



BIRTHWAYS NEWSLETTER

May 2022

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Pelvic floor workout programme launches for pregnant and postnatal women

Pregnant and postnatal women in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are being encouraged to use a new workout programme to help improve their pelvic floor health.

The 'Squeeze, Lift, Hold' campaign has been launched by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS). The campaign includes a website with facts, tips and advice to help women recognise the signs of incontinence, as well as behaviours to follow to help strengthen their pelvic floor muscles.

More than one in three women experience unintentional (involuntary) loss of urine (urinary incontinence) in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy, while about one in three leak urine in the first three months after giving birth. But the team at LMNS want women to know it doesn't have to be this way.

Rhiannon Eling, Maternity Voices Partnership representative

said: "Incontinence during or after pregnancy isn't normal and can have a massive impact on a woman's quality

of life. Talking about it isn't normal either but it should be, which is why we've launched the 'Squeeze, Lift, Hold' campaign.

"By providing women with easy-to-follow tips and a workout programme of simple exercises taking less than six minutes each day, we hope they can improve their pelvic floor in just a few months, all from the comfort of their own home."

The workout programme features simple, quick and effective exercises that can be fitted in around busy routines. With three stages, it is designed to improve bladder and bowel control, reduce the risk of pelvic organ prolapse, improve recovery from childbirth, preserve and/or increase sexual sensation, as well as maintain spine and pelvis support along with deep abdominal (tummy) and back muscles.

Daniela Long and Jen Westley, Specialist Pelvic Health

Physiotherapists said: "Pelvic floor muscles work in two ways – slow and gently to keep things in place

during your everyday life and quickly and strongly when you do a quick movement such as a cough, sneeze or laugh. That is why our workout exercises the pelvic floor in two ways – slow, gentle squeezes to work on the endurance of the muscles and then some quick, strong squeezes to stimulate both these pelvic floor functions.

"Once you grasp the technique, you can quickly start to progress and use the exercises in day-to-day activities."

Amanda Argyle, Perinatal Pelvic Health Midwife added:

"We hope women will find the workout programme simple, engaging and that they will quickly feel the benefits of adding them into their daily routines. Strengthening their pelvic floor muscles will enable them to enjoy this exciting new chapter in their lives with confidence."

To find out more visit:
www.squeezelifthold.co.uk



Meet the Perinatal Pelvic Health Service Team

The #SqueezeLiftHold campaign forms part of a wider piece of work to ensure that mums-to-be across Herefordshire and Worcestershire can benefit from additional, specialist information, advice, and support to maintain or improve their pelvic health.

A new Perinatal Pelvic Health Service is now up and running after Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) was successful in securing £487,000 from NHS England and Improvement to become an early implementer system and improve access to postnatal physiotherapy services.

The aim is to improve the quality of care in the antenatal period before and during pregnancy by providing mums-to-be with more resources to enable them to take active steps to maintain or improve their pelvic floor function and ultimately reduce the number of women living with pelvic floor dysfunction (urinary and faecal incontinence) postnatally and later in life. A new Squeezy App also forms part of the offer – for details on how to download it, see page 3.



**Amanda Argyle,
Pelvic Health Midwife**

Amanda has been a midwife for 13 years, having trained in her home county of Devon. She moved to Worcestershire in 2012 where she worked at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, working mainly on the Delivery Suite and Theatres. As pelvic health midwife for the LMNS she will be working closely with the pelvic health physiotherapists to implement new pelvic health pathways and improve services for the women of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

She said: "I firmly believe in listening to what women and their families want, being their advocate and giving the best possible individualised, quality care. I am excited to be involved in the project and am eager to deliver this very needed service to the women of the two counties."



**Jennifer Westley,
Pelvic Health Physiotherapist**

Jennifer brings nearly 20 years of experience as a physiotherapist, and has been a highly specialist physiotherapist in the Pelvic Health specialty for around 13 years.

Originally from Yorkshire, Jennifer trained in Sheffield before moving to London and has since worked across various NHS trusts and private practice developing her experience and skills in pelvic health.

Jennifer said: "I am excited to be working more closely with midwives and helping to support them in their role to help women understand how to prevent pelvic floor issues and get the right advice early on. I am passionate about improving the service provided to patients and helping to simplify how people access care. I am also determined to dispel myths about the pelvic floor and get us all talking about pelvic floor problems to prevent people suffering in silence."



**Daniela Long,
Clinical Specialist
in Pelvic Health**

Daniela holds a vast array of qualifications backed up by over 15 years of clinical experience. She holds postgraduate qualifications in Continence for Physiotherapists and acupuncture. She is an Independent Prescriber and has completed many other endorsed courses.

Daniela said: "I am delighted to be part of LMNS project improving perinatal care for all women across both counties. I have a passion for supporting both my fellow woman and professionals, aiming to help educate them and address the stigma surrounding pelvic health."

New Apps for parents

Helping our families access additional advice and support

Baby Buddy App

Interactive pregnancy and parenting app by Best Beginnings to support parents, co-parents and caregivers.



Squeezy App

Supporting people with their pelvic floor muscle exercise programmes. Available free via your midwife.



My Prem Baby App

A premature baby tracker from Tommy's for parents, from pregnancy to after the birth.



DadPad App

The essential guide for new dads, developed by the NHS.



All available to download now:



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Covid-19 vaccination clinics for pregnant women prove successful

Weekly drop-in Covid vaccination clinics for pregnant women have been rolled out at the Alexandra Hospital in Redditch and Worcestershire Royal Hospital following the success of clinics at Kidderminster Hospital's Maternity Hub.

The clinics are available for pregnant women, women who have recently given birth, breastfeeding women and partners.

They are in addition to the walk-in clinics already available across Herefordshire and Worcestershire which anyone can use. It is hoped the convenience of being able to have the vaccine while at an existing antenatal clinic will further improve uptake.

Justine Jeffery, Director of Midwifery at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

"COVID-19 rates are currently higher in Worcestershire than England's average rate and can be serious for pregnant women. It is so important to be vaccinated and these vaccination clinics will further encourage pregnant women and women who have recently given birth to get their jabs."

The vaccine has been proven in clinical studies to be safe for pregnant women and their baby and is recommended by NHS England, the National Childbirth Trust and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The drop-in clinics run as follows:

Alexandra Hospital, Redditch:

9am to 1pm every Friday. Call 01527 512004 to book or just drop in.

Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre Maternity Hub:

9am to 1pm every Tuesday. Call 01562 512376 to book or just drop in.

Worcestershire Royal Hospital:

9am to 1pm every Wednesday. Call 01905 760659 to book or just drop in.

To find details of all Covid vaccination walk-in clinics visit www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine



Meadow Birth Centre re-opens

The Meadow Birth Centre at Worcestershire Royal Hospital re-opened at Worcestershire Royal Hospital in November 2021 following a necessary change of use during the Covid pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic it was necessary for Meadow Birth Centre to become an area where mothers and babies who may have been in contact with, or had screened positive for, Covid-19, could be safely isolated.

It was able to re-open when the number of pregnant women testing positive for Covid-19 on admission to the maternity unit reduced to a level where it was possible to safely care for them in adapted single rooms on Delivery Suite. Meadow Birth Centre, run by experienced midwives, offers a comfortable home from home environment which is comfortable and aids relaxation. Movement throughout birth is encouraged and three rooms have a birthing pool available.

Hazel Brookes, Meadow Birth Centre Team leader, said: *"We were thrilled to be able to welcome families back to the birth centre. It's clear how valued the centre is within the local community and we were so excited to be able to provide this midwifery-led service to families across Worcestershire again."*



Meet Wye Valley's new Associate Director of Midwifery

Amie Symes is the new Associate Director of Midwifery at Wye Valley NHS Trust.

