

Each Person Counts - The Role Of The Maternity Team

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Objective

This pilot programme is designed to provide all doctors working within maternity services with non-technical skills to be effective future leaders, to enable them to provide safe and effective care. This course aims to teach senior obstetric and gynaecology trainees about leadership and teamwork through a blended practical approach, aiming to promote innovation, creativity, leadership and problem solving skills. This foundation of core skills will be developed using the principles of team synergy and developing positive work-based behaviours and cultures.

Background

With many national reports focused on the failings within maternity care we felt a need to better support staff to understand the many other important factors required to deliver safe and excellent health care. Educating staff members on clinical knowledge alone is simply not enough.

On a background of claims data and examples of cases referred to the Early Notification Team at NHS Resolution we want to highlight some of the recurring themes that we see.¹ We want to educate the maternity workforce on how a litigation investigation is conducted and how we can all learn from these cases. The course is designed to ensure that all maternity staff feel empowered to deliver excellent care but also develop their understanding of some less familiar concepts.

The East Kent report published in 2022 highlighted the importance of a good workplace culture and how this is intrinsically linked to leadership and team working. It highlighted how treating women, birthing people and their families without kindness and compassion can have a profound effect on the outcome. Many incidents described displayed flawed team working amongst medical staff. From an organisational perspective, there was clear evidence of both external and internal denial of the devastating findings and consequences.²

There has been a gap in educating our workforce to understand important non-technical skills and how vital the role of each individual team member plays in a well-functioning maternity team. Key areas for this course focus on critical problem solving, leadership, communication, team working, human factors and workplace based culture.

Each person counts – Course Objectives:

- To understand the relevance of the national climate regarding maternity services and major reports.
- To understand how we can learn from claims within maternity services, using the Early Notification (EN) Scheme at NHS Resolution.
- To understand how to communicate with families effectively during and after an incident.^{3,4,5}.
- To understand the importance of effective communication, particularly during hand-over and when managing crisis situations.
- To develop an understanding of what working culture is and how poor work based behaviour affects maternity care.
- To develop skills to become an effective team leader, by understanding different styles of leadership as well as how and when to apply them.
- To understand team synergy and its importance to creating a cohesive team and safe working environment.
- To develop a strategy to manage poor or challenging behaviours in stressful situations.
- To understand the importance of reflection and develop personal reflective behaviours.
- To apply these tools to a local workplace.

Design

This innovative course is split into two parts. There is an e-learning module which must be completed prior to attending a one day face to face training course. The NHS Resolution EN Scheme second report identified several themes in cases of avoidable harm including lack of situational awareness, confirmation bias and delay in escalation. This training package will allow participants to develop a solid foundation in leadership and team working whilst recognising the importance of good culture but also how to foster and create one.

E-Learning Module

The first part of the course will be completed remotely and includes sessions on learning from litigation. The reader will explore 5 virtual case stories which are examples of cases that could be received by NHS Resolution. The reader will review the cases and identify areas for learning and themes that may have contributed to the outcome.

There will also be a communication tutorial and a session on the 2nd victim and what you staff members can do to support themselves and others during difficult events.

Practical Module

Based on UK military training principles this day will focus on practical exercises with a flat hierarchy allowing participants to complete a series of challenges outside of clinical situations. In-between these sessions will be focused group tutorials on leadership, culture and team working. Some of the important principles to be covered include emotional intelligence, human factors, team synergy and problem solving.

Through a series of team tasks participants will be able to reflect on their performance and apply some new principles as they progress through a series of challenges.

Next Steps

There is currently limited training for the maternity workforce in team working, leadership and management. We hope to provide candidates with a better understanding of these principles and a series of techniques that they can then apply at a local level.

This course will be piloted in several regions initially for ST6/7 Obstetric and Gynaecology trainees. We will then collect evaluations of the course to further refine the content. We hope that this will then be rolled out to the wider multi-disciplinary team working within maternity services,

References:

1. EN 2nd Report. NHS Resolution. [NHS: The second report: The evolution of the Early Notification Scheme \(resolution.nhs.uk\)](#)
2. Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent: Reading he Signals report. [Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent: 'Reading the signals' report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
3. Being Fair. NHS Resolution. [Read the Being Fair report - NHS Resolution](#)
4. Being Fair 2. NHS Resolution. [Being fair 2 - improving organisational culture in the NHS - NHS Resolution](#)
5. Saying Sorry. NHS Resolution. [Read saying sorry \(duty of candour\) - NHS Resolution](#)