

BIRMINGHAM LINKS – WOMEN’S HEALTH & MATERNITY ACTION GROUP

**Minutes from meeting held on Thursday 23rd September 2010
at Hutton Hall, Herrick Road, Alum Rock, Birmingham, B8 1PW**

PRESENT:

- Elsie Gayle (EG) (Chair)
- Jasbir Behal (JB)
- Frahana Rashid (FR)
- Samina Begum (SB)
- Shaista Parveen (SP)
- Najeena Bashir (NB)
- Halima Ali (HA)
- Catherine Lennon (CL)
- Soniya Kumari (SK)
- Alicea Hossain (AH)

FACILITATORS PRESENT:

- Andrew John (AJ) - Gateway Family Services
- Linda Onerhime (LO) - Gateway Family Services
- Herveen Kaur (HK) - Gateway Family Services (Minute Taker)

APOLOGIES RECEIVED:

- Kafilla Noorin
- Helen Oxten
- Sarah Francis
- Meanaz Akhtar

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Brief introductions were made by all members present.

2. MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD FRIDAY 20TH AUGUST 2010

Not discussed as no one from the previous meeting was present at today’s meeting to clarify the minutes. It was also agreed to sign off minutes before locating them on the website as per LINK policy.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The chair moved the Any Other Business to the top of the agenda.

Amina Project: FR explained how the project was set up. The Amina Project was set up as a voluntary women’s group, they were successful in receiving funding from the NHS. The first focus of the group was to create and send out a set of questionnaires, 146 questionnaires were completed through personnel networks and door to door enquires.

All members of the group were handed the ‘Report for Amina Project, Consultation on Maternity Services & Support for Post Natal Depression’. This report was commissioned by Aston University. The key themes emerging from the analysis carried out are all highlighted in the report. FR continued by explaining how the group befriended women with the community. The group put together newsletters and created a 6 session training programme; this involved confidence building and proved very successful amongst the women within the community.

The only concern now is that the funding from the NHS for the project has ended (as of May 2010). FR commented that the next stage of the project is to secure more funding, as obtaining funding from the NHS it is now on hold until at least April 2011.

Training was also provided to the group around safeguarding. FR explained how the group held small workshops to get women talking about Post Natal Depression (PND). Phase 1 is completed (i.e. the PND Report) but phase 2 (dealing with the key issues highlighted in the Report) can not begin until further funding has been received.

FR further explained how the group acts as a social support mechanism for the community; this is what the group was intended for. Issues such as domestic violence are also discussed. The group organised an Open Day where women within the community got together to discuss what they wanted to achieve (for example, to have swimming and aerobics lessons). The flexible approach taken by the group proves to be very valuable i.e. allowing women to bring their children to the meetings. Members of the group have started to see changes within themselves and within other women. HA commented that it was a great source of self reflection and a great way to empower women.

EG led the discussion onto the PND Report mentioned earlier, she explained how giving birth is a massive life changing experience and how women need time to readjust. EG commented that if family support turned out not to be what you expected, then women talking about it with each other is one way to go. The chair expressed what fantastic work the group had done.

FR explained how cultural views and issues like depression are seen as negative within the community. Some women within the group have been trained to be cooking mentors, and deliver a healthy eating programme. EG wondered how women that work can get involved, FR explained that they organise evening lessons. FR expressed the need to reach out to more women, especially from different cultures. Other success stories include the sewing club (made possible after successful neighbourhood funding), beauty and pampering classes (ideal for hard to reach parents) and childcare courses.

FR explained how they are trying to get a women's only centre, a place has become available in Washwood Heath. A meeting was attended on 17th September to discuss this; it is looking positive that it will happen. EG commented how the group has built an 'organisation' from scratch and wondered whether the LINK had any remit to support this? AJ believed that it may be possible. FR reiterated the need to encourage more women to join the group; they would like more of a mix of women.

HA commented that the group was about educating women as well as educating the family, this was key. In terms of the future, FR wants to build a firm foundation where the group is taken seriously.

EG would like the Amina group to put together a portfolio of case studies, they should collect all evidence and put it all in one place. EG commented that time needs to be spent with different women within the community to capture their thoughts and experiences on what it is that women need. The evidence collated can act as a reason to commission the project in the future.