Amie has worked in hospital and community settings in a variety of roles including Delivery Suite Co-ordinator, Matron, Quality Improvement Lead and most recently Head of Quality and Patient Safety in Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB in Wales. Amie completed her Midwifery Degree at Cardiff University in 2012 and went on to achieve a postgraduate Masters Degree in Advanced Practice in 2018.

Why did you want to be a midwife and how long have you been qualified?

I wanted to become a midwife after receiving excellent care during the birth of my first daughter, a path many new mums want to follow. I had come to realise the privileges of the midwifery role and started my journey towards becoming a midwife in 2007. I had left school with average GCSE results and wasn't sure if I would make the grade, but found that the college support during the Access to Higher Education course, and the University during the degree programme, provided all of the support needed and I qualified with a first class honours midwifery degree in 2012. It was a proud moment to receive my NMC pin number and begin practicing as a registered midwife - one of the best life decisions I have made.

What attracted you to the job at Wye Valley NHS Trust?

I worked at Wye Valley NHS Trust as a Delivery Suite Co-ordinator in 2016. It has been one of my favourite roles in my career so far! I recall the team here being friendly, supportive and with a strong desire to deliver safe and effective care. They genuinely wanted women and their families to have a positive birth experience – I am delighted to find this has not changed. When the role was advertised I knew I had to apply, and during some of my early discussions I knew I would be well supported.

What will your first priorities be?

There is much great work happening here in Wye Valley and across the region. One of my first priorities will be to support the teams to continue this work through listening and engaging with them. There are several mechanisms of engagement with women and their families which plays a crucial role in successful delivery of a personal, positive

birth experience, I will be participating and supporting the continuation of this work. Of course, we have also seen the publication of the final Ockenden report. This makes a very sad and difficult read. However, the recommendations within this provide us with a great basis upon which we can continue to improve and transform service delivery to provide a high quality, safe service to the women and families we care for. I will work closely with the team here in Wye Valley, and the wider networks to ensure we can meet the recommendations successfully.

What's the best thing about your job?

The Associate Director of Midwifery is the most senior midwifery role in the Trust. I am honoured to be given the opportunity to provide skills and leadership to support the delivery of high quality, safe and effective care. The best thing about my role is working with a wider team of highly skilled professionals, who all have a varied background and differing skills to offer.

What are the biggest challenges?

There are many challenges to improving and delivering care within a healthcare setting and Covid-19 has certainly tested the system, having a huge impact on our patient population, the staff and structures of healthcare. The midwifery landscape has transformed over recent years with further transformation needed. Implementing meaningful change at pace is certainly a huge challenge, but being surrounded by a skilled and able team makes it possible.

What are you looking forward to the most?

Having stepped out of direct midwifery into a corporate role in my last post (which I enjoyed and gained many new skills) I am most looking forward to being back in midwifery, where my heart lies.

Money for digital transformation supports improvements in maternity care

Maternity services in Herefordshire and Worcestershire have been awarded a combined £360,000 of funding from the national Digital Maternity Fund to further improve digital maternity services.

Wye Valley NHS Trust and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust are among Trusts from across the country which have benefited from funding which will help to deliver an enhanced experience for maternity service users and staff by improving infrastructure, technology systems and connectivity.

In Herefordshire the funds have been used to purchase equipment to improve CTG monitoring systems – a method of recording a baby's heartbeat during labour to assess their wellbeing. This will allow Consultant Obstetricians to easily view CTGs from any location while they are on-call. This will improve the quality of care for women on delivery suite.

The award has also enabled the creation of a full-time Digital Midwife role who will lead on improvements to the 'Badger Notes' app which provides information to women about their options for maternity care, including an online antenatal education course translated into seven different languages.

In Worcestershire, the money will be used to implement a fetal medicine reporting system which will enable medical images to be measured and annotated digitally, inserted into medical reports and used for diagnostic purposes.

It will also enable a home blood pressure monitoring system to be put in place, where pregnant women can monitor and record their blood pressure results via a smart phone app and receive tailored advice from clinical staff.

