

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

Rossendale Primary Care Centre

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Our findings

Overall summary of services at Rossendale Primary Care Centre

Good 

We inspected the maternity service at Rossendale Birth Centre, based within Rossendale Primary Care Centre as part of our national maternity inspection programme. The programme aims to give an up-to-date view of hospital maternity care across the country and help us understand what is working well to support learning and improvement at a local and national level.

We will publish a report of our overall findings when we have completed the national inspection programme.

We carried out a short notice announced focused inspection of the maternity service, looking only at the safe and well-led key questions.

The inspection was carried out using a post-inspection data submission and an on-site inspection where we observed the environment, observed care, conducted interviews with patients and staff, reviewed policies, care records medicines charts and documentation. Following the site visit, we conducted interviews with senior leaders and reviewed feedback from women and families about the trust.

We ran a poster campaign during our inspection to encourage pregnant women and mothers who had used the service to give us feedback regarding care. We received 2 feedback forms from women. We analysed the results to identify themes and trends.

Rossendale Birth Centre is a stand-alone midwife led birth centre based in Rossendale Primary Care Centre. It is only opened and staffed by midwives from Blackburn or Burnley Birth Centres when a woman is booked to give birth there. Therefore, information and data relating to staff and training for Blackburn Birth Centre and Burnley General Hospital has been used to inform this report.

Rossendale Birth Centre has 1 birthing room with a pool. Ante and postnatal clinics are also provided at this location. It provides maternity services to women in the Blackburn, Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley areas.

Rossendale Birth Centre did not deliver any babies between April 2021 and March 2022. The centre was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and became a vaccination centre, re-opening as a birth centre in April 2022. Staff had not delivered any babies at the centre since re-opening.

The local maternity population come from higher levels than deprivation than the national average with 34% in the most deprived decile compared to 12% nationally. More mothers were Asian or Asian British (24% compared to the national average of 14%) and fewer were White than the national average. Since February 2022, the trust has been in the upper 25% of all organisations for women who were current smokers at booking appointment.

This location has not been previously inspected. We rated it as good because:

- Our ratings of the Maternity service changed the ratings for the location overall. We rated safe as good and well-led as good and the location as good.

Our findings

We also inspected 2 other maternity services run by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. Our reports are here:

Burnley General Hospital – <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RXR10>

Blackburn Birth Centre – <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RXR78>

How we carried out the inspection

You can find further information about how we carry out our inspections on our website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/what-we-do-inspection>.

Maternity

Good 

Our rating of this service stayed the same. We rated it as good because:

- The service had enough staff to care for women and keep them safe. Staff had training in key skills, and worked well together for the benefit of women, understood how to protect women from abuse, and managed safety well. The service controlled infection risk well. Staff assessed risks to women, acted on them and kept good care records. They managed medicines well. The service managed safety incidents well and learned lessons from them.
- Leaders ran services well using reliable information systems and supported staff to develop their skills. Staff understood the service's vision and values, and how to apply them in their work. Managers monitored the effectiveness of the service and made sure staff were competent. Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities. The service engaged well with women and the community to plan and manage services. People could access the service when they needed it and did not have to wait too long for treatment and all staff were committed to improving services continually.

However:

- Not all staff completed level 3 safeguarding adults training.
- Since re-opening the birth centre had not been used for birthing, awareness raising was needed to ensure women could express a preference for the centre as a place of birth.
- The birth centre did not have a local, specific vision or strategy underpinning it to develop future birth centre services.
- Managers could not analyse performance against key indicators easily as the maternity dashboard was service wide and did not break down information specific to the birth centre. Nor could managers always access reliable data to inform local audits due to the way information was recorded in the electronic care record. However, following our inspection managers told us they could pull information for each location from the trust systems to assess performance against key indicators.

Is the service safe?

Good 

Our rating of safe stayed the same. We rated it as good.

Mandatory training

The service provided mandatory training in key skills to all staff and made sure everyone completed it.

Nursing and midwifery staff received and kept up to date with their mandatory training. Compliance with core skills training was 96% against a service target of 90%.

The mandatory training was comprehensive and met the needs of women and staff. The service conducted a training needs analysis to identify the required training for each role. This outlined mandatory and specialist training required and staff responsible for ensuring training was completed.

