

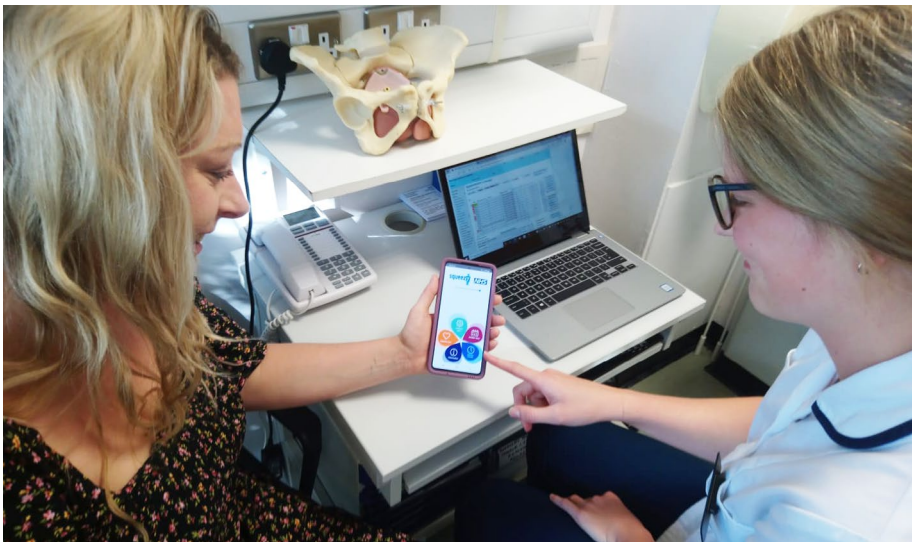


BIRTHWAYS NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2022



Free app supports improved pelvic health



A free app which supports women to maintain and improve their pelvic health has been launched across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Midwives and health visitors are now able to refer women for the Squeezy Pelvic Floor App while they are pregnant and up to a year after giving birth.

The multi-award winning app supports people with their pelvic floor muscle exercises. It comes with a pre-set exercise plan recommended by pelvic health physiotherapists that follows national guidelines and guides users through pelvic floor muscle exercises and reminds them to do them regularly.

Amanda Argyle, Pelvic Health Midwife at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System, said: *"The Perinatal Pelvic Health Service team launched the Squeezy App in the summer and we have been really pleased with the uptake so far."*

"We would encourage all women to use the app, regardless of if they have any existing pelvic floor issues. We know that if women continue to exercise their pelvic floor muscles they can prevent problems developing and can even treat any minor issues such as leaking urine when coughing, sneezing or laughing or any other symptoms that may naturally begin during pregnancy."



Pregnancy and childbirth, whether it be a vaginal delivery or caesarean section all can take its toll on the body and the pelvic floor.

Amanda added: *"We are so excited to be offering this amazing app and we want women to know that they can prevent pelvic problems and that it doesn't have to be something that just happens after having a baby."*

The app can also be tailored to be used in conjunction with any physiotherapy care women are receiving. Women who would like to know more, should ask their midwife or health visitor.

Midwives can refer women for the app via BadgerNet. Health visitors can contact the Perinatal Pelvic Health Service team directly for any postnatal women wishing to download Squeezy App.

Further information on the Squeezy App can be found at squeezyapp.com/how-it-works/

For further information, hints and tips on looking after your pelvic health visit squeezelifthold.co.uk

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.



SCAN ME

Squeezy App

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



SCAN ME



My Prem Baby App

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



SCAN ME

DadPad App

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



SCAN ME

All available to download now:



APPROVED BY



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New service offers Beacon of hope to those with mental health difficulties



Plus Beacon team (left to right): Heather Reed, Peer support Worker; Trudy Berlet, Team Lead and Specialist Midwife; Kate Willis, Cognitive Behavioural Therapist; Nick Pardoe, Team Secretary; Claire Sweeney, Clinical Psychologist.

A brand new service offering help and support to women and birthing people experiencing mental health difficulties is up and running across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The Beacon MMHS, Reproductive/ Birth Trauma and Loss Service is a non-urgent outpatient therapeutic service, offering targeted psychological interventions to those who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health difficulties in a number of areas.

