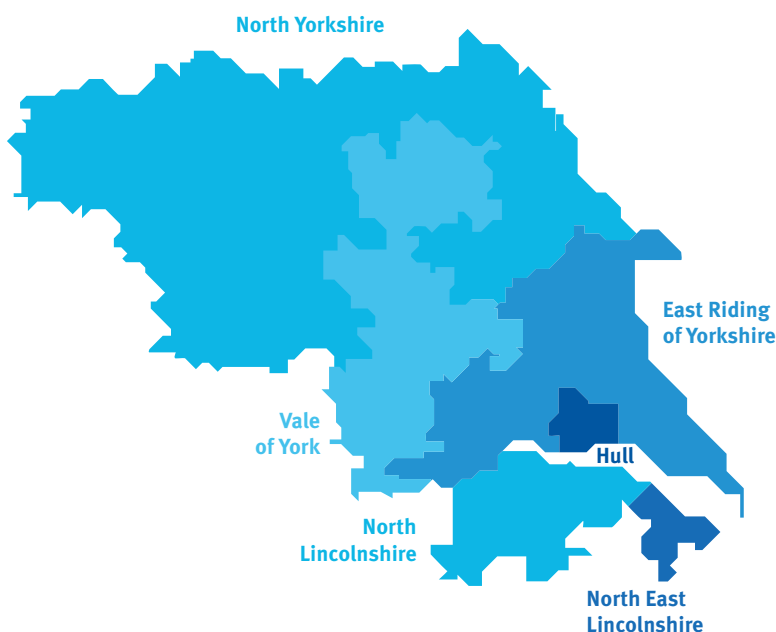


# The 'Ask a Midwife' Service



## Humber, Coast and Vale Health and Care Partnership

Dedicated to improving the overall health and wellbeing of people living in Humber, Coast and Vale



The Local Maternity System (LMS) in Humber, Coast and Vale have not had the option to pause or reassign their workload during the pandemic – whilst concern about COVID-19 was at its height, the babies kept coming!

It was therefore really important that the LMS found a way of communicating with women and families to:

1. keep up with the rapidly changing situation
2. reassure them about concerns
3. highlight any messages around how maternity services were being delivered which they might need to know during their pregnancy or labour.

The 'Ask a Midwife' Service, hosted on Facebook was set up to support parents with a consistent message across HCV. It has reallocated and optimised available resources to continue supporting women and families during the pandemic.



**“Thank you for getting back to me so quick! That’s great to know, thank you again”**

Anonymous Parent

## Approach / Methodology



The approach was developed by the team at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) because they already had a Facebook page running. The process created in HUTH was then utilised by North Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust (NLaG) and York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, with the content adapted to reflect local needs.

The 'Ask a Midwife' Service was coordinated by the Local Maternity System (LMS) to ensure a consistency of delivery and messages around the system. The LMS developed

'Frequently Asked Questions' and other resources which the three sites were able to utilise. This supported the consistent approach and aligned voice across Humber, Coast and Vale.

The Hospital Trusts were able to quickly provide equipment to the Senior Midwives who were shielding at home, which enabled the service to start rapidly across all three sites. The Midwives provided accurate, appropriate and timely information as well as answers to queries in order to continue supporting their patients.

## Testimonials

**“That’s great. Thank you very much you’ve been a great help. This is a great idea too!”**

Anonymous Parent

**“Thank you so much, you’ve been helpful every question I’ve asked”**

Anonymous Parent

**“Thank you so much, nice to hear off a professional thank you”**

Anonymous Parent

## Impact

An audit in one area of the service highlighted that 91% of messages were answered by the service; of the remaining 9%, 3% were referred to the Antenatal day unit, 3% to community midwifery services and 3% to labour ward.

Up to the end of June 2020, HUTH had answered 3,750 personal messages to their page. These have been categorised for future development and will enable the service to be reactive to policy changes, patient queries and to post timely information.

In NLaG the number of views on the Trust Facebook page has increased by 1,800%. Posts had reached 70,000 people by the end of April and the first post alone had 13,300 views.

At York Hospital, the post covering changes in visiting received over 21,000 views; this supports the LMS findings around new information being disseminated in a very timely manner.

The service was well received by parents and as the service developed, the teams saw a change in the types of questions being asked. Some parents were building rapport with the midwives on the service and were asking multiple questions because they felt comfortable to do so. They were able to ask questions to the service when they thought of them without feeling like they were ‘bothering’ a midwife.

In a survey delivered by the local Maternity Voices Partnerships, 98% of respondents in both the antenatal and postnatal surveys said they would use the ‘Ask a Midwife’ Service again.

The midwives delivering the service from home gained a real value in supporting the service and allowing colleagues in clinical areas to have more time to care for their women and families.

## Next Steps

Because 21% of all responses were around clinical symptoms, the LMS feel there is value in continuing to deliver this service on behalf of Humber, Coast and Vale. A proposal has been written along with a cost model for continued delivery.

The LMS are also working with Gynaecology Departments to develop FAQs around early pregnancy to provide information and reassurance to women at this stage.

## Key Learning Points

Using the local Maternity Voices Partnerships was very valuable as they supported the development of FAQs and ensured the implementation of the service was something parents would find useful.



Interviewee: Sallie Ward, LMS Lead Midwife