

## CASE STUDY: USING FACEBOOK LIVE TO LINK THE PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONALS (Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership)

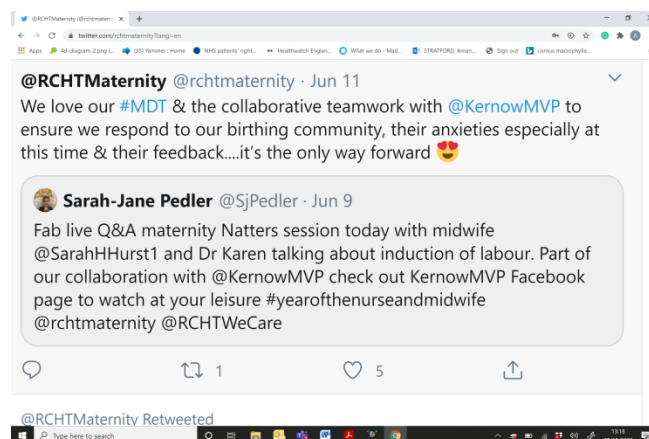
Covid-19, the subsequent lockdown and restrictions it brought about, prevented Kernow Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) and local maternity services from meeting each other and the public face to face.

Expectant mothers, their partners and families were confused about rules and restrictions around visiting and attendance at antenatal appointments. Pregnant women didn't know what to expect when they attended hospital and there was an increasing level of anxiety being expressed on social media.

The MVP began to experiment with different on line platforms. Facebook Live became the most accessible way of gauging how people felt and to pick up on themes or questions that people needed more information about. A Friday night live session was set up for an hour each week during which the MVP project manager answered questions from women and their families with the information she had available. Care was taken always to refer women to their midwife with any questions which required medical advice.

By being able to show how useful interactive social media functions were to the public and show how it could be safely facilitated healthcare professionals were more willing to explore it too, providing opportunities to connect directly with a healthcare professional and see what other people had questions about.

When lockdown began policies on using social media to communicate with the public seemed to be relaxed at Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust (RCHT) and midwives established a second series of live Q&A sessions during which medical questions could be answered - "Maternity Natters" was born.



### Positive outcomes

- Staff were able to offer more support at a time when they found restrictions on the care they were able to provide to women challenging.
- Anxieties were reduced as women and their partners were able to gain up to date information.
- People with learning disabilities (particularly those with ASD) found that having a person talking to watch made information easier to process.
- The live sessions also brought a sense of community to those watching and connections were established in the chat box, when people were liking comments or replying to one another.
- Being able to either join live or watch at a later time has given people an opportunity to watch and reflect before seeing the feedback presented in a more formalised way.

*“These sessions have been amazing, it’s great to be able to listen to all the advice and information and have the opportunity to ask questions. Even though this is my second pregnancy it’s been really reassuring and interesting. I think they’re incredibly valuable and should be considered in the future regardless of a second lockdown.”*