



University Hospitals
of Leicester
NHS Trust

‘Leicester Maternity Matters’: Improving Access to Information Through Podcasts and Community Engagement Events.

Project Leads: Lara Harrison-Myers, Floretta Cox and Sarah Blackwell

Project support: Lisa Carr

Project Overview:

The Leicester Maternity Matters Podcast and Meet the Experts events were developed in response to feedback from the Birth Reflections Service and the Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP), which highlighted that many women and their partners felt unprepared for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. Rather than relying solely on traditional information channels such as leaflets, websites and videos, the project introduced an **innovative** approach by using a **free-to-access** podcast platform and face-to-face community events to provide trusted maternity information in formats already widely used by families.

Since launching in August 2025, the podcast has produced 22 episodes and achieved over 2,400 plays, while more than 300 women have attended community events.

Awareness of the initiatives is done through social media advertising, maternity websites, posters, flyers and clinical digital screens. Throughout the project, we have found utilising text messaging, messages via the Electronic Patient Record (BadgerNotes) and EventBrite have proven the most popular method for engagement and we hope that going forward word of mouth will increase attendance even further.

What are/were we trying to accomplish?

Support women and families to be informed so they can make better decisions about their care and have healthier pregnancies and outcomes, reducing birth trauma.

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

1. A reduction in themes through Birth Reflections service and patient feedback mechanisms relating to PTSD/mental health concerns as a result of birth and disempowerment
2. Number of women and families accessing community events and podcast episodes and how this improved their experience and knowledge through patient surveys
3. Uptake of vaccinations, referrals to services including homebirth team, antenatal classes and mental health support, increased breastfeeding rates

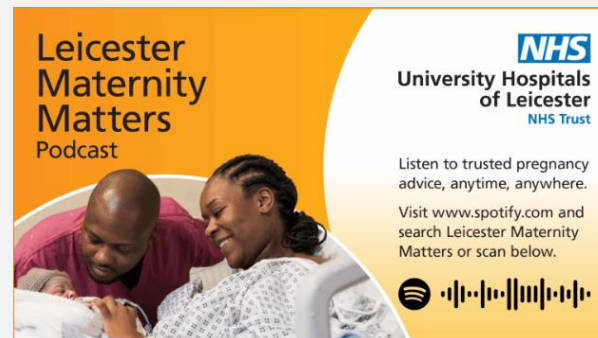
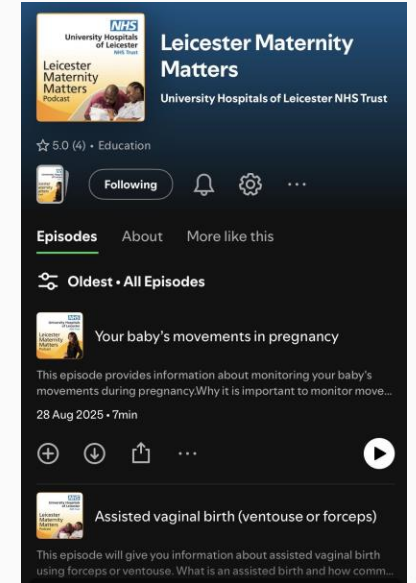
What changes can/did we make to achieve the improvement?

Develop a podcast as an accessible format for education and host quarterly face to face engagement events to provide women and families with the opportunity to meet different staff and increase awareness and knowledge about different services.