These include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following birth trauma or perinatal loss, baby loss at any stage, or suffering a severe fear of childbirth.

The service, run by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, launched in February 2022, and is initially taking referrals from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Perinatal Mental Health Service. Over

the coming weeks it will extend its service to take direct referrals from maternity services at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Wye Valley NHS Trust, as well as GPs and health visitors. The aim is for the service to be fully up and running in early 2023.

Trudy Berlet, Team Lead for the Beacon MMHS Reproductive/Birth Trauma and Loss Service and Specialist Midwife, explained that the service can assess and offer treatment that may include psychological interventions with a Clinical Psychologist or Cognitive Behavioral Therapist (CBT). The team is also able to offer support from a Specialist Midwife and a Peer Support Worker (PSW) with lived experience.

"We're really pleased to be able to offer individualized care for the people accessing our service, whether that be face to face locally for them or virtually. We are here as an additional service that will complement the range

of mental health services already available across the two counties, and will cater for those women and birthing people who in the past may not have been able to access professional help and support for their specific needs."

Trudy added that the feedback from those who have accessed the service so far have been extremely positive.

"We have had service users tell us that they didn't realise that they could have had such a positive birth experience after what they had been through previously, and that if they hadn't received the support from the service they wouldn't know where they would be now."

"It's great to hear this and know that we have been able to make such a positive difference to their mental wellbeing, and we are really looking forward to expanding the service to offer more support to those who need it over the coming months."

Digital developments to continue to transform care for women and babies



A detailed vision for how digital tools and technology will continue to improve maternity and neonatal care across Herefordshire and Worcestershire over the next two years has been set out.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System's Digital Strategy 2022-2024 sets out the roadmap for how midwives and maternity and neonatal staff will have improved and more timely access to robust information at their fingertips to help them take targeted measures to address any inequalities and improve the health of those in their care, and how women and families

will have improved access to their own health records and health management tools to help them make informed decisions about their care.

The strategy aims to build on the good progress already made across the two counties – such as the implementation of the BadgerNet system which replaces paper notes – which has seen the LMNS being placed second out of the 42 LMNS' nationally for its digital maturity.

Zoe Durall, Lead Midwife for the LMNS, said: "Our work over the next two years will directly contribute to the overall digital strategy across the NHS in the two counties - namely sharing care record

information with service users, digitally improved access to information and enhanced signposting, and supporting communities through telehealth.

"We plan to join the national Single Pregnancy Record (SPR) to enable all units using BadgerNet to contribute to a single record of care – meaning women's records will be available wherever they access maternity and neonatal care, and we will be increasing the use, and expanding the functionality, of already adopted tools to further empower our colleagues and service users.

"Thanks to national funding, we are also excited to be introducing remote

blood pressure monitoring for women requiring frequent checks - this will allow women to check their blood pressure at home and send the results digitally for checking, reducing the need for frequent trips to Day Assessment Unit and improving service user experience. A digital reporting system this will also go live in 2023 for fetal medicine patients, allowing scan results to be available electronically. This will improve safety as it will reduce the possibility of errors when manually transcribing results, and save clinician time, enabling enhanced focus on direct patient care."

The LMNS continues to work closely with both Herefordshire and Worcestershire Maternity Voices Partnerships to ensure user experience is central to decision making. There will be a specific focus on equality of access - ensuring measures are taken to assess people's digital literacy and give support for those at risk of digital exclusion.

The strategy, which was launched this month, was developed against the seven success measures of NHS England's 'What Good Looks Like' Digital Transformation Framework (August 2021).

Welcome to Rachel and Fiona

– the newest members of the LMNS team



Dr Rachel Duckett joined Herefordshire and Worcestershire LMNS as Consultant Obstetrician in August. She is also a Consultant Obstetrician at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust where she has previously been Divisional Medical Director for Women and Children's Services and Clinical Director for Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Her special interests are fetal medicine, antenatal and intrapartum care.

Fiona Lawrence joined Herefordshire and Worcestershire LMNS as a Neonatal Nurse in August.

Why did you want to be a Consultant Obstetrician/Neonatal Nurse and how long have you been qualified?

