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| TRUST BOARD IN PUBLIC | | Date: 24TH November 2016 | |
| | | Agenda Item: 2.1 | |
| REPORT TITLE: | | Patient Story from Women & Children | |
| EXECUTIVE SPONSOR: | | Fiona Allsop Chief Nurse | |
| REPORT AUTHOR (s): | | The Patient & Michelle Cudjoe Head of Midwifery | |
| REPORT DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY: (name of sub-committee/group & date) | | N/A | |
| Action Required: | | | |
| | | Discussion (√) | Assurance (√) |
| Purpose of Report: | | | |
| To share a recent maternity patient story with the board | | | |
| Summary of key issues | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All women are actively encouraged to develop a personalised care plan with their midwife and other health professionals which are updated throughout the pregnancy. • This story demonstrates to staff how listening to the woman and providing unbiased information, facilitates informed decision making • During obstetric emergencies where time critical actions are required and the clinical need detracts from the expected plan for birth, respecting women's individual needs and working collaboratively with the woman can still result in a safe and positive experience for families. | | | |
| Recommendation: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain assurance from the report • To continue the practice of developing an individualised birth plan with each woman that is reviewed throughout the pregnancy and birth | | | |
| Relationship to Trust Strategic Objectives & Assurance Framework: | | | |
| SO1: Safe -Deliver safe services and be in the top 20% against our peers SO2: Effective - Deliver effective and sustainable clinical services within the local health economy SO3: Caring – Ensure patients are cared for and feel cared about SO4: Responsive – Become the secondary care provider and employer of choice our catchment population | | | |
| Corporate Impact Assessment: | | | |
| Legal and regulatory impact | | N/A | |
| Financial impact | | N/A | |

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| Patient Experience/Engagement | Included in the report |
| Risk & Performance Management | Included in the report |
| NHS Constitution/Equality & Diversity/Communication | Included in the report |
| Attachment: | |
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TRUST BOARD REPORT – 24TH November 2016 Patient Story from Women & Children's Division

My Son's Emergency Caesarean Birth Story

I had a beautiful, calm and drug-free birth with my daughter in 2014. It was so empowering and life-changing that I trained as a Hypnobirthing practitioner. I now teach women and their birth partners how they too can achieve a calm, confident and comfortable birth. I became incredibly passionate about birth and the right every woman has to have a positive birth experience. When I found out I was pregnant for the second time, I felt very fortunate that I would have the opportunity to go through the experience all over again.

For nine months, I put all my efforts into creating the environment I wanted my baby to be born into – we planned for a home birth, bought the birth pool, invested in new lighting around the house, bought new blinds for the windows and created a safe and private space. I asked close friends and family to write birth affirmations for me which I had up around the house to encourage me during pregnancy and birth.

My husband and I practiced Hypnobirthing every day and felt confident and excited about using it in the comfort of our own home when the time arrived.

Fast forward to the 5th July 2016: That morning, I took my then 18 month old daughter to her 'Sing & Sign' class. Following the class, we joined some friends for tea in a nearby cafe. After half an hour of being there I felt like my waters were going, it felt more like a period starting. After checking in the toilets, it was clear to me that there was a problem. I didn't panic at that point – I knew there was no point as stress would only effect the baby and that was the last thing I wanted. So, I went out and asked a friend to check for me. When she saw the blood, it was clear to both of us that I needed to get to hospital as soon as possible. Rather than ring for an ambulance, which in hindsight I should have absolutely done, I jumped in the car with my daughter and headed home. En route, I called my husband and my midwife and explained that I was bleeding heavily – it was a very surreal experience. Surely this wasn't happening to me, I thought. I've been so healthy throughout my pregnancy and I had it all worked out in my head how my labour was going to go!

My wonderful midwife soon arrived and drove me to the hospital. Within minutes of arriving at the maternity unit, I had a cannula in my hand to get fluids in me. My baby's heart rate showed clear signs that he was in distress. When my midwife informed me that it was very likely I'd need to birth my baby at the hospital, I let out a very loud cry and wept. I couldn't believe that I wasn't going to get my longed-for home birth. I was devastated and refused to believe it. At that moment my husband arrived at the hospital – hospital bag, birthing ball and birth affirmations all in hand – and he held me whilst I sobbed for the birth I was beginning to loose and the different route it was inevitably going to take.

Before any more doctors came in to see me, my husband suggested we do some Hypnobirthing relaxation. I thought it was the last thing I wanted to do as it would only remind me of the natural birth I was hoping for but, in fact, it was the best decision. As I laid in the bed, my husband read the Stroking Relaxation script to me. I immediately went into deep relaxation and brought my breathing right down. I switched off from all the noise and movement happening on the ward behind the purple curtain and started to feel more and more calm and in control. I knew that, whatever journey we were about to go down, being in control was very important and I couldn't do that from a stressed and emotional place.



