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Nottingham Maternity Research Network

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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!

Join us on Facebook - just search for Nottingham Maternity Research Network

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the latest issue of our regular network newsletter. Here you'll find a summary of our recent network meeting, details of recent and forthcoming community engagement events, and findings from our recent study about birth plans.



REPORT ON THE OCTOBER NETWORK MEETING

Network members met earlier this month at the Poppy & Pint in West Bridgford, with much of the meeting taken up discussing our forthcoming community visits. We asked members about best ways to engage with the public, and the general view was that face-to-face works best. On the subject of the key messages we could communicate when publicising involvement in research, we had some great suggestions, including this tag line: 'Supporting researchers doing the research'.

We also discussed the use of resources in our community visits, and received valuable feedback on posters and leaflets. Finally, we talked about how we feed back the results of studies once they've been completed, and from this discussion we're planning to embed posters and other dissemination resources within our Notts Maternity web pages - watch this space!

Recent and Forthcoming Community Visits

We've been highlighting the work of Notts Maternity around Nottingham over the past couple of months, as part of our mission to engage with women from lots of areas. In September, we visited the Nottingham Homebirth Group, and most recently we've been talking about the Network to women at the Nottingham Women's Culture Exchange. Bernie received a very warm welcome and plenty of interest in the Network at both these visits - and more women are signing up to our mailing list all the time: welcome to our newest members, who will be receiving this newsletter for the first time!

Next up, we'll be at the **Nottingham Women's Centre** on **Wednesday 2nd November**, between 10am and 3pm.

Then on **Friday 16th December** we'll be holding our first community engagement event beyond Nottingham, when we spend a day at **Newark library**.

If any Network members would like to join us at these events, do let us know - it's so valuable for members of the public to hear about involvement in research from those of you who are actively engaged in studies!

Notts Maternity at Café Connect

We've been at the Nottingham Contemporary this October half term, along with other University of Nottingham researchers. We've been highlighting examples of our studies, and there were plenty of opportunities to engage with researchers from other University departments. Notts Maternity was there as part of the Maternal Health and Wellbeing research group, showcasing some ongoing and completed studies, including:

- ◆ Fathers' experiences of early labour;
- ◆ Birth plans
- ◆ Midwifery Units

Visitors had the opportunity to tell us what they think about doing research via the Internet, and were also asked about their opinions of how childbirth appears on TV - lots of interesting comments on these subjects!



Completed project: birth plans



As many of you know, we've been doing some small scale research into birth plans, asking women on Mumsnet and Netmums whether they wrote a birth plan, and if they did, how they feel about it now. We had a good response to our questions, and some significant themes emerged from what women told us:

- ◆ Women had a wide range of opinions and experiences of birth plans;
- ◆ Benefits included communication opportunities, awareness of options, and gaining a sense of control over events in labour and birth;
- ◆ 'Planning' birth was considered a challenging term, and many respondents had found it difficult to complete birth plans.

Meet a Member of the Network



Julie Roberts, senior research fellow in maternity care

I'm a sociologist by background, and I've been doing research around pregnancy and women's health since 2003. I'm interested in the experiences of women and families, and also the cultural context of those experiences. I've researched topics including ultrasound, fathers and labour, experiences of being 'overdue', and my current project is about childbirth on TV.

I've been involved with the Network since its beginning. I have first-hand experience of how guidance from Network members can ensure that research studies are appealing and accessible to women. Advice from women in the Network often challenges us to think about doing research differently. Research has a vital role in improving maternity services, and maternal health. Working alongside members of the public can help make sure we are asking questions that matter, and that research findings reach beyond academia.

Get in Touch, Spread the Word!

Visit our website: www.nottsmaternity.ac.uk

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