Rachel: On my medical student attachment in Obstetrics and Gynaecology I was inspired by the team of Midwives and Doctors in the maternity department. It was the first time as a student I had really been made to be part of a team and that feeling has never left me

I qualified in 1996 and went straight into my training in O and G after my junior doctor year and was appointed to Worcestershire NHS Trust as a Consultant in 2007. Initially I worked across both Obstetrics and Gynaecology but I now specialise in Maternity care from preconception to postnatal.

Fiona: I have been a qualified Nurse for 33 years and a Neonatal nurse for 23 years. After initially qualifying as a Nurse I left to study for a Degree in Social Policy at York University. I started working within the Neonatal area of Nursing following the birth of my third child. I have

always enjoyed caring for people within the Intensive Care environment and have loved the challenges of caring for Neonates within a constantly changing environment. I love the sense of satisfaction of seeing a family's journey from an often-traumatic start through to a successful discharge home.

What attracted you to this job?

Rachel: Obstetrics as a speciality is so varied and every day is different. One day you will be counselling a woman before she embarks on a pregnancy, the next you might be performing a Caesarean Section. For me, taking the time to listen and support choices that enable care to be personalised is key to my role. As a Consultant in Worcestershire over the last 15 years I work across the county undertaking clinics in Evesham, Redditch and Worcester. I enjoy the multisite nature of our Trust and the opportunity to provide antenatal care for women close to their homes.

Fiona: I wanted to work outside the clinical setting and gain a greater understanding of the policy that surrounds my current practice.

What will your first priorities be for care in Herefordshire and Worcestershire?

Rachel: I have been based in Worcestershire for the last 15 years and have a good understanding of the challenges locally. In my LMNS role I recognise that I need to get to know the team at Wye Valley and the specific challenges they face. My first priorities will be to visit Wye Valley in person and develop close cross Trust working relationships.

Fiona: I feel very passionately that every family deserves to have the choice to deliver their baby in the most appropriate setting and therefore improve the long-term outcomes of their child. One of the important areas I will be focusing on is the use of state-of-the-art treatment across the two counties that can serve to reduce the potentially devastating effects when, in rare instances, a baby born prematurely suffers brain injury at birth.



What do you enjoy most about your job?

Rachel: I feel so privileged to be able to care for women and their families from preconception to after birth, often for successive pregnancies. I enjoy getting to know the women under my care so that I can provide individualised support. Working as part of the maternity team reminds me on a daily basis of the importance of excellent team work and the support that we provide to each other and the families for whom we care.

Fiona: The diversity of being clinical one day and managerial the next – both very different roles, but with some overlap. Working clinically, I really enjoy interacting with families and making a difference to a neonatal outcome. Already in this new role I can see how I may be able to add to the experience of the families I care for and influence policy decisions.

Although my role with the LMNS covers the large geographical region of Herefordshire and Worcestershire I believe we have the opportunity to work as a team sharing the skills of staff across the LMNS.

Fiona: Learning how to work in a different way and understanding new terminologies. I am comfortable with my ability to deliver excellent care in the clinical setting; however I am aware of the challenges that also exist. I'm aiming to work smartly and collaboratively with other members of our West Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network (ODN) to ensure our families receive the best possible care they deserve.

What are you looking forward to the most?

Rachel: I enjoy my day to day clinical role and seeing the effect of providing excellent care on an individual basis, I am looking forward to the opportunity to work across the wider healthcare system to develop and support the provision of high quality and safe care for women and their families throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Fiona: Definitely working outside my comfort zone, with a new team across the West Midlands ODN, while also being able to bring my clinical experience and families' voice to a specialised area that is constantly undergoing change.

What are the biggest challenges?

Rachel: Maternity services have been in the spotlight over the last few years with the publication of reports such as Ockenden and Saving Babies Lives. Following on from the challenges of Covid which has stretched the NHS and its staff to the limits it is important as a leader that I inspire my teams, work with them and lead by example in continuing to improve maternity services. Staff need to be given the opportunity to develop their skills, embrace and embed new ways of working such as Continuity of Carer.