Amie Symes, Associate Director of Midwifery at Wye Valley Trust, said *"We are excited to be able to use these funds to enhance the care that we offer to women in Herefordshire. We are always seeking to improve our services, and using these digital methods to provide information and education will help women to feel informed and confident throughout their pregnancy. Changes to our use of CTG monitoring will also improve the service we offer to women on our Delivery Suite."*

Justine Jeffery, Director of Midwifery at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust said: *"I am delighted that we have been awarded these funds to enable further digital improvements within maternity services in the county. We pride ourselves on digital innovation and moving the service forward and strive to provide women with digital solutions to support and personalise their care. We always consider the most efficient ways of working for staff and digital methods have assisted with this."*

Digital tools are one of the ways the Trusts are improving safety, reporting, and sharing information with women and their families so they can feel more supported throughout their pregnancy and maternity journey.

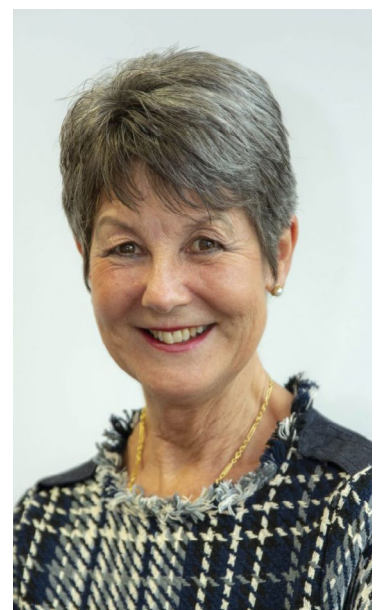
Fond farewell to Fay

Maternity colleagues have bid a fond farewell to Fay Baillie as she steps down as Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System's Clinical Director.

Fay has led the implementation of the Local Maternity and Neonatal System since its inception in March 2017, having previously worked in the NHS for 43 years working mainly in acute teaching hospitals leading women and children's services. Fay also held Board positions as Director of Nursing and Midwifery in an Acute Hospital, Primary Care Trust and NHS England local and area teams. As the West Midlands Darzi lead for maternity services, Fay led major reconfiguration and transformational service changes.

Cathy Garlick, LMNS Director, said: *"Fay has been the corner stone of the LMNS success in improving care and outcomes from mothers, babies and families. Her tenacity, extensive clinical knowledge and skills have steered the LMNS and aided its multidisciplinary workings and engagement."*

"We will greatly miss Fay's wisdom, enquiring mind, searching questions and mostly, her passion to improve outcomes for families."



Thank You to Shirley and Best Wishes to Lauren

Herefordshire and Worcestershire LMNS wants to say a huge thank you to Shirley Jones as she stands down from her role as Chair of Worcestershire Maternity Voices Partnership and best wishes to Lauren Edwards, Chair of Herefordshire Maternity Voices Partnership, who is soon going on maternity leave. Recruitment is underway for a new chair of Worcestershire MVP.

News in Brief

Congratulations to the Neonatal Outreach Team at Wye valley NHS Trust for receiving a staff recognition award for their fantastic work!

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust's Neonatal unit is now providing wellbeing packs for parents who have to go home without their new baby while they receive extra care.



