

Somerset Council
Scrutiny Committee
– Adults and Health[Click [here](#) and type date]



Care Quality Commission inspection reports in relation to maternity services in Somerset

Lead Officer:

Author: Phil Brice, Director of Corporate Services

Contact Details:

Executive Lead Member:

Division / Local Member:

1. Summary

1.1. On 20 and 21 November 2023, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a planned focused inspection of the maternity units at Musgrove Park Hospital, Yeovil District Hospital and the Mary Stanley mid-wife led unit at Bridgwater Community Hospital. This inspection was part of a national programme of inspections undertaken by the CQC which aimed to provide an up-to-date view of the quality of hospital maternity care across the country, and a better understanding of what is working well to support learning and improvement at a local and national level.

1.2. The inspection rated the maternity services to be inadequate at both the Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital sites and rated the services at the Mary Stanley unit as requires improvement. Overall, the inspection and finalised inspection reports downgraded the overall rating of both acute hospital sites from “Good” to “Requires Improvement” in both the safe and well-led categories of the CQC ratings. The rating for Somerset NHS Foundation Trust remained as “Good” overall.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. As a result of the inspection and findings identified during the visit the Trust was issued a Section 29(A) notice under the Health and Social Care Act 2006 in January 2024 which covered a number of areas including;

- The lack of clear triage in place at Musgrove Park Hospital to ensure the safety of women, birthing people and babies, which was not included on the relevant maternity risk register;

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- The service not having a regular program of audits to ensure the safety and quality of the service is monitored and processes to learn from incidents were not found to be effective;
- Leadership systems were found to be ineffective to improve quality of the service or maintain clear oversight of maternity services to keep women, birthing people, and babies safe; and
- The service did not ensure that Policies and Procedures were in place to provide staff with relevant guidance.

2.2. In addition to the above, the Trust was also issued with a warning notice under Section 31 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 in December 2023. This related to concerns raised as part of the inspection process with regards to the condition of the estate and security of the maternity wards at Musgrove Park Hospital. The Trust was given 48 hours to rectify the issues specifically covered by this notice which was subsequently withdrawn.

2.3 The Trust has established a Maternity and Neonatal Action Group (MNAG), jointly chaired by the Chief Nurse and Chief Operating Officer, to oversee the response to the CQC inspection reports and delivery of the actions in relation to the s29A warning notice. The Trust has submitted action plans in respect of the s29A notice and also in respect of the CQC inspection reports Must and Should Do recommendations and has established liaison meetings with the CQC to inform and update on the delivery of these. MNAG meets twice a month and reports monthly to the Trust's Quality and Governance Assurance Committee which reports directly to the Board at each of its public board meetings. These arrangements will continue until the action plans are completed and/or a further CQC inspection of maternity services is undertaken.

3. Background

3.1. Musgrove Park Hospital provides maternity services to the population of Taunton and Somerset. Maternity services include a Triage Ward with 4 beds and a side room; Antenatal Ward (Willow Ward) which included 4 induction of labour beds, 6 antenatal beds and 1 side room with en-suite facility; a midwifery led alongside birthing centre (Bracken Birth Centre) which includes 2 pool rooms with en-suite facilities and 6 postnatal beds; a Postnatal Ward (Fern Ward) which had 11 beds across 2 bays, 2 transitional care beds in a shared bay and accommodation for up to 5 parents whose babies are on special care. There is a labour ward with 7 birthing rooms, 1 of which has a birthing pool and a procedure room: 2 recovery beds and 1 theatre. In the last year approximately 3000 babies were born at Musgrove Park Hospital.

3.2. Yeovil District Hospital provides maternity services to the population of Yeovil in South Somerset, North and West Dorset, and the Mendips. Maternity services

include an outpatient department, maternity assessment unit, triage, maternity ward for antenatal and postnatal care (Freya Ward), delivery suite, two maternity theatres, bereavement suite, antenatal clinics, and an ultrasound department. Between April 2022 to March 2023 there were 1259 births at Yeovil District Hospital.

- 3.3** The Mary Stanley midwife-led unit at Bridgwater Community Hospital provides maternity services to the population of Bridgwater, Minehead, Glastonbury and the surrounding areas. Maternity services include a midwifery-led birthing centre with 2 birthing rooms both with birthing pool rooms. At the time of inspection, one birthing room was used as a clinic room and the other was set up for births. Between October 2022 and October 2023, 5 babies were born at the Mary Stanley midwife-led unit at Bridgwater Community Hospital.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** The CQC reports highlight a limited approach to sharing information with and obtaining the views of staff and people who used the service.
- 4.2.** The trust works with the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership who have representation on the MNAG and are involved in co-producing the responses to the findings from the CQC inspection.
- 4.3** The findings of the inspection reports were shared with a wide range of stakeholders together with a summary of the actions the trust is taking to address the shortcomings identified.
- 4.4** The Trust recognises that these reports illustrate that we have fallen short of the standards we expected to be delivering and we have publicly apologised to the families that use our services and to our hard-working colleagues.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** In response to the inspection report findings and Section 29A warning noticed, the Trust has developed an improvement plan with identified “must do” and “should do” actions with reporting of progress against the identifiable actions to both the Trust’s Quality and Governance Assurance Committee, where progress against the maternity recommendations is a recurring agenda item and also as part of the Board level reporting.
- 5.2.** The Trust has been working alongside the local CQC team in order to track progress and has met all deadlines with regards to the reporting of actions achieved, and those planned for the future. The Trust has provided the CQC inspection team with detailed briefing notes outlining both the areas of concern raised in the initial inspection alongside the actions that have been implemented since the inspection in order to address the concerns. In May 2024, the Trust received notification from the CQC that they were satisfied

with the actions completed by the Trust to date in order to address the concerns identified from the initial inspection into maternity services. The CQC confirmed that at this stage, they were not intending to take further regulatory action.

The Trust is committed to improving our services so that we provide an excellent service that supports women, birthing people, and families in Somerset and we have made significant changes since the inspection and will continue to do so. The trust has strengthened its processes to provide ongoing review of quality, performance and governance including developing a strong audit and policy programme to drive continual improvements in our services. All guidance and policies that were highlighted have been reviewed and updated and the Trust has increased scrutiny and governance around our policy processes ensuring these are available to all colleagues. The Trust has reviewed and mapped all mandatory training, strengthened its oversight, and significantly improved compliance.

At Musgrove Park Hospital’s maternity unit, the Trust has put in place a new evidence-based, standardised triage process to risk assess and prioritise care based on clinical need and reconfigured the ward to facilitate safe and effective clinical oversight of service users. The Trust also immediately sourced emergency equipment at Musgrove Park and Yeovil District Hospital.

The CQC report for Musgrove Park’s maternity service highlights issues that are as a result of the poor condition of the building. The Trust is planning to replace this as part of the national New Hospitals Programme but has already made improvements specifically around safety and security.

In their reports, the CQC noted an open culture, good engagement with local communities to make improvements and plan services, good team working, and that colleagues felt valued and supported.

6. Background papers

6.1. Care Quality Commission Inspection Report

INS2_13812366341_RH5A8_Musgrove Park Hospital 2024-05-01 FINAL

Care Quality Commission Inspection Report INS2_13812366341_RH504_Yeovil District Hospital 2024-05-01

Care Quality Commission Inspection Report 2024429_ INS2_13812366341 - RH5A8_Bridgwater Community Hospital FINAL

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Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author