Leicester Maternity Matters Podcast

- The podcast episode topics were decided from patient feedback and podcast episode hosts involve staff across multiple specialities including midwives, obstetricians, physiotherapists, students, anaesthetists and staff from voluntary organisations.
- Episodes are recorded in differing styles keeping them engaging and interesting for service users and we try to keep them less than 20 minutes to maintain engagement
- The Leicester Maternity Matters Podcast is one of the few hospital-based maternity podcasts in the UK and the only one dedicated to showcasing the full range of maternity services within our Trust.
- Live episodes include: pain relief in labour, planned caesarean birth, pelvic floor exercises, bonding with your baby and vaccinations in pregnancy.
- To improve accessibility, we chose Spotify to host the podcast, which is free to access
- Following liaison with the clinical education team, a digital suite was identified to record episodes, providing a better quality



Meet the Experts Event

- The idea for Meet the Experts events came from the known success of baby roadshows and evidence that continuity of care and women building relationships with the people caring for them improves outcomes
- Held every 3 months, so women are able to attend at least twice in their pregnancy whilst not having clinicians commit too regularly to evening events, it brings together NHS staff and those from external organisations like breastfeeding support groups, smoking cessation, antenatal classes and mental health services
- The event is set up with tables and stalls providing information and resources about various topics
- Women and their families attend the events as an opportunity to meet staff, ask questions and find out more about the services provided and offered during pregnancy, birth and following birth
- We have adjusted locations each time to reach different communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to improve accessibility



The 3 events held so far have been held in the evening following patient feedback that this would best support attendance with over 300 women attending so far



Interpreter support during the events has improved accessibility and engage seldom-heard groups, reducing inequalities in access to information



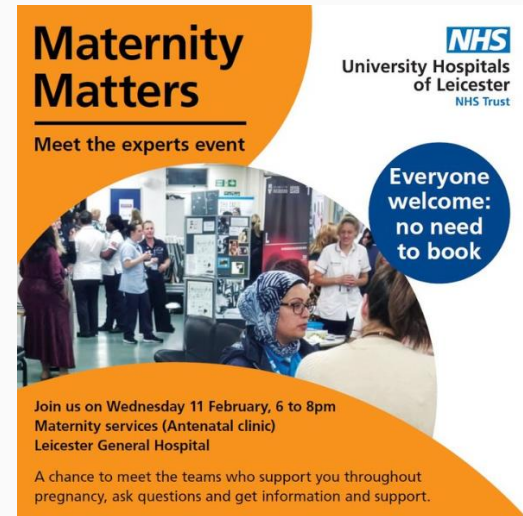
Feedback from staff and volunteers helped us adjust and improve the events which now offer breakout rooms for topics including breastfeeding and homebirth

“Having my vaccination at the event made it so easy and reassuring. It was great to be able to get it done whilst also learning about all the other support available”

Vicki

“With our first baby due very soon, we've naturally had lots of questions and worries. Being new to the UK means we don't have family nearby to guide us, so events like this are incredibly valuable. We've been able to speak to experts, get trusted advice, and learn about services we didn't even know existed. We feel much more confident and reassured about what's ahead”

Shilpa



Understanding the impact

- Early indicators suggest positive outcomes associated with these initiatives
- Since the launch of the podcast and meet the experts event, we have observed reductions in specific themes referred to the Birth Reflections Service, alongside a reduction in third-degree tears and an increase in breastfeeding initiation rates
- We are continuing to develop robust outcome measures for the Meet the Expert events and plan to monitor indicators such as homebirth rates and vaccination uptake
- At our most recent event, attendees were invited to provide contact details and consent for follow-up after birth, enabling us to better understand the impact of the event and the information provided on their birth and postnatal experiences

Key learning points

- Use communication methods that fit into people's lives
- Co-production is essential
- Measure outcomes as well as activity
- Accessibility should be considered at every stage - interpreter support, translated materials, flexible digital access, free car parking etc
- Ensure clear messaging when advertising to manage expectations
- Use existing resources to keep costs low



- ✓ Built relationships between providers, MNVP, service users and voluntary organisations
- ✓ Improved access and referrals
- ✓ Opportunities for peer support with spaces to have refreshments, sit and reflect with each other
- ✓ Inclusion for birth partners
- ✓ Facilitates informed choice and decision-making
- ✓ Improves trust



University Hospitals
of Leicester
NHS Trust

For more information, please get in touch!

Email: uhl-tr.maternityandneonatalqiteam@nhs.net