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Nottingham Maternity Research Network

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Melissa Thomas

Nottingham Maternity Research Network aims to include the views of a range of local maternity service users. If you know anyone who might be interested in joining us, you can give them our email address or direct them to the website. We'll be happy to hear from them!

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 20th January

1-3pm

New venue:

The Poppy & Pint,

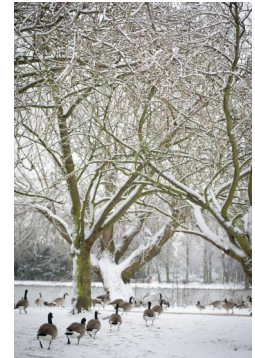
West Bridgford,

Nottingham

Light refreshments provided

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the fourth issue of our regular network newsletter. Here you'll find a summary of our latest network meeting, news of recently funded research, an introduction to another of our network members, and information about a new journal that focuses on user involvement.



REPORT ON THE OCTOBER NETWORK MEETING

Members of the network met on October 8th at the University of Nottingham.

We discussed ongoing studies, including midwife-led units, anxiety in pregnancy and birth plans, and encouraged network members to get in touch if they would like to be involved in any of these.

On the subject of getting involved, the group discussed best ways of writing the detailed calls for involvement which we send out about forthcoming projects:

- ◆ More inviting, less formal language;
- ◆ More of a question and answer style;
- ◆ A shorter document, with a maximum length of two sides of A4 paper;
- ◆ A clearer idea of how exactly people can help in the study.

Based on this feedback, a revised call for involvement document will be reviewed by the group at the next meeting.

Just funded!

We have recently been awarded a Wellcome Trust 'seed award' for a project called *Televising Childbirth: understanding media impacts on perceptions of risk, women's choices and health*. The project aims to develop an interdisciplinary approach to studying reality television programmes like *One Born Every Minute* and to assessing television's impact on women's health and wellbeing. A series of activities will include academics from midwifery, sociology, television studies and health humanities, as well as industry representatives, advocacy groups and service users. At the end of this short project, we will design a larger study to take the work forward. *Televising Childbirth* will start in 2016.



Image by Maaïke Flissebaalje .
www.flickr.com/photos/maaikeflis/4941353487/

New journal about involvement in research

We thought you might be interested to hear about a new journal. *Research Involvement & Engagement* will publish articles about patient and public involvement in health and social care research. The journal takes an innovative approach and sets out to practice what it preaches.

The journal is led by co-editors-in-chief Sophie Staniszewska (University of Warwick) and Richard Stephens, an involved and engaged patient and carer. All articles submitted to the journal will be reviewed by at least one academic and one patient reviewer with both reports carrying equal weight in the editors' decisions. The journal is open access so anyone can read it online: <http://researchinvolvement.biomedcentral.com/>



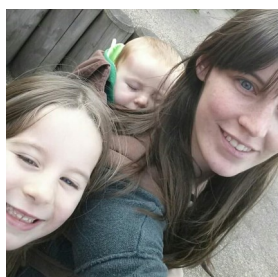
Richard Stephens &
Sophie Staniszewska

Project underway: Factors influencing use of midwifery units in England

Our NIHR funded project about midwifery units is underway. We are very pleased to welcome two new research fellows to work on the project Dawn Coleby and Celia Grigg. Led by Denis Walsh, the project will explore why use of midwifery units (MUs) varies so widely across England and why some areas have never developed midwifery units.

Only 11% of women in England have their baby in a MU, despite very good evidence that having a baby in a MU results in better outcomes than having a baby on a traditional labour ward and is cheaper. Not all maternity services have MUs and of those that do, some are not being fully utilised. We are undertaking a comparative case study in six sites, and hope that the study will help us identify why some services are successful in opening and promoting MUs and others are not. Study findings will be used to develop guidance for local maternity services in England to help increase the provision and uptake of MUs.

Meet a Member of the Network: Melissa Thomas



I joined the network at a time when I was seeking ways to share my thoughts and opinions about maternity with a wider audience. It was refreshing to find a space that was proactive with service user engagement and prepared to incorporate the voices of those outside of professional roles. I consider the network to be highly collaborative and forward thinking.

During my involvement in meetings and research projects I have undergone a process of establishing my own value for the work of user representatives and the potential the role possesses to drive change and question institutional norms. Pairing user involvement with academia represents the kind of bridge building needed to shape the future of coherent research and policy making within maternity.

Season's Greetings and best wishes for 2016 from all at the Maternal Health Research Group!

Get in Touch, Spread the Word!

Visit our website: www.nottsmaternity.ac.uk

Email us at: HS-nottsmaternity@nottingham.ac.uk