MANAGE TOGETHER

Royal United Hospitals (RUH) Bath NHS Foundation Trust - Maternity System Training across Community Midwifery Teams and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) Quality Improvement Project

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Background:

Across all recent maternity inquiries, failures in teamwork, escalation, and cross-boundary working have been found to directly contribute to harm and enhanced realistic multidisciplinary training has been advocated.

We wanted to ensure that our maternity community emergency skills drills were collaborative with the ambulance service and tested the system



Aims and Objectives of the Project:

- To facilitate integrated maternity-system training delivered jointly across the community midwifery team and the ambulance service.
- Increase confidence and competence for all healthcare professionals in managing obstetric emergencies in out-of-hospital settings, in line with PROMPT principles

"When we usually encounter the ambulance team, it is in high stress (often emergency) situations, I feel it is important to run these drills when there is capacity to come together and calmly build up relationships and support educating each other in order to improve safety, care and outcomes for our mothers and babies"
Jess Murray Quality & Education Lead Midwife

"Failures to work collaboratively across disciplines results in poor outcomes"
Independent Maternity Review
Ockenden Report (2022)

Training Day Programme

Kit Drop	Everyone brings their kits, which allows us to compare and streamline what each person carries, and encourages discussion about what is required and the rationale behind it.
Drug Comparison	This exercise raises awareness of which drugs each team carries and encourages discussion about the most appropriate drug use in different situations.
3 Simulations - Learning-Led Drills	This exercise allows emergency drills to be practised in realistic community settings, providing not only clinical education but also an opportunity to test systems such as communication challenges (e.g., poor signal) and logistical barriers including stairs, limited space, and stretcher access.
Debrief & Policy Comparison	After each clinical skills drill, we spend around 45 minutes debriefing the scenario, discussing the learning points, and reflecting on what went well and what could be improved. The debrief also includes conversations about the most appropriate person to lead in each situation and a comparison of relevant policies.
Birthing out of Guidance Scenario	There has been a national increase in mothers birthing outside recommended guidance. This session explores the challenges health professionals face in these situations, along with the implications for professional accountability.

Proposed Benefits of the Quality Improvement Project:

- **Realistic context for decision-making:** Delivering training in real home environments ensures that the true conditions of a homebirth are considered, including limited space, lighting, equipment, and potential delays in accessing help.
- **Stronger multidisciplinary teamwork**: Training together helps build understanding of each other's roles, capabilities and limitations, and supports the development of a shared mental model for managing emergencies. This is especially important given the range of roles within the Ambulance Service, each with its own scope of practice and competencies.
- **Appropriate leadership**: Focused education on who is best placed to lead in different scenarios aims to support more efficient and effective management of real-life emergencies.
- **Testing system processes:** Realistic scenarios allow teams to identify areas for improvement in both equipment and wider system processes.
- **Reduced delays in escalation:** Joint training can help minimise delays that arise from uncertainty, hierarchy, or lack of clarity.
- **Improved communication under pressure**: Scenarios provide structured practice in clear, concise communication, including SBAR and closed-loop techniques.
- **Better understanding of escalation pathways:** Training clarifies when to call an ambulance, what information crews require, the support they can provide on scene, and how to coordinate an efficient transfer into hospital.
- **Enhanced confidence and competence**: Repeated exposure to emergency scenarios in community settings helps develop muscle memory for rare but critical events.
- **Alignment with national safety priorities:** The project directly supports recommendations related to teamwork, escalation, and cross-boundary learning.

Main Successes of Project:

- Improved processes for the efficient management of maternity and neonatal emergencies and safe transfer into hospital.
- Strengthened working relationships and improved collaboration between midwives and ambulance crews.
- 100% of attendees reported they would recommend the training day to others.
- 100% of attendees felt confident or extremely confident in managing emergency situations at home following the training.
- 87% of attendees rated each simulation as the most effective learning experience; the remaining participants rated the day as effective for learning.

Challenges of the project:

- Ambulance crew have no funded time to attend
- Release time for Midwives to attend

Lessons Learnt:

- There are different roles within the Ambulance Service and they can all have different skills and competencies.

Staff Feedback
"Incredibly helpful to have this run in a home setting, emphasised the practicalities that need to be considered that cannot be reproduced in a usual training room environment. Working alongside midwife colleagues was so helpful for shared learning and understanding. Almost certainly the most beneficial training experience I have had as a Paramedic"

Staff Feedback
"brilliant day, should be made mandatory."



Next Steps:

- To increase the number of sessions delivered and work towards making the training mandatory for all midwives.
- Explore funding options to enable ambulance crews to attend the training within paid hours.



"Dysfunctional teamworking within and across professional groups leads to suboptimal care"
Reading the signals: Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent. Bill Kirkup (2022)