Maternity

Clinical staff completed training on recognising and responding to women with mental health needs, learning disabilities, autism and dementia. Staff completed training on perinatal mental health as part of the maternity specific mandatory training. 93.7% of midwives had completed dementia awareness training.

Managers monitored mandatory training and alerted staff when they needed to update their training. The team of practice education midwives were proactive in monitoring staff compliance with required training and alerting staff and managers to training which needed to be updated or completed. The service had clear guidance for managers to follow to escalate continued non-compliance with mandatory training.

Safeguarding

Staff understood how to protect women from abuse and the service worked well with other agencies to do so. Staff had training on how to recognise and report abuse and they knew how to apply it.

Nursing and midwifery staff received training specific for their role on how to recognise and report abuse. The service was unable to provide information solely for Rossendale Birth Centre as it did not have a specific staffing establishment but was staffed by midwives from Blackburn Birthing Centre when open. Staffing data reported by the trust and reflected in this report relates to Blackburn Birthing Centre.

The service provided information that showed core skills training included safeguarding children level 3 and safeguarding adults level 2. However, staff told us they completed level 3 adult and children safeguarding training. Evidence provided showed 84.4% of Blackburn Birth Centre staff had completed safeguarding children level 3 and 98.4% safeguarding adults' level 2. Therefore, we could not be sure all staff completed the most appropriate level of adult safeguarding training.

Staff could give examples of how to protect women from harassment and discrimination, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act. All midwives received safeguarding supervision annually in addition to safeguarding training. This consisted of training and reflective practice based on local safeguarding issues. The safeguarding lead facilitated a bi-monthly safeguarding collaborative meeting with all senior midwives where they reviewed all serious incidents, themes, trends and action plans related to safeguarding.

Staff knew how to identify adults and children at risk of, or suffering, significant harm and worked with other agencies to protect them. Midwives attended child protection conferences when required. Staff worked with local authorities to make safeguarding referrals and provide additional support for women whose baby would be separated from them after birth by the local authority.

Staff knew how to make a safeguarding referral and who to inform if they had concerns. Safeguarding issues were flagged on the electronic care record system. We saw staff were alerted to women where there were safeguarding issues through the daily safety huddle.

Staff followed the baby abduction policy. All areas were secure with key fob access so women and visitors could access the birth centre directly but only when allowed by a midwife. However, staff had not undertaken any baby abduction drills on site.

Cleanliness, infection control and hygiene

Maternity

The service controlled infection risk well. Staff used equipment and control measures to protect women, themselves and others from infection. They kept equipment and the premises visibly clean.

The centre was clean and had suitable furnishings which were clean and mostly well-maintained. All areas we visited were visibly clean and dust free.

Staff followed infection control principles including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE was available and staff and visitors wore surgical face masks to reduce the risk of spread of infections such as COVID-19. Hand hygiene sinks were available in the birthing room and alcohol hand gel available at the entrance. Staff completed training on infection prevention and control as part of core skills training.

Staff cleaned equipment after contact with women and labelled equipment to show when it was last cleaned.

Environment and equipment

The design, maintenance and use of facilities, premises and equipment kept people safe. Staff were trained to use them. Staff managed clinical waste well.

The design of the environment followed national guidance. There was protected parking next to the entrance for women who were in labour and a key fob system to gain access, so the unit was secure. There was also an ambulance space directly outside the birth centre entrance so there was clear and short access to an ambulance in an emergency.

The birth centre had 1 birthing room with a pool and a patient waiting room.

Women could reach call bells and a midwife attended all times during the birth.

Staff did not carry out daily safety checks of specialist equipment. Staff told us they had carried out ad hoc checks of emergency equipment but recognised the risk that equipment may not be available when needed. They told us there was now planned resource for staff to visit the centre each morning to check equipment.

The service had enough suitable equipment to help them to safely care for women and babies. The birthing room had a resuscitaire and staff could access equipment to help them evacuate a woman safely from the pool in event of an emergency. Staff practiced this through skills and drills training.

The facilities department monitored when equipment was due for regular maintenance and had a schedule of work to ensure all regular maintenance was carried out.

Staff disposed of clinical waste safely. Staff disposed of sharps, such as needles, correctly in appropriate containers and in line with national guidance. Separate waste bins and bags were available for clinical waste.

