Kate Cheesbrough

Team Leader for South East Community Midwives

2017 iMatter Team Story

In the months leading up to our 2017/18 iMatter questionnaire we had made a few developments in our team as to how we organised are workload each day. We decided that we would all start from the same base each morning so that we could sort out the visits more easily and hopefully see more of each other. We also developed the idea of having a different midwife coordinating each day. Leading on from these changes and our iMatter report it was put forward as a suggestion that we had an official “Huddle” each morning. This would provide ten minutes every day when everyone could gather together.

We discussed what we would like to include in the huddle. Newer midwives to the team felt that the morning could seem very busy and it was difficult to follow what was going on. It was decided that the Huddle would be led by the daily coordinator. She would use the ten minutes to allocate the visits and then pass on any issues or updates that needed to be shared.

Each week the team leader puts together a ‘guide’ for the coordinator to refer to. This is a summary of the issues and updates for that week. Any team member can add things to the huddle ‘guide’.

As a team we believe that our communication with each other has improved as a result of the daily huddle. Having more face to face time with each other is an effective way of information sharing and keeping the team up to date with new initiatives. We have spent time discussing, for example, the Best Start initiative and the Better Home Birth Group. Huddles ensure that when there are changes in any guidelines and policies these are disseminated which in turn helps keep team members up to date.

We feel relationships with each other have also improved. The Huddle makes it easier to discuss workload for the whole of the team and be able to help each other when it is needed. The Huddle provides a safe space for us to discuss minor grievances within the team which then makes it easier to find resolutions together. The fact that everyone in the team has the opportunity to add to the Huddle gives team members the feeling that their input is valued and they are being listened to. We as a team would highly recommend this idea to other teams.

Kate Cheesbrough

Team Leader for South East Community Midwives

2018 iMatter Team Story - Update

The team used to have three bases and each midwife was attached to one of these.  It felt as though there were three teams rather than one.  We went down to two bases but it still felt like two teams in many ways.  This lead to team members not knowing each other very well and therefore had less empathy for each other.  Sometimes there was talk of ‘we are busier than them’ when things got stressful. The visits could get quite chaotic and sometimes would be doubled up. This was a big reason for deciding to start the day from just one of the bases and all meet together.

As everyone was now in the same base for the start of the day we wanted to maximise this opportunity.  We had never been able to have a regular way of communicating effectively to all team members because of the splitting between sites.  We relied on the monthly team meetings for face to face discussion.  As a team leader I also had to rely a lot on emailing team members about updates and practice issues.  Following the agreement of our 2018 iMatter Action Plan, I can now communicate to the team via the huddle guide but the onus is on the coordinator to pass this onto the team.  Not all midwives find it easy to conduct a huddle but it has been a good opportunity for career development as everyone has to take a leadership role in this.  Passing on information face to face stimulates more discussion and conversation.  This sometimes leads onto further discussion of practice issues so provides a regular opportunity for reflection and updating.

 We would hope that this in turn benefits the women we look after.  One reason would be that the huddle ensures that everyone knows who is doing what visits, clinics, meetings and there shouldn’t be any confusion about this.  Greater efficiency will hopefully benefit women.  Also, because the midwives are more regularly discussing practice issues then they are hopefully passing on the benefit of this knowledge in their care of the women.  I think student midwives also enjoy the huddle as they get to see us discussing things and midwives taking leadership roles.

 Kate Cheesbrough

Team Leader for South East Community Midwives

Gracemount HC, Gracemount Dr, Edinburgh EH16 6RN

0131 672 9457    07872419820   kate.cheesbrough@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk