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| **Statutory Guidance on Working with People and Communities 2022**  **Case** | |
| **Details** | |
| **Title of the case study** | Equality in Health: Embedding Cultural Awareness in Maternity and Neonatal Care (An East of England project) |
| **Organisation** | * Project commissioned by Regional Maternity & Clinical Network – East of England NHS England and NHS Improvement * Project delivered by East of England Local Government Association * Supported by Eastern AHSN (Academic Health Science Network) |
| **Synopsis** | For over 10 years, the East of England Local Government Association via the Strategic Migration Partnership has been delivering a wide range of engagement and integration projects with ethnic minority groups across the East of England.  We understand the challenges health professionals can experience when supporting a wide range of culturally diverse and dynamic groups. This can include language barriers, a reluctance to engage with professionals and a mistrust of the NHS system because of past relationships with authorities in countries of origin. We also understand that for many ethnic minority groups, healthcare in the UK can be seen as confusing and often inaccessible due to a lack of appropriate information and a reliance on people having access to digital devices.  In response to the challenges faced by the healthcare professionals and ethnic minority groups, we have worked in partnership with different ethnic minority groups to create cultural awareness workshops, which are both effective and efficient at ensuring the development of sustainable maternity and neonatal care pathways for different groups across the East of England. |
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| **Background** | In April 2021 the East of England Maternity Clinical Network, NHS England and NHS Improvement, began a project partnership with the East of England Local Government Association, via the Strategic Migration Partnership, to deliver a unique programme of cultural awareness training, providing guidance and advice  for maternity, neonatal, and perinatal health care professionals.  The cultural awareness programme was a request from all our LMNS (Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems) that eLearning was not enough to learn why ethnic minority service users do not access maternity services or seek help early. |
| **The need** | The [MBRRACE-UK report](https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports) demonstrates the continued disparity in maternal mortality rates between women from Black and Asian aggregated ethnic minority groups and white women, more than four times higher for Black women, two times higher for mixed ethnicity women and almost twice as high for Asian women.  Previous life experiences, racist attitudes, microaggressions, dismissal of concerns and breakdown of trust with any health profession or figure of authority can affect interactions with maternity services [The Bias Trap - A Way Forward - Welcome](https://www.southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/the-bias-trap/) (southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk).  MBRRACE states that women do not receive essential contraceptive and pre-pregnancy advice because of structural and cultural biases. It is also evident that factors such as socioeconomic deprivation, language difficulties, mental health problems, obesity, and domestic abuse combine to increase the impact of the structural and cultural biases women experience simply because they are, have been, or might become, pregnant. [MBRRACEUK\_ Maternal\_Report\_2021\_-\_FINAL\_-\_WEB\_VERSION.pdf (ox.ac.uk)](https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrrace-uk/reports/maternal-report-2021/MBRRACE-UK_Maternal_Report_2021_-_FINAL_-_WEB_VERSION.pdf) |
| **The solution** | * To deliver a six-month pilot project providing healthcare professionals with interactive cultural awareness training. * The workshops were an opportunity to identify engagement issues specific to the East of England and delivered   by members and advocates of ethnic minority groups considered hard to engage with across the region. *(LGBTQ+ Groups, African Groups, Orthodox Jewish Groups, Gypsy and*  *Traveller Groups, Roma Groups, South Asian Groups, Eastern European Groups, Asylum Seekers and Refugees)*   * This unique and innovative training approach provided professionals with information about the cultural background of each group, challenging the stereotypes that exist and providing realistic and effective engagement strategies. * The workshops enabled professionals to ask questions to different groups and identify methods to remove barriers and improve engagement techniques. * The trainers were all either located in the East of England, or were working with groups in the region, providing professionals with points of contact for continual engagement conversations. |
| **Costs** | The East of England Local Government Association will produce a proposal in collaboration with each organisation developing a cultural awareness project. In terms of replication or scoping related work, costs will be dependent on a variety of factors for example:   * Procurement methods/outcome of procurement * Delivery mode(s) * Timings * Overall size and scope of the programme * Evaluation, reporting and dissemination requirements,   The costings for each project will be different depending on outcomes and timescales. |
