



ROCHDALE & OLDHAM

# Maternity Voices

Working in partnership to improve maternity services

## Annual Report

Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices  
Partnership (ROMVP)

April 2021- March 2023



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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Purpose of the Report  | <b>3</b>  |
| Letter from the ROMVP Chair, Leona Barlow  | <b>4</b>  |
| Who are ROMVP and what do they do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim</li> <li>• Setting up ROMVP</li> <li>• ROMVP Volunteer Advocates</li> </ul>  | <b>6</b>  |
| What we've done: Highlights/Challenges   | <b>9</b>  |
| Our Work: In Detail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly ROMVP Meetings</li> <li>• Ockenden- Gap Analysis</li> <li>• Equality and Equity Work</li> <li>• Co-Produced Reports</li> <li>• Wider Work</li> <li>• Communications and Social Media</li> </ul> | <b>11</b> |
| Feedback   | <b>17</b> |
| Impact of service user feedback  | <b>19</b> |
| Conclusion   | <b>20</b> |
| Ongoing and Future Plans   | <b>21</b> |
| Contact details  | <b>23</b> |



## Purpose of the Report

This report has been written to give an introduction and overview of what Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership do, how they do it and to also present findings, provide updates on work undertaken so far and to share the view and work plan for the future.

There will be an Annual report published on Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices website each year following the completion of the reporting period.

The reporting periods will normally be for the financial year i.e. (April to March) which is in line with the current funding arrangements, however, as this is the first report since Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices was relaunched and officially funded this report covers 2 financial years (April 21 – March 23).

## A letter from the Chair

I have been in post as Rochdale and Oldham MVP Chair since 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 when Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership was officially launched. This was during the phased exit from lockdown following the COVID19 pandemic and I think it's safe to say that everyone was feeling the effects of the previous 2 years of lockdowns and restrictions which saw the withdrawal or postponement of many face to face appointments and groups. Over the 1<sup>st</sup> year of ROMVPs relaunch we worked hard to raise our profile and have built some strong relationships and connections within our Hospital Trust (Northern Care Alliance) and the local community groups.

Over the last 2 years, local maternity services have encountered huge changes. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges. Although difficult, these challenges have emphasised the importance of having a well-functioning, diverse and inclusive Maternity Voices Partnership. It has created opportunities to reassess the way in which local maternity services are being offered and reshape future maternity care with a view to providing a more accessible service for all.

I am extremely passionate about the work that we are doing to ensure that maternity services are created and shaped by the families that use them. I would like to thank every person who has taken the time to give their feedback, as without their voices this work is not possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to everyone involved within our ROMVP team for their dedication and commitment towards developing maternity services which provide the best possible care for all in our community. I am excited for the future of our ROMVP and I look forward to driving more change and improvement of maternity care in Rochdale and Oldham.

**Leona Barlow,**

**Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership Chair**

## Comments from representative from Royal Oldham Hospital

“We have built effective relationships across our maternity services and corporate teams with Leona the ROMVP lead. This has been pivotal as part of our Maternity Improvement Project to add value to the engagement workstream. This compliments requests brought to us from our community, and I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to make improvements informed by our service users”.

**Julie Cheney**

*Assistant Director of Patient & Service User Experience & Volunteers*

**Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust**



## Who are Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership (ROMVP) and what do they do?

**The Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership (ROMVP) is a newly formed forum for maternity service users and their families, providers, and commissioners of services to come together to design services locally that meet the needs of local women, parents, birthing people and families in the Rochdale and Oldham area.**

Maternity Voices Partnerships (MVPs) are independent NHS working groups that aim to review and improve maternity services locally, by putting the experiences of women, birthing people and their families at the centre.

The Rochdale and Oldham MVP is multidisciplinary in nature and brings together professionals from organisations involved in maternity care alongside local women, birthing people and their families.

Professional members of the MVP include midwives from Royal Oldham Hospital, representatives from the Integrated Care Board (was Clinical Commissioning Groups) in both Rochdale and Oldham, and representatives from Rochdale and Oldham Councils.

Our ROMVP is hosted by Healthwatch Rochdale with support via Healthwatch Oldham and has links with representatives from charities and other organisations that support local families, such as Dad Matters, Homestart Oldham and Relax with Lucy (Baby Loss Support).

Rochdale and Oldham MVP have recruited over the 2 years a team of passionate ROMVP Volunteer Advocates who can both represent and reach out to local women, birthing people and their families from across both boroughs.



## Aim

The aim of Rochdale and Oldham MVP is to champion the voices of women, birthing people and their families in the development of maternity services across Rochdale and Oldham. They do this by representing, supporting, networking and gathering feedback to further improve services and ensure the service users voice is heard.