You wouldn't think it here but, I'd just been told they were going to break my waters! Consultants and doctors were coming and going as mine & my baby's heart rate were being monitored. My husband and I used Hypnobirthing relaxation techniques to remain calm, confident and in control.

My baby's heart rate continued to be a concern and I continued to bleed. At 1:30pm, I was taken to the labour ward. There I was, sat up in a bed, monitors on my tummy hooked up to a machine with doctors and consultants walking in and out, whispering to one another about 'next steps'. The doctor asked for my permission to break my waters as they needed to know whether there was any blood in the membranes. This would indicate whether there was a problem with the placenta. I asked what the risks were if I didn't agree to this as I wanted everything about my baby's birth to be as natural as possible. However, I hadn't even gone into labour yet so things weren't even moving along and it was clear we needed to get my baby out sooner rather than later. Once I felt I had all the information required to make an informed decision, I agreed to the procedure.

My waters were pink which confirmed their fear that there was a problem with the placenta. I was told that they were going to give me some time before making any further decisions to see how my body responded to the waters breaking. My husband and I spent this time doing our Hypnobirthing – I particularly wanted to hear him read out the Positive Birth Affirmations. I found this incredibly calming.

However, after 40 minutes, my baby's heart-rate continued to be a concern and so I was asked to be examined. I agreed to this as I knew it was important in helping us decide on the next-steps. I was 3 centimetres dilated but by now, it was clear that some serious decisions needed to be made. Our doctor advised us that it was likely the placenta had started to come away from the uterine wall which meant that his oxygen would be compromised. If our baby wasn't born soon then there was a risk of brain damage, cerebral palsy or even the unthinkable. I knew time wasn't on our side but getting myself informed meant that I could go forward on this journey knowing it was right for me and our baby.

When I finally agreed to a caesarean, the atmosphere changed very quickly. 10 people were suddenly in the room with a job to do. The anaesthetist was explaining the spinal block, the surgeon was describing the procedure, I was signing papers, I had someone putting stockings on my leg, getting me changed, monitors and wires moved about....it was very overwhelming. However, throughout all of this, my husband remained totally calm. Every time I looked over at him for reassurance, he would be breathing slowly and calmly. This really helped me to remain in control.



I've just been given the spinal block and the surgery is about to start. I'm focussed on remaining calm.

As I was wheeled into theatre, the sense of urgency became even more apparent. It was then that I realised I had made the right decision ... and I was empowered by that. Everything happened very quickly and before I knew it, I was lying down, unable to feel the bottom part of my body, a gauze up in front of me with the surgeon saying 'baby is nearly out'. As my baby was lifted up over the gauze, a huge sense of relief and joy washed over me. It was a boy! We were absolute right to have a caesarean – there were clots in the uterus which confirmed that the placenta had started to come away from the uterine wall, plus the umbilical cord was very tightly wrapped twice around my son's neck.



The most incredible moment. He is safe & we're finally together. There are no words.....just pure love.

He was immediately placed on my chest for skin-to-skin. Within minutes, my midwife was rubbing a piece of gauze over my son's face. This is called vaginal 'seeding' – early studies show that swabbing a mother's vagina and transferring it to her baby's mouth, eyes and skin may stimulate microbiome development similarly to babies born naturally –

and protect it from health issues later in life. I had put this on my birth preferences sheet and, although it was very important to me, I had totally forgotten about it. I had written my birth preferences (otherwise known as a birth plan) a month before. However, a few days before the caesarean, I decided to add a section called 'In case of a caesarean' and I'm so glad I did (call it a mother's instinct!). I listed six things I would like should my birth take this route, including skin-to-skin and vaginal seeding. Although my son's birth was an emergency and I never went into labour, my husband played an active part in our son's birth. He protected my choices, my calm environment and my state of mind.

My son spent an uninterrupted hour on my chest...it was heaven on earth. All the standard checks such as weighing and measuring took place after the first feed and then my husband had some all-important skin-to-skin time too.

When my husband left the hospital at 11pm, as is policy at East Surrey Hospital, I spent the entire night with my son on my chest, bursting with overwhelming love for this amazing human being that I had grown for nine months. It was like we were in our own bubble together, recovering from what had happened that afternoon, feeling relieved that we were safe, well and happy in each other's arms. It was the most beautiful night and I will treasure it always.



Utter bliss. Just getting to know one another!

I never imagined my son being born by emergency caesarean and it has taken me a while to process everything that happened. However, as I lay awake with my baby during that night in hospital, I realised I could draw many positives from the experience. I felt totally safe and supported, not only by my husband but by my caregivers too. The midwives, consultants and doctors were amazing. I felt listened to and respected and remained in control every step of the way. Throughout the experience, I continued to feel that ultimately my husband and I were responsible for my baby's birth so I ensured that any decisions were made from an informed and rational place.