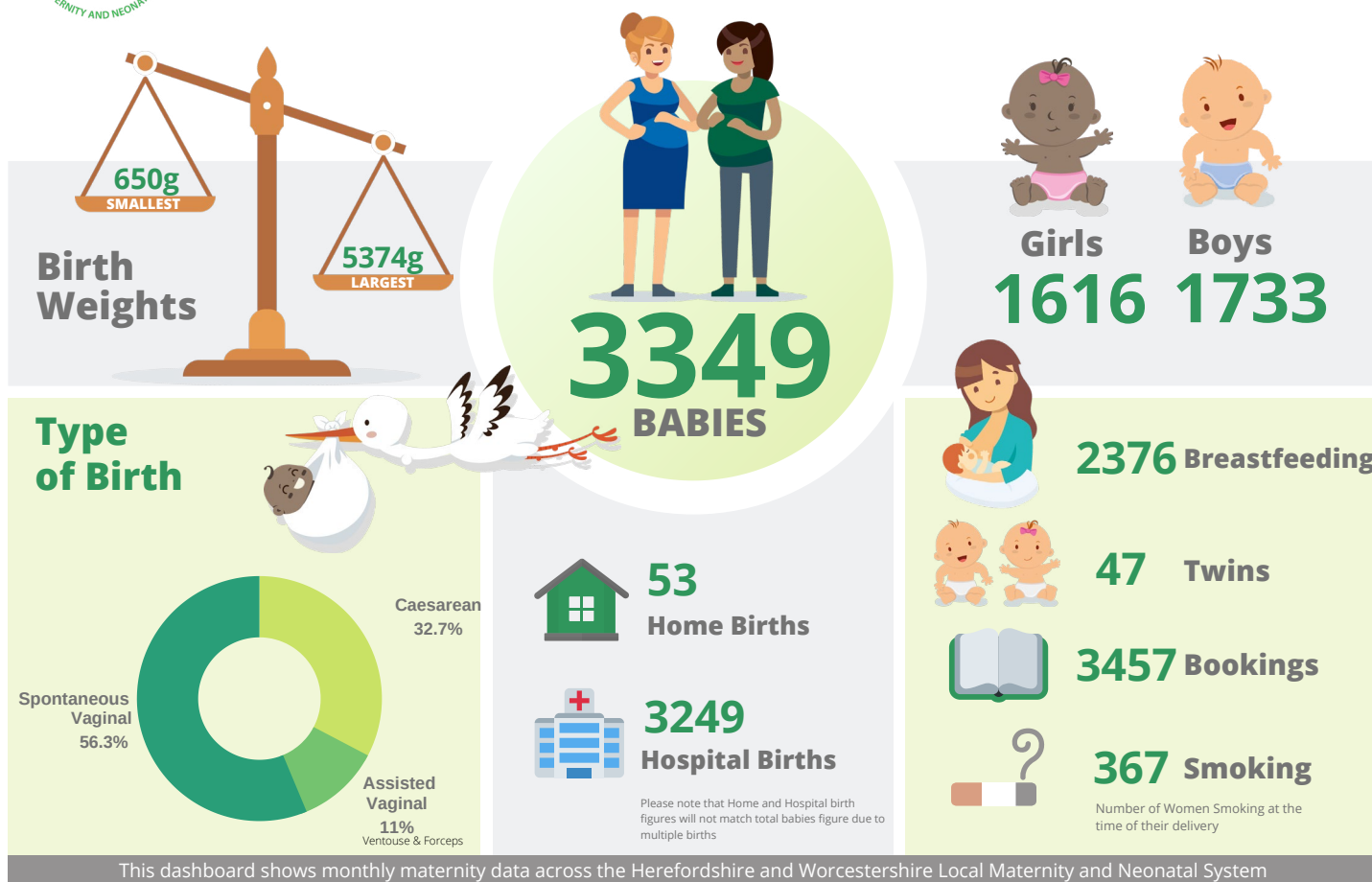
The neonatal outreach team in Worcestershire recently introduced home phototherapy and the initiative won them a £100 prize at the Neonatal Nurses Association Conference



Maternity and Neonatal Insight



SEPTEMBER 2021 - FEBRUARY 2022



This dashboard shows monthly maternity data across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System



HEREFORDSHIRE
Maternity Voices
Working in partnership to improve maternity services



WORCESTERSHIRE
Maternity Voices
Working in partnership to improve maternity services



We would love to hear your experiences of maternity care before, during and after birth.

What went well?
What didn't?
What changes would you like to see?

HAVE YOUR SAY

Herefordshire

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