Assessing and responding to patient risk

Staff completed and updated risk assessments for each woman and took action to remove or minimise risks. Staff identified and quickly acted upon women at risk of deterioration

Maternity

Staff used a nationally recognised tool to identify women at risk of deterioration and escalated them appropriately. Staff recorded observations using modified early obstetric warning scores (MEOWS). Managers audited compliance with use of MEOWS.

Staff knew when to escalate women and babies for medical review or transfer to the main maternity unit in line with trust policy.

Women could not always access birth choices and options to give birth in Rossendale. This was because the birth centre had closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic as the primary care centre became a vaccination hub. The centre re-opened in April 2022 and no babies had been born there since then. The service told us during this time could access birth centres in Burnley or Blackburn. Staff acknowledged the need to raise awareness in the local community about the centre being an option for giving birth.

Staff completed risk assessments for each woman on admission / arrival, using a recognised tool, and reviewed this regularly, including after any incident. We saw risk assessments identified key factors such as disability, age, and diabetes.

We saw women's carbon monoxide levels were monitored. This is in line with the 'Saving Babies' Lives' care bundle, which is an evidence-based bundle of care designed to reduce the numbers of stillbirth and early neonatal deaths bringing together five elements which are identified as best practice and includes reducing smoking in pregnancy.

The service had 24-hour access to mental health liaison and specialist mental health support (if staff were concerned about a woman's mental health). Staff could access support for women from a specialist perinatal mental health team.

Staff completed, or arranged, psychosocial assessments and risk assessments for women thought to be at risk of self-harm or suicide. We saw mental health assessments using a recognised tool were completed in care records.

Staff shared key information to keep women safe when handing over their care to others. Staff used a situation, background, assessment and recommendation (SBAR) format when handing care to another area. The SBAR was recorded in the electronic care record.

Shift changes and handovers included all necessary key information to keep women and babies safe. Managers responsible for overseeing the birth centre attended the safety huddle held 4 times daily where key safety information on high-risk women was shared.

Staffing

The service had enough maternity staff with the right qualifications, skills, training and experience to keep women safe from avoidable harm and to provide the right care and treatment. Managers regularly reviewed and adjusted staffing levels and skill mix, and gave bank and agency staff a full induction.

The service made sure staff were competent for their roles. Managers appraised staff's work performance and held supervision meetings with them to provide support and development.

The service had enough staff to keep women and babies safe. Planned staffing for the birth centre was 2 midwives at all times when in use. Midwives who staffed the birth centre were from Blackburn community midwife teams or Blackburn Birth Centre.

Maternity

The service was unable to provide information solely for Rossendale Birth Centre as there is not a specific staffing establishment but was staffed by midwives from Blackburn or Burnley Birthing Centre when open. Staffing data reported by the trust and reflected in this report relates to the obstetric, midwifery and gynaecology directorate.

Staff told us they would report any staff shortages or incidents through the online incident reporting system and managers reported this through a safer staffing report.

Managers accurately calculated and reviewed the number and grade of nurses, nursing assistants and healthcare assistants needed for each shift in accordance with national guidance. The Birthrate Plus report for the service was completed in September 2022 and the annual report and plan presented to the trust board.

Managers could adjust staffing levels daily according to the needs of women. Staffing was reviewed 4 times in each 24-hour period at a staffing safety huddle attended by ward managers and matrons. Staffing was reviewed based on staff numbers and acuity of the women needing care and given a risk rating.

The service had low vacancy rates of 0.25% across all staff groups. The service had plans to recruit international midwives and all international recruitment midwives had to pass an English test before being accepted into employment.

The service had turnover rates of 5.16%. The service had a recruitment a retention midwife who completed exit interviews for staff and supported staff wellbeing initiatives to improve retention.

Overall sickness the directorate was 5.58%

The centre had not used any bank staff in the last 12 months.

Managers supported staff to develop through yearly, constructive appraisals of their work. The number of staff having completed an annual appraisal in the obstetrics, midwifery and gynaecology directorate was 72%. Managers told us the decision was made to halt appraisals during the COVID-19 pandemic and there was a plan to ensure appraisals were conducted with compliance recently rising.

Managers supported midwifery staff to develop through regular, constructive clinical supervision of their work. Staff could access support from professional midwife advocates and additional supervision such as safeguarding supervision was provided by lead midwives.

