

News Release

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Praise for maternity care at Dorset County Hospital

Mums have placed Dorset County Hospital's maternity service among the best in the country.

The local service gained higher scores than any other hospital for patient satisfaction in several key areas in a recent patient survey.

But the hospital's Head of Midwifery Christine Voce says although the results of the survey are encouraging, her team are by no means complacent and are striving to provide an even better service.

Independent researchers, the Picker Institute, sent questionnaires to 200 new mothers as part of a survey of 70 hospitals throughout the country. The results will feed into a national report on maternity services due to be published by the Healthcare Commission early next year.

Dorset County Hospital, which became a Foundation Trust in June this year, came top in a number of areas, including:

- Being given a choice whether to have the baby in hospital or at home;
- Allowing partners to attend birth;
- Giving advice and support for feeding the baby;
- Being spoken to in a way that could be understood.

Dorset County Hospital also scored far above average in most other areas of the survey, including:

- Involving patients in decisions about their care;
- Treating patients with kindness, understanding, respect and dignity;
- The cleanliness of delivery room, ward and bathrooms;
- The overall care received during pregnancy and labour.

But Christine feels that there is room for further improvement and says her team will not be happy until every mother who uses their service has the best experience possible.

"We are pleased to get this positive feedback but we are by no means complacent," said Christine. "We know we are not getting it right for everyone. We are aware that because of how busy we are, mothers don't always get as much support as we would

like to be able to give in the immediate hours after the birth of their baby. That is something we are very keen to improve with additional staffing.

“We will continue to strive to provide the very best personalised service for all our mothers. “

Dorset County Hospital has seen a 29% increase in the number of mothers giving birth on its maternity unit since 2001 – a 10% increase just since 2006.

Christine added: “One of the reasons we are so busy is that because of our reputation more and more ladies are coming from outside of the area to have their babies here. We have people from outside Dorset coming to stay with relatives nearer the hospital when their due date is approaching so they can come here.”

Dorset County Hospital’s Chief Executive Jan Bergman said: “We are extremely proud of our excellent maternity unit – it is without doubt one of the best in the country.

“We will be investing in the service so that our very committed and hard working team of midwives can provide the first-class service they want to be able to offer every mother who has her baby here.”

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For more information about this news release please contact Communications Manager Susie Palmer on 01305 254683 or susie.palmer@dchft.nhs.uk