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

Email: Herefordshiremv@outlook.com
Facebook: @HerefordshireMaternityVoices

Worcestershire

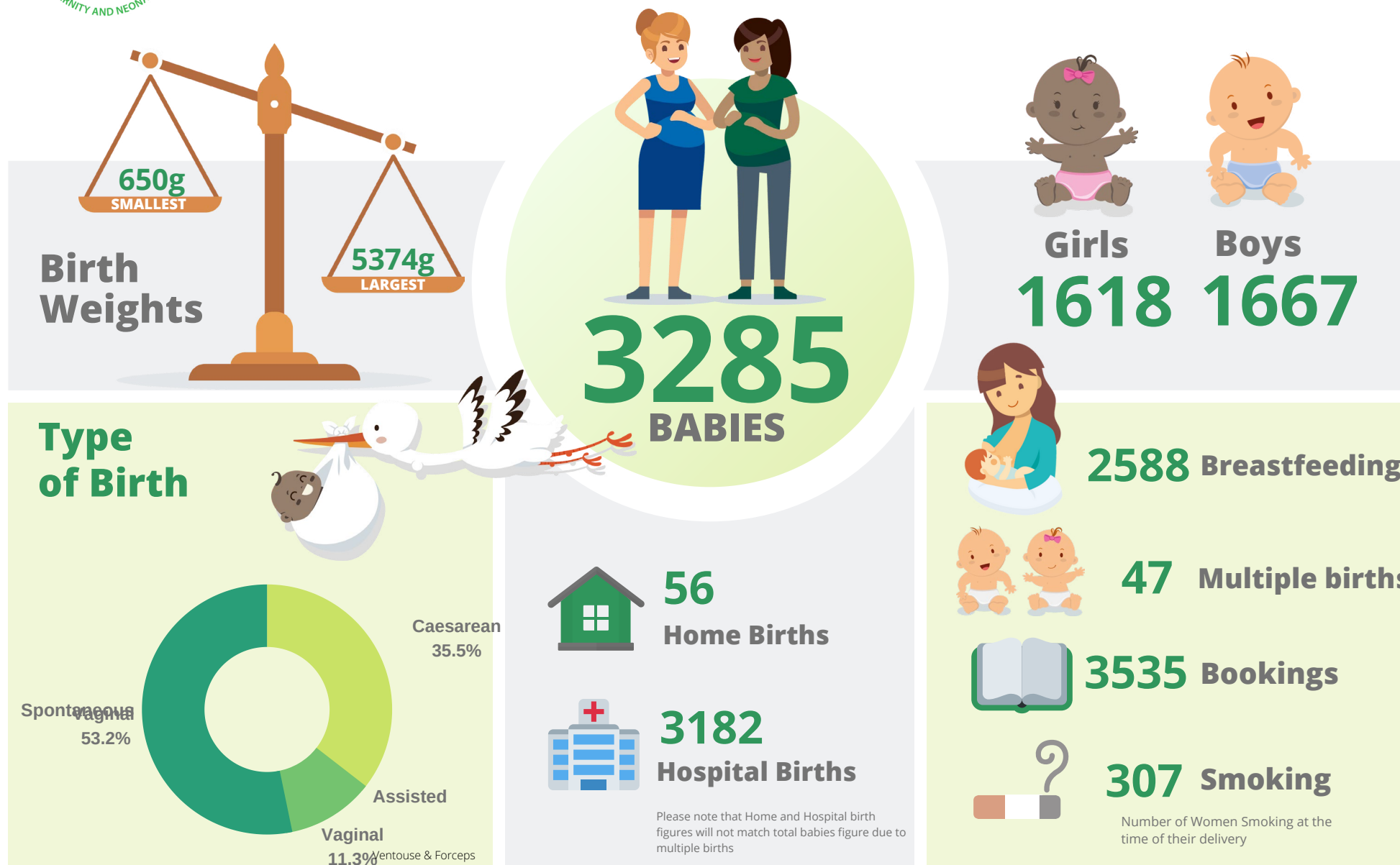
Email: worcestershire.mv@outlook.com
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Instagram: worcestershire_mv



Maternity and Neonatal Insight



APRIL 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2022



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