Managers made sure staff received any specialist training for their role. 91% of midwives and 83% of maternity support workers had completed Practical Obstetric Multi-Professional Training (PROMPT). PROMPT is an evidence-based multi-professional obstetric emergencies training package that has been developed for use in maternity services, with an emphasis on team working and communication. Staff attended an annual fetal monitoring study day and 99.4% of staff had either attended the study day or completed the K2 perinatal training programme.

Records

Staff kept detailed records of women's care and treatment. Records were clear, up-to-date, stored securely and easily available to all staff providing care.

Maternity

Women's notes were comprehensive and all staff could access them easily. The service had introduced electronic care records 12 months ago. Women's records were available to them online and via a mobile phone application. Each birthing room had a computer tablet for midwives to use to record notes contemporaneously.

The electronic care record had a system of alerts so staff could see at glance if a woman was high risk or there was a safeguarding concern. Documentation could not be closed on the electronic system unless all mandatory field and information was completed. Managers completed audits of care records focusing on key elements.

When women transferred to a new team, there were no delays in staff accessing their records as all notes were available on the electronic care record.

Records were stored securely. All computers and tablets were password protected and staff closed screens when computers were not in use.

Medicines

The service used systems and processes to safely prescribe, administer, record and store medicines.

Staff followed systems and processes to prescribe and administer medicines safely. All midwifery staff received training in medicines management and 95.8% of midwifery staff had completed this. Midwives used midwife exemptions to administer some medicines, and this was clearly recorded on medicines charts we reviewed.

Staff completed medicines records accurately and kept them up to date. Staff scanned paper medicines charts onto the electronic care record once complete. Medicines charts could be accessed on the electronic record if women moved between units or to other services.

Staff stored and managed all medicines and prescribing documents safely. We reviewed the storage of controlled drugs and saw they were in date, stored securely and an accurate record kept.

Incidents

The service managed safety incidents well. Staff recognised and reported incidents and near misses. Managers investigated incidents and shared lessons learned with the whole team and the wider service. When things went wrong, staff apologised and gave women honest information and suitable support. Managers ensured that actions from patient safety alerts were implemented and monitored.

Staff knew what incidents to report and how to report them. Staff were able to describe types of incidents they would report.

Staff raised concerns and reported incidents and near misses in line with trust policy. Staff reported incidents on the trust electronic incident reporting system. We reviewed open incidents reported by staff and saw these were allocated to a manager for review and appropriately graded.

The service had no never events. Never Events are defined as Serious Incidents that are wholly preventable because guidance or safety recommendations that provide strong systemic protective barriers are available at a national level and should have been implemented by all healthcare providers.

Maternity

Staff reported serious incidents clearly and in line with trust policy. The trust was an early adopter for the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). This is a new incident reporting framework being developed by NHS England to replace reporting to the Strategic Executive Information System (StEIS). From January to October 2022 the birth centre reported no serious incidents to StEIS. Managers carried out rapid reviews of the incidents to identify immediate learning and shared this with staff.

All maternity incidents across the trust reported to StEIS were reported to the trust board monthly. We reviewed minutes of the Patient Safety Incidents Requiring Investigation (PSIRI) Panel held monthly and saw all key staff and the local clinical commissioning group attended. The meeting reviewed and agreed incident investigations and action plans and made suggestions for further investigation or improvement to the action plan.

Staff received feedback from investigation of incidents, both internal and external to the service. We saw learning from incidents discussed at daily handovers. Staff received a 'In Safe Hands' newsletter which shared learning from internal and external incidents.

Staff met to discuss the feedback and look at improvements to the care of women. Staff discussed incidents and updates on action plans at the weekly quality and safety group meeting. The meeting reviewed all incidents reported that week and any never events or serious incidents from across the service.

Managers also met at a weekly incident review meeting to review all incidents reported in their areas, share learning and agree next steps.

Managers debriefed and supported staff after any serious incident. Staff could access support from professional midwife advocates or practice education midwives. Specialist bereavement midwives supported staff as well as women and families following any incidents where a baby died and staff could access counselling.

Is the service well-led?

Good 

Our rating of well-led stayed the same. We rated it as good.

Leadership

Leaders had the skills and abilities to run the service. They understood and managed the priorities and issues the service faced. They were visible and approachable in the service for women and staff. They supported staff to develop their skills and take on more senior roles.

Maternity services were part of the family care division which was led by a senior management team made up of a divisional medical director, head of midwifery and divisional director of operations. They were supported by a maternity leadership team which included a deputy head of midwifery, clinical director and 2 matrons. Local leadership was also supported by lead midwives and specialist midwives.

Maternity

Members of the senior management team met formally each week to discuss the service and were based together, which allowed for more informal, ad hoc communication. Local leaders also met regularly through a variety of forums including daily safety huddles and weekly quality and safety meetings. Managers told us they felt supported by leaders and leaders and managers worked well together.

Leaders were visible within the birth centre, staff knew who they were and told us members of the senior management team attended meetings at the centre regularly. Staff reported good clinical leadership and support from the named consultant.

During interviews, local leaders demonstrated awareness of the key issues faced by the birth centre and talked through actions taken to address some of the challenges.

Vision and Strategy

The service had a vision for what it wanted to achieve and a strategy to turn it into action, developed with all relevant stakeholders. However, there was no specific vision or strategy for the birth centre.

The service had a clear vision and aims which were visible on documents throughout the service and on the trust website. Staff spoke about offering safe care which was person centred and based on best practice. The vision was underpinned by objectives, values, operating principles and improvement priorities.

The service had a number of strategies underpinning the vision. This included a clinical strategy and communication strategy. We reviewed minutes of the communication strategy working group and saw plans and actions taken into account and sought out feedback from external partners such as the Maternity Voices Partnership and women and families.

In July 2022 the service had facilitated a multidisciplinary away day to develop future projects and plans to deliver the national safety ambition. There was staff representation from all areas and levels of maternity services and staff participated in working groups to examine strengths and weaknesses and identify future aspirations and project priorities.

However, there was no specific vision or strategy for the birth centre. Staff told us they wanted to do more to promote use of the centre but as they felt use of the centre had been impacted by the recent closure.

Culture

Staff felt respected, supported, and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. The service promoted equality and diversity in daily work and provided opportunities for career development. The service had an open culture where women, their families and staff could raise concerns without fear.

Throughout the service we saw a positive culture with staff happy in their roles and proud to work for the service. Staff told us they felt teams worked well together to support women and families. Staff could record positive feedback received and thanks to staff who had gone the extra mile on an online reporting system. This feedback was shared with individual staff by managers.

Maternity

Midwives told us medical staff and managers were easily accessible and they felt confident to raise concerns or contribute ideas. Staff could access support from a trust Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. A Freedom to Speak Up Guardian works alongside the trust's senior leadership team to ensure staff have the capability to speak up effectively and are supported appropriately if they have concerns regarding patient care.

The service had a number of staff wellbeing and support initiatives including a social media group with messages of gratefulness, therapy sessions for staff and a £1.50 meal to help with the cost-of-living crisis.

Women, relatives, and carers knew how to complain or raise concerns. Following our inspection, 2 women sent feedback about their maternity care at Rossendale Primary Care Centre. One was positive feedback about antenatal care, the other related to community midwifery services, which we did not inspect.

Managers investigated complaints and identified themes. Managers shared feedback from complaints with staff and learning was used to improve the service. Complaints and learning from them was shared at the weekly quality and safety group.

Governance

Leaders operated effective governance processes, throughout the service and with partner organisations. Staff at all levels were clear about their roles and accountabilities and had regular opportunities to meet, discuss and learn from the performance of the service.

The service had clear governance and reporting structures which outlined key meetings and committees and lines of reporting through directorate, divisional and trust wide structures. This ensured information flowed from floor to board and then back to floor. A monthly governance report was presented to the divisional quality and safety board which was then shared to the divisional management board and up to trust board.

The service had a number of specialist committees such as health and safety, patient experience and safeguarding which met regularly and reported through the relevant divisional group to divisional or speciality boards.

The service measured performance against national schemes and reports and reported this to board through the governance structures. This included the maternity incentive scheme or clinical negligence scheme for trusts (CNST) and Ockenden reports (2019, 2022) were presented to the board. CNST is a scheme which applies all trust maternity services in which there is a financial incentive to meet 10 key safety standards.

Staff at all levels were clear about their roles and accountabilities and had regular opportunities to meet, discuss and learn from the performance of the service. Managers held a divisional briefing every two weeks with matrons and ward managers to ensure feedback was provided both from staff and to staff. Each area held a staff forum to share information about performance and learn from any incidents or feedback.