The group have promoted themselves on Unity FM; they have done 3 shows on PND and are hoping to have them repeated. They will also mention the LINK PND event on their next program.

Update from the Pregnancy Outreach Workers (POWs): CL explained the nature of their role, how they support pregnancy women from the beginning of the pregnancy to birth, and now 8 weeks after birth. Generally referrals come through midwives. However, at the moment the POWs are conducting a randomised controlled trial for 2 years where referrals cannot be generated. CL explained that their existing patients are not apart of this controlled trial. EG believes that the POWs can get more of an honest opinion from women as they have already built a relationship with them.

Actions:

- a) **Amina group to start to put together case studies based on the work they have done. LINK to be ready to support AMINA as and when needed.**
- b) **Amina Group to mention the PND Event when next on the radio.**

4. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Function of the LINK: EG explained the role of the LINK as there were new members present at the meeting. EG stated that the function of the LINK was to bring the voices of health and social care users to health and social care providers. EG commented that there were different strands to this action group; to look at women's health overall but also to work across the city to identify what issues are affecting them. As stated previously, PND has been identified as a major issue.

Other Updates: The Solihull Maternity Consultation was mentioned as was the setting up of antenatal classes within the Good Hope area.

The need for a pool of women to do a survey for Heartlands Hospital was discussed, there are 2 wards left to survey. Training was available for participants in the methods and techniques of interviewing and would be provided by the LINK. A report to the trust needs to be written up on what the views and experiences of the patients and staff really are - it is about the need for quality information not just about ticking boxes. FR offered her help if it was required.

EG mentioned another way for community women to take part in shaping maternity services is the MSLC. The Birmingham East and North (BEN) PCT are building a maternity services liaison committee; it is funded by the PCT. It is proving to be very powerful in certain other Trusts in getting women's experiences heard by commissioners and the Trusts. Birmingham Women's have a successful MSLC running and LINK could arrange for a visit to see how they work.

The Core Group Elections were discussed, and AJ agreed to send the details of the election process to the members.

AJ showed the group members a copy of the Sensitive Practice Guide that was given to him at the MHAG meeting. AJ thought it would be a great idea to create a similar handbook or guide book as a result of the PND Event. EG mentioned that this is already being looked into. AJ thought a buzz guide similar to the Sensitive Practice Guide which has useful contact numbers all in one place should be created e.g. like bounty packs provided within hospitals.

Discussions moved onto social media training. Members of the Amina group would be really interested in this. AJ to look into setting up a women's only session, FR mentioned that the E Café in Hodge Hill would be an ideal location to hold this.

Actions:

- a) **AJ to let FR know if help is needed with conducting the survey at Heartlands Hospital**
- b) **AJ to send details of the election process to the group members**
- c) **Group members to let EG or LO know if there is anywhere specific they would like the PND posters to go to.**
- d) **AJ to look into setting up a women's only social media training session**

5. Forthcoming Events (PND)

Members of the group were told about the PND Event which is taking place on the Tuesday 19th October 2010, 10.00am- 15.00pm. EG explained what the day would entail, that it is a learning, information gathering day which will include live music, food, activities for children and adults, professional speakers as well as a question and answer session. There will be a bollywood dance and a raffle.

The CDW's will have a stall on the day with Kafilla Noorin. EG asked if LINK can give out the Amina reports on the day or if possible place a copy within the goodie bags. Members within the group thought highly to inviting Gargi Bhattacharyya to attend the PND Event.

LO mentioned that the official PND poster has been completed and sent to print.

LO mentioned the Fathers in Labour workplan, run by Birmingham City Council. LO communicated out to the group members to feel free to bring forward any issues that they may have.

Actions:

- a) FR to send out the PND Event leaflet to the rest of the Amina group members.
 - b) EG and LO to place a copy of the PND report in the goodie bags for PND Event
 - c) EG to invite Gargi Bhattacharyya to attend the PND Event
 - d) AJ to upload the PND Report onto the LINK website
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6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)

Tuesday 26th October 2010

Tuesday 7th December 2010

Actions:

- a) EG to check availability at the Children's Centre, if not the Host to book a room at St Paul's Centre