## Setting up ROMVP

Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices partnership was launched with the help of the Volunteer and Involvement Officer from Healthwatch Rochdale who sought out advice and guidance from the National Maternity Voices Partnership and the North West Regional MVP Lead to ensure consistency with other regional MVPs.

The Chair role was advertised due to the Covid-19 restrictions around engagement/face to face contact, using a variety of comms channels alongside social media, various websites and mailing lists, Indeed and via local grass roots organizations.

Interviews were held virtually and following the selection process a Chair was appointed and commenced the role on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

The Current Chair is a Rochdale resident and recent Maternity Service user. As the role developed it was clear that there was a need for a Vice Chair to support the work, and recruitment took place in May 2022, with the Vice Chair commencing a 12-month fixed term role in June 2022 until June 2023. The Vice Chair is an Oldham resident and a recent local maternity service user.



## Rochdale and Oldham MVP Volunteer Advocates

**Our Volunteer Advocates are key in the success of ROMVP. They help deliver engagement events collecting service user feedback and engaging with parents or carers on a peer-to-peer level. They actively promote the ROMVP by sharing social media posts, by speaking about us in baby groups they attend, by promoting our events and by handing out our promotional material when they are out and about. They review leaflets, guidance, and other Trust material which require service user input. They attend our MVP quarterly meetings and contribute to our topical discussions. They form a unique group of individuals with a wide range of skills which help us reach more, hear more and do more.**

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, ROMVP has held several successful recruitment drives. There are currently advocates recruited from across Rochdale and Oldham, as well as Whitworth and Manchester – these advocates have accessed services in Rochdale or Oldham and all our advocates share the same passion for improvement of Maternity Care and Services.



The use of social media platforms has been a huge influence and way of easily communicating the volunteer drives. As with all volunteering roles, there have also been some who were recruited, but were unable to continue in that role, but have continued to offer support via resharing posts.

Rochdale and Oldham MVP are keen to ensure that they have representatives from seldom seen and heard groups and minority groups across the boroughs this includes but not limited to, South Asian women, Black women, Travelers, asylum seekers and LGBTQ+ service users.

We continuously look at the diversity of engagement and involvement of service users and welcome new volunteer requests in particular from those representative of minority groups.

For more information on our volunteering opportunities and how to apply please visit our website <https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk/romvp>



## What We've Done

- **Formed and set up Rochdale and Oldham MVP**
- **Recruitment of a Rochdale and Oldham MVP Chair and Vice Chair**
- **Induction of Chair and Vice Chair**
- **Monthly Attendance of Trust meetings** – escalating service user feedback direct to Departmental Manager, Director of Midwifery NCA, Divisional Assurance Board
- **Monthly Meetings with Rochdale and Oldham Health Commissioners and sharing of Highlight Reports.**
- **Developed networks and relationships across the two boroughs** – Cartwheel Arts and Baby Bubbles reports plus list of other community links below.
- **Chaired Rochdale and Oldham MVP Meetings quarterly**
- **Built list of contacts** – including service users, organisations and professionals
- **Established service user engagement** – despite the pandemic, making use of social medias and relaunched face to face sessions when possible.
- **Coproduction of local Trust leaflets**
- **Recruited a team of Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership Volunteer Advocates representative of the two boroughs.**
- **Conducted 15 Steps walk around and follow up report** – providing feedback to the NCA of findings and actions for improvement to be followed up.
- **Representation of service user voice at NHS England insight visit**
- **Member of the Northern Care Alliance Maternity Transformation Program** – attending workstream meetings to provide challenge and input from service user point of view.
- **Chair part of interview panel for appointment of Trust Community Specialist Engagement Midwives**



## Challenges

- **Delays in initial information sharing/receiving.**
- **Social Media Accounts.** (re-building reach and engagement)
- **No prior workplan, report or minutes. Starting from scratch.** (Covid-Pandemic made engagement/involvement difficult 2020-21)
- **Short turn around on timeframe deadlines making true co-design difficult.**
- **Covid Pandemic and local restrictions making face to face contact difficult around engagement and involvement.**
- **Engagement Opportunities delayed:** 15 steps rescheduled several times due to Covid-Pandemic and local restrictions.
- **True Co-Production:** Challenging and although the MVP is asked for input Maternity Leads don't always feed back the outcome
- **Time/Funding:** Increased awareness of the ROMVP and the emergence of Ockenden Reports and other reports concerning Midwifery Services means that there are more organisations and professionals who want input and support from the Chair, Vice Chair and Volunteer Advocates. This has led to increasing asks nationally and in formal Trust guidance to embed ROMVP into processes and workplans.
- **Ensuring Grass Roots community voices are heard:** We need to do more to address ensuring voices are heard and to ensure a more representative cohort of volunteers is recruited.