Staff followed up-to-date policies to plan and deliver high quality care according to evidence-based practice and national guidance. The service displayed information on policy and guideline updates in staff areas to remind them to access and read them. The service followed trust policy on the implementation of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and quality standards which set out a process for receiving, reviewing and updating staff of all new and updated NICE guidance and Quality Standards.

Management of risk, issues and performance

Maternity

Leaders and teams used systems to manage performance effectively. They identified and escalated relevant risks and issues and identified actions to reduce their impact. They had plans to cope with unexpected events. Staff contributed to decision-making to help avoid financial pressures compromising the quality of care.

Managers carried out a local quality assurance audits and fed back results to staff. We saw areas of low compliance were investigated and an action plan put in place. Manager repeated audits each month to check improvement.

Managers and staff carried out a comprehensive programme of repeated audits to check improvement over time. The service had a unit accreditation scheme called nursing assessment and performance framework (NAPF). Audit teams attended wards and units to assess performance against core standards.

The service participated in relevant national clinical audits. The service reported outcomes to the NHS Digital Maternity dashboard, the National Neonatal Audit Programme, the National Maternity and Perinatal Audit and MBRRACE-UK (Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiry).

Leaders monitored performance against key outcomes through a maternity dashboard. The maternity dashboard was comprehensive and captured 28 different metrics such as stillbirth rates, 3rd or 4th degree tears and eclampsia cases. The dashboard was RAG rated red, amber and green so leaders could see at a glance any metrics which were outside of expected ranges and showed a monthly trend graph so leaders could see if performance was changing over time. However, it was not possible from the maternity dashboard to see information only for Rossendale Birth Centre.

Managers and staff used the results to improve women's outcomes. Managers and leaders met monthly to review the dashboard, validate data and review any outliers.

Outcomes for women were positive, consistent and met expectations, such as national standards. Data from the maternity dashboard was submitted to the local maternity system and compared with other trusts to see if they were an outlier for any outcome. Leaders gave an example of being a positive outlier for the number of babies born before arrival at hospital and sharing learning across the regions on how they achieved this.

The service stated it was fully compliant with the CNST scheme in year 3 and on track to achieve this in year 4. The service audited compliance with the Saving Babies Lives care bundle and reported compliance to NHS England. The most recent submission showed full compliance with the care bundle.

The service had assessed compliance against the most recent Ockenden report and used the self-assessment to complete a gap analysis. The gap analysis was updated regularly and had been presented through governance structures to board. A maternity safety business case had been agreed to address some of the workforce issues arising out of the gap analysis. The updated gap analysis in October 2022 showed 95% compliance with Ockenden essential actions with action still ongoing to ensure funding for maternity staff training was ringfenced.

The service used the nationally recognised perinatal mortality tool to review all baby deaths and conducted a rapid review into all deaths. In line with Ockenden recommendations, the service provided a report to trust board with details of all deaths reviewed and action plans. Perinatal mortality review meetings were held twice a week with an additional perinatal meeting monthly for full multidisciplinary team review of deaths. Each of the obstetric leads was assigned a case to investigate and report with the report going through the obstetric risk governance structure and presented to the perinatal board.

Maternity

Leader and managers monitored risk through the local risk register. The risks on the register aligned with risks and concerns highlighted by staff and managers.

The service was accredited by Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI). It was reassessed in 2022 and regained the gold accreditation it had held since 2014.

Information Management

The service collected reliable data and analysed it. Staff could mostly find the data they needed, in easily accessible formats, to understand performance, make decisions and improvements. However, managers could not always access reliable data to inform local audit due to the way data was recorded in the electronic care record. The information systems were integrated and secure. Data or notifications were consistently submitted to external organisations as required.

Policies and guidance were situated on a shared computer drive which all staff could access easily.

The service submitted data to external bodies including the National Neonatal Audit Programme, MBRRACE-UK and HSIB.

Staff were supported by a dedicated digital midwife who delivered training and ad hoc support as required. However, the introduction of a new electronic care record in November 2021 had increased the need for digital support for staff. We found that though the digital midwife was proactive in supporting staff more work was required to ensure all staff were fully compliant in the use of the new system. Managers told us they encouraged staff to use paper copies of document if they struggled to input into, to ensure documentation was completed and care remained focused on the woman.

Feedback from some women following our inspection showed they had had trouble accessing important information about their pregnancy from the App which accompanied the electronic care record system.

