

Maternity Survey 2019: Briefing for trusts on informing young mothers about the survey

Throughout January and February 2019, midwives must inform all 16 and 17 year old women who give birth in their trust about the Maternity Survey, and give them details on how to opt out if they so wish. Please read the details below on how to do this.

Introduction

Approval for the Maternity Survey 2018 was sought under Section 251 of the NHS Act 2006. The survey methodology was reviewed by the Health Research Authority (HRA) for approval. Their Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG) granted support on the condition that 16 and 17 year old women are informed directly of the survey and given the opportunity to opt out. This is because the cohort of patients aged 16 and 17 are legally considered to be children and the response rate from this group is particularly low. We will be using the same survey methodology in 2019 and therefore expect that support will be contingent on this condition.

Trust staff (usually midwives) must therefore inform any 16 or 17 year old women who give birth in their trust during the sample period about the survey and provide them with details on how they can opt out if they so wish. The sample data from the 2018 survey shows that there were only up to five young mothers aged 16 or 17 at each trust. We believe it is therefore manageable for staff at trusts to have a discussion with each individual about the survey.

Which women should be approached by staff?

All women aged **16 or 17 years** who have had a live birth in your trust during **January or February 2019** should be approached by a member of staff about the survey.

Women will be removed from the survey sample if it was known that the pregnancy was concealed, if the baby is to be taken into care or if the baby has died either during or since delivery. If any of these criteria apply then it would not be necessary to inform the individual about the survey.

When should women be approached by staff?

We recommend that a member of staff talks to a young mother about the survey when they are being **discharged** from hospital. If a woman has a home birth, a midwife should mention the survey at a time considered most appropriate following the birth.

What information should be given to women and how?

Women should be provided with the information leaflet (nhssurveys.org/survey/2313) informing them that there is a national maternity survey taking place. Women who give birth during January or February may be sent a questionnaire in about 3 months' time asking about their experiences of the care received.

The information sheet explains:

- The purpose of the survey
- How their responses will be used to help improve the quality of care provided
- That all answers are confidential.

The survey is voluntary and so the respondent does not have to take part. The information leaflet reiterates that if they choose not to take part it will not affect the care they receive from the NHS in any way.

The information sheet also explains that they can opt out of the survey once they have received the questionnaire, i.e. by returning a blank questionnaire or calling the survey helpline to say they do not wish to take part. If a woman wishes to opt out before she actually receives the questionnaire, then she should be given the contact details of a member of trust staff who can ensure she is removed from the sample before the survey commences. Such cases **must** be logged by your trust and referred to during the sampling for the survey.

Ideally, women should not be asked for a decision on opting out at that stage, and should be advised to read the information sheet in their own time and call the number provided by the end of March if they do not wish to take part in the survey.

The aim is for the member of staff to draw attention to the survey, to briefly discuss it if necessary and refer them to the helpline number if they have any queries or concerns.

Thank you for your assistance with the Maternity Survey. If you have any queries or feedback please contact your trust survey lead or email maternity@surveycoordination.com.