

DEVON MVP

15 STEPS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

What is 15 Steps?

Based on the ethos of teamwork within MVPs, the 15 Steps toolkit is a method which looks at maternity services from the perspective of those who use them. It explores their first impressions of care, their surroundings and the overall experience across their maternity journey.

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WHAT WE DID

On Monday 13th September 2021, Vice Chair - Leona Miles and two service users entered Ladywell Unit at Northern Devon Healthcare Trust. We were given our tour by Head of Midwifery, Joanne Haywood.

We visited the following areas of the trust:

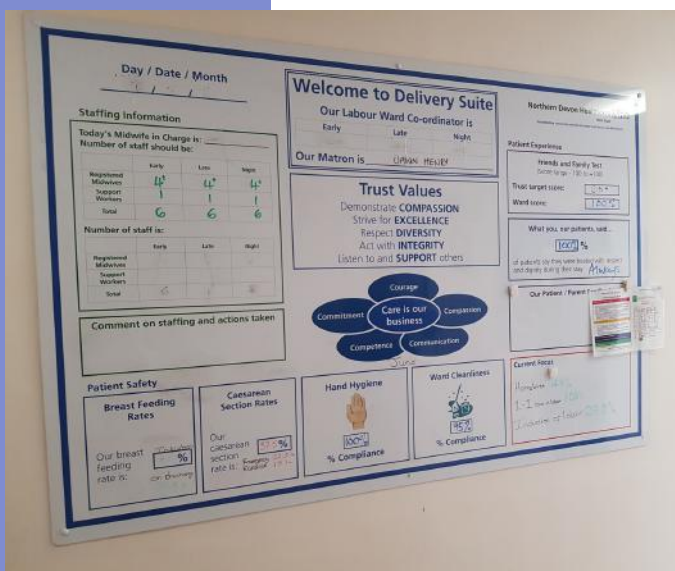
- Labour Ward
- Reception
- Antenatal Clinic
- Bassett Ward

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LABOUR WARD

As we walked through the double doors into Labour Ward we noticed the “Welcome to Delivery Suite” board. We all felt that the board didn’t appear engaging. **One person in the group suggested that being in labour you do not take notice of writing, but perhaps bold letting with affirmations and confident strong photos of birthing people and newborn babies would be more engaging and inspiring.**

As we walked further the team as a whole felt the space leading into reception looked clean and people in desk were friendly and welcoming to the group. Despite the radio playing quietly in the background the atmosphere felt calming.



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The group noticed the “Thank You” cards and photographs on the wall. The art work competition was nice to see, but we did question whether people would engage with them when first entering the ward. It was suggested that it might be nicer to have these somewhere stationary, rather than a walk through area.

The group noticed the clinical machines out in the corridors and felt that they looked overwhelming and a little scary.

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Joanne led us through to the different rooms. Everyone liked that each room was named after a location in North Devon.

Delivery room – **Clovelly**: This room was large in size and overall clean. We noticed the laminated affirmations, which was nice to see. But one person noticed that there was paint coming off the wall near the bin. Wires were hanging over the information sheets near the TV, which was distracting and looked a little untidy.

One person in the group suggested it might be nice for there to be a noticeboard on how to get help should they need it. The room had an en-suite, which was large and clean. But felt very clinical.



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Midwife led unit – **Broadsands**: Overall the group liked this room. One member of the group said from a birth trauma point of view this room was amazing! She said she could see there was real thought that had gone into the colour palette and the picture on the wall. Everything felt softer, welcoming and instant calm. It was a shame there was a stepladder keeping the door open. However, it felt large, airy and very calming. The sofa looked comfortable and it was nice to see more home comforts like candles and plants. It was great to see a birthing ball out and that many of the clinical elements were kept out of the way. The bathroom felt light and very clean, but clinical like the other bathrooms. One member of the group noticed the showerhead looked very small! The group liked that there would be no doctors in the room unless absolutely necessary.

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Delivery room – **Barricane**: The group felt that despite there being a pool and birthing ball this room felt very clinical, after viewing Broadsands!

One member of the group said she just felt sad being in this room as it brought back memories of waiting here before her caesarean (she had wanted a waterbirth and felt it was cruel to have to wait in the room she would rather have birthed in).

The group did not notice any information in any of the birth rooms to promote active birth or different positions.

Whilst on labour ward Joanne also showed the group to the Beaches bereavement room. This room felt light and very clean with nice facilities. It was nice to see welcoming notes on self-help and the group noticed that it didn't feel too clinical.



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RECEPTION

Next, we were led into the reception area by Joanne. On the day we visited, it was quiet and calm. But the area is small and lots of people pass through at different times. One person in the group suggested a screen running parallel to the entrance doors could keep the area from feeling drafty and offer more privacy.



The overall look felt messy and dated. Whilst women and birthing people had to wait, they only had a small TV, with adverts to look at or reception. There was nowhere obvious to get refreshments (although we later discovered these walking up to Bassett Ward). There was a noticeboard that looked like it needed restocking and **Leona noticed that the MVP flyers on display were out of date.** No one in the group saw any information on how to contact PALS. However, it was noted that there was diverse imagery (although this was the only time the group noticed this).



There was no information or representation for the LGBTQ+ community.

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The group thought the breastfeeding posters were very positive. Although, it was questioned where the formula feeding posters were for balance? Overall, there were a lot of different notice boards and one person in the group suggested one big board might be more useful than many. Another member of the group suggested poems, local information on antenatal care or baby groups.



The group thought the Covid notice boards were incredibly useful and informative. **However, the group felt that within the entire maternity unit there were too many notice boards; it was sometimes difficult to determine which boards were for service users and which were for staff. It was suggested that boards had different coloured borders. For example, green for service users and blue for staff.**

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ANTENATAL CLINIC

Joanne led us into the Antenatal Clinic, we noticed many nice photos as we went in and notice boards, including an empty flyer wall, that felt like a missed opportunity. **There was a breastfeeding wall, which we all thought was a great idea, but questioned whether this was the right place to have it? Would it get more engagement somewhere else?** The group loved the poems and affirmations, but also felt these would be best placed in a more obvious waiting area.

One member of the group suggested less information in the corridor and more bold images and colour as people walk through.



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The group thought that whilst small, the idea of Sandy Cove was a lovely idea and a nice place for families to go if they had received bad news. The sofa and curtains felt homely and not clinical and it was nice to see personal touches like tissues with tea and coffee making facilities. **One member of the group suggested some images on the wall, that were not baby related.**

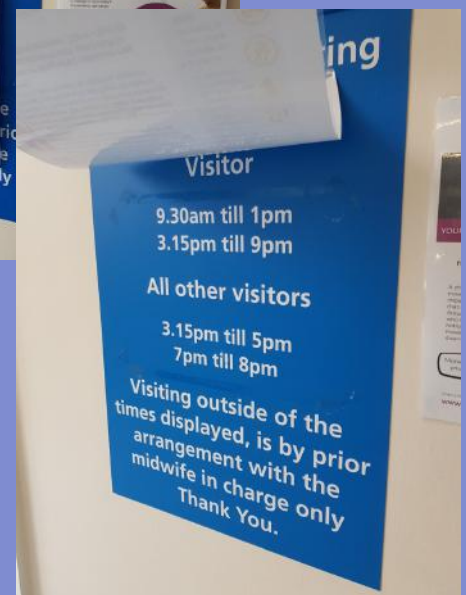
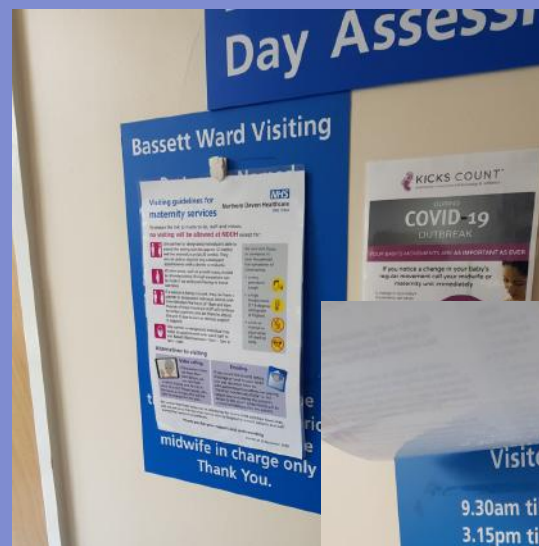
Joanne then took us to the ultrasound room where **the team were very welcoming and friendly**. Whilst quite dark and clinical, the room felt cosy and reassuring to the group. However, one person in the group thought the desks looked untidy and suggested it would be nice to see some images or (fake) plants in the room – so make it appear a little less clinical.

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BASSETT WARD

The group were next taken up the stairs towards Bassett Ward (postnatal wards). We stopped in the small reception/waiting area before entering the ward. One person noticed and liked the Anne Geddes images. It was really nice to see images of fathers with their babies. **But on the whole the group felt the space was very dark and not that welcoming.** There was a wheelchair obstructing the telephone and the snack machine was extremely noisy. **One person in the group suggested some reading materials in this area, like within the main reception.**

We noticed that there was no obvious information on visiting times. we later discovered this was hidden under a poster that Joanne lifted up for us to read.



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We then walked through to Bassett Ward where we saw that the board on the left was out of date. The walk up to reception was quite dark and there were a lot of trolleys in the corridor. **As we observed in other spaces, there were a lot of notice boards and we were unsure which boards were for us and which were for staff.**

However, the space felt quiet and calm on arrival.



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Day Assessment: This space felt light and airy. It was nice to see breastfeeding information as well as information about Early Nourishment (although it was questioned why there were no flyers or posters from other organisations). The group commented on how they liked to see chairs, rather than beds in this space. But the room did feel clinical. The radio was on. If there were lots of women or birthing people present then it wouldn't feel very private.



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Nursery & Visitor room: The room was basic, but nice and light. Someone noticed a calm feeling and commented on how it was good to see a water station.

Wards: On the day of the visit, we couldn't view all the rooms as some were occupied. But overall the group felt the rooms were very clinical. The room opposite reception only had one bed on the day we visited, so we felt that this would be more relaxing, but if 3 women or birthing people occupied the room and with the noise from reception - this could feel quite stressful and noisy for some families. **The group commented on breastfeeding posters again, which was great to see, but no information on bottle feeding. One member of the group said the bleeping machines could cause feelings of anxiety.** The group felt that if by a window, then the space would seem less crowded, but very overwhelming and suffocating if in one of the corner spaces with just curtains to look at.



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A huge thank you to the service users who attended the trust and gave feedback for the 15 Steps report and to all the staff at Northern Devon Healthcare Trust, especially Joanne Haywood.