including women having a higher level of trust and confidence in the staff caring for them, and partners being able to stay overnight.

We have been engaging our staff and service users across both sites, to inform strategies to continue to attract women and birthing people to St Helier hospital, despite the CQC rating and poor exterior of the estate.

The Trust's annual workshop with service users in the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnerships (MNVP) was held on 29th February. The CQC patient experience survey report was discussed, and further service user feedback was sought as well as input into the action plan and any other ideas to improve the unit.

Our staff and all the families that we have supported remain the best champions of the service to new mothers and birthing people.