| **Challenges** | * The project was delivered during the Coronavirus pandemic.   With unprecedented pressures on the NHS and particularly maternity services, this meant that some of the professionals who wanted to attend the sessions were unable to join.   * Several people asked for recordings of the workshops, but it was agreed that recording the sessions may stop participants especially lived experience service users and staff from being open in sharing their experiences and asking questions. * Limited funding to continue with a Phase 2 project: Open dialogues workshops for each Local Maternity & Neonatal System. |
| **Impact** | Total 324 health professionals attended the workshops.  An [evaluation report](https://www.easternahsn.org/cultural-awareness-maternity/) was produced which was published in February 2022 at a regional webinar.  The report was also presented at the:   * Maternity Transformation Programme Equity & Equality Working Group - NHS England and NHS Improvement * The NHS Race and Health Observatory maternity and neonatal health meeting   Most of the Local Maternity & Neonatal Systems have funded local projects.   * Creating videos for mandatory training of staff. * Padlets – Digital platform with information in different languages. * Maternity Open Dialogue workshops to encourage ethnic minority women/birthing people to have informed consent about Covid vaccinations. * Scoping Interpreting projects also stated outside our Region. * Other regions have also commissioned the East of England Local Government Association to deliver tailored Cultural Awareness Projects. * Talking to Universities about including Cultural Awareness Training in Midwifery Training   **Achievements**  This project was part of the Maternity & Neonatal Looking Beyond Programme (East of England Regional Maternity & Clinical Network NHS England & NHS Improvement) and has been recognised nationally:   * BAPM Gopi Menon Awards – Specially Commended for the award for Supporting the Perinatal Team (October 2021). * Finalist Nursing Times Awards 2021, HRH The Prince of Wales Award for Integrated Approaches to Care. |
| **Lessons** | Based on the evaluation of the workshops, professionals have started work on various projects or programmes.   * To reach out to local community groups. * Update local clinical guidelines to reflect the population they serve. * The workshops raised awareness of the diversity in our region. * Influenced individual and unit change to ensure maternity care delivered recognises the cultural differences within its population.   This work cannot be delivered in isolation, it should be the golden thread to Midwifery Continuity of Carer & Personalised Care and Choice. |
| **Next steps, sustainability, and scaling** | Our report recommendations were presented to Local Maternity & Neonatal systems & providers.   * Ensure cultural awareness and cultural intelligence training/workshops are rolled out and embedded as part of the professionals mandatory training. * Ensure staff are offered training on personalised care and support, as this will add their skills and confidence in improving the data quality of ethnicity recording and supporting those pregnant women/people especially those experiencing digital exclusion. * Based on these workshops, the maternity access, experience, and outcomes from each ethnic group varies tremendously. * We strongly recommended based on the Equity & Equality guidance and the feedback from these workshops that all local serious incidents investigations consider the impact of culture, ethnicity and language and clear actions are taken to address this unwarranted variation and health inequalities. * Where possible local working groups working on addressing inequalities should ensure that people representing different groups have a Patient Partner Voice/Expert in lived experience being part of the local equity working group as this ensures that work is being carried out with or by members of the public, not To, About or for them.   The report has been shared with commissioners and policy makers to start ongoing support to encourage all maternity and neonatal units to coproduce local Equity and Equality action plans using the recommendations in the report. This will ensure that Local Maternity and Neonatal System Equity & Equality Action Plans align with the ICS duty to submit 5-year plans including around reducing inequalities based on the Equity & Equality: Guidance for LMS. |
| **Find out more** |  |
| **Resources** | |
| Add files |  |
| Add hyperlinks | Achieving Equity in Maternity Healthcare <https://smp.eelga.gov.uk/migrant-workers/equity-in-healthcare/>  Embedding cultural awareness in maternity services  <https://www.easternahsn.org/cultural-awareness-maternity/>  Equity and Equality – Guidance for local maternity systems  <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/C0734-equity-and-equality-guidance-for-local-maternity-systems.pdf> |
| **Media**  How do you think this case study could be presented? | |
| Text | Face to Face |
| Video | Recording on slide show |
| Audio file / podcast |  |