Engagement

Leaders and staff actively and openly engaged with women, staff, equality groups, the public and local organisations to plan and manage services. They collaborated with partner organisations to help improve services for women.

Leaders engaged with partner organisations to help improve services for women. Managers attended daily calls with the local maternity system and worked with partners across the North West to enact the staffing escalation policy when needed. Leaders attended a monthly maternity acuity alliance board which included system partners to plan maternity services across the region. They were involved in the health equality alliance which brought together different partners such as health police and local authority to ensure services met the needs of the whole community.

The service had a maternity communication strategy which outlined objectives for communication with all key partners. This included ensuring key messages were available in different languages spoken across the local community and monitoring the way women used the website and social media to see if any improvements could be made.

Maternity

Leaders met monthly with the chair of the local Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) and had regular informal conversations. This meant the MVP was represented and took part in key improvement projects such as breast feeding and infant feeding projects. Staff reported positive relationships with the MVP, with a mature relationship where issues could be raised, and feedback given and heard by leaders at the trust.

The service had a midwife champion for equality and diversity who linked with local groups representing people from black and minority ethnic communities to ensure services met their needs. Staff had worked with the local mosque and taken part in radio interviews to gain feedback from women from diverse backgrounds. The service had information on computer tablets in different languages in all clinics to enable them to share information with women. The service had secured funding to introduce specialist midwives to work with women from diverse communities including a lead midwife for consanguinity. Consanguinity is where partners are blood relatives, and this can increase the risk of some genetic disorders.

Leaders engaged with staff to gain feedback on improving services. Staff had attended an away day to input into future improvement programmes. Leaders and managers carried out 'appreciative enquiry' with staff involved in any incidents or concerns so they could identify strengths and what went well, as well as any learning, and fed that back to staff. Staff were encouraged to provide feedback from this at governance and team meetings. Staff from the service had attended a 'Big Conversation' in May 2022, which agreed actions for improvements to issues raised in the staff survey.

Learning, continuous improvement and innovation

All staff were committed to continually learning and improving services. They had a good understanding of quality improvement methods and the skills to use them. Leaders encouraged innovation and participation in research.

Leaders described how they used the actions from governance meetings such as complaints to identify themes to highlight areas for improvement. These were communicated with staff through the 'In Safe Hands' newsletter. Staff were informed about research and improvement projects through notice boards in staff areas and team meetings.

Managers and leaders were involved in experiential learning through staff presenting cases in clinical effectiveness meetings.

Staff were working with the national research project 'Born into Care'. They worked with external partners to provide memory boxes for women whose baby was being removed into care following birth. Midwives had received a safeguarding star award from NHS England for this work.

The service was participating in national research on Group B Streptococcus and collecting cord blood gas samples for submission to the research project. Information for women on the research was displayed across the unit.

The service was one of 40 hospitals in the UK participating in the COPE study to compare 2 medicines used to treat postpartum haemorrhage.

The service was the first in the UK to gain BFI gold accreditation and to retain this on all subsequent assessments.

Maternity

Outstanding practice

We found the following examples of outstanding practice:

- All midwives had safeguarding supervision annually in addition to safeguarding training. This consisted of training and reflective practice based on local safeguarding issues and is above good practice standards.
- The service was focused on the needs of local women and families. They had a midwife champion for equality and diversity who linked with local groups representing people from black and minority ethnic communities to ensure services met their needs and were recruiting a lead midwife for consanguinity.
- Leaders engaged proactively with staff to improve services. They carried out appreciative enquiry with staff involved in incident and concerns to identify strengths as

Areas for improvement

Action a trust **SHOULD** take is because it was not doing something required by a regulation but it would be disproportionate to find a breach of the regulation overall, to prevent it failing to comply with legal requirements in future, or to improve services.

Action the trust **SHOULD take to improve:**

Maternity services

- The trust should ensure all staff complete level 3 safeguarding adults and children training, in order to protect women from abuse and improper treatment.
- The service should consider developing a local vision and strategy for the birth centre.
- The service should continue working with staff to increase competence in using the electronic care record system.
- The service should consider developing a specific maternity dashboard for the birth centre to allow managers to easily assess and improve performance.

Our inspection team

The team that inspected the service comprised a CQC lead inspector a Specialist Advisor, and 2 other CQC inspectors. The inspection team was overseen by Carolyn Jenkinson, Head of Hospital Inspection.