## Our Work: In Detail

### Quarterly ROMVP Meetings

The first virtual Rochdale and Oldham MVP meeting was held via zoom on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 from 7:00pm – 8:30pm, chaired by the new Rochdale and Oldham MVP Chair and minutes taken by Healthwatch. This meeting was well attended by a mixture of service users, professionals, charities and organizations who represent service users across Rochdale and Oldham. Prior to this meeting there were also several apologies with interest expressed for future and further engagement or involvement as part of the Rochdale and Oldham MVP.

Included within the meeting as agenda items were updates from local maternity services, a question-and-answer session from service users to the professionals and the opportunity for feedback and discussion around a number of maternity service leaflets for review. The Terms of Reference were also circulated for sign off at a subsequent meeting, with a date set for review in June 2023.

There has since been a meeting each quarter, all of which have been virtual via Zoom and in the evening. There has been a poll on the preferred times of meetings giving options of morning, afternoon and evening and there was mixed appetite for morning or evening. A morning zoom was trialed however this was poorly attended and as a result evening meetings were reinstated. Meetings are minuted along with an action log and the following have taken place:

| Meeting  | Date       | Time            | Theme   | Guest Speaker   | Number of Attendees |
|----------|------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>1</b> | 02.06.2021 | 7:00pm – 8:30pm | First Meeting – Introduction to ROMVP           | None            | <b>23</b>           |
| <b>2</b> | 19.07.2021 | 8:00pm – 9:20pm | Planning for the first year                     | None            | <b>18</b>           |
| <b>3</b> | 20.09.2021 | 8:00pm – 9:00pm | Infant Feeding                                  | Wendy Blackwood | <b>15</b>           |
| <b>4</b> | 17.01.2022 | 7:45pm – 9:15pm | Hyperemesis Gravidarum                          | Francesca Soan  | <b>20</b>           |
| <b>5</b> | 04.04.2022 | 8:00pm – 9:30pm | Yearly Round Up                                 | None            | <b>10</b>           |
| <b>6</b> | 11.07.2022 | 7:45pm – 9:15pm | Maternal Mental Health and Emotional Well being | Michelle Barker | <b>18</b>           |
| <b>7</b> | 26.09.2022 | 7:45pm – 9:15pm | Antenatal Education                             | Angela Welsh    | <b>18</b>           |
| <b>8</b> | 16.01.2023 | 7:45pm-9:15pm   | Antenatal/Parent Education update               | None            | <b>18</b>           |

## Ockenden – Website Gap Analysis

The Ockenden report was written following a review at another NHS Trust in response to a letter from bereaved families raising concerns about Maternity care received whilst at the hospital. The report outlines immediate and essential actions for the Trust and wider system that are required to improve care and safety in maternity services across England.

The Chair was asked to review the Royal Oldham Hospital Maternity webpages and submit a gap analysis highlighting areas for improvement. Following this report the Trust are rebuilding their page from scratch.



## Equality and Equity work *What we are doing to ensure we hear all voices.*

The ROMVP are committed to hearing all voices. The Rochdale and Oldham MVP ran a survey specifically for South Asian Women across the two boroughs. Included in this engagement plan are South Asian Community Groups who both Healthwatch Rochdale and Healthwatch Oldham already have good relationships with. We held targeted feedback events within the community and also partnered with Cartwheel Arts.

ROMVP have shared information to specific groups across Rochdale and Oldham to ensure that awareness of the ROMVP is raised to grass roots communities and minoritized parents. In particular, the issues and needs of Roma communities has been raised with Maternity Services and an initial meeting has taken place between Local Authority Officers working with this group and the engagement midwife. Joint work is planned to establish a close rapport with Roma people in the boroughs.





## Co-produced Reports

**Baby Bubbles** – A consortium of Rochdale based organizations (Barnardos, Rochdale Connections Trust, Beyond Psychology, ROMVP, Healthwatch Rochdale, Early attachment service and Home Start). Aim to gather in lived experiences from maternity service users who have been pregnant/given birth within the Covid Pandemic time frame. Each organization ran workshops and the ROMVP gathered lived experiences/feedback.



Baby Bubbles  
partnership feedback



**15 Steps** – A 15 steps is a program where a team go into an area and carry out an inspection on the service and then create a report with recommendations.

The ROMVP 15 steps was carried out by ROMVP Chair, local commissioners and Dad Matters Representative at Rochdale antenatal and scanning department in December 2021 and at Oldham in February 2022. Report produced which includes recommendations



15 Steps for  
Maternity across Ro



**Racial Inequalities with Cartwheel Arts** – Working in collaboration with Cartwheel Arts, Healthwatch Rochdale, independent artists and an emotional wellbeing support worker a creative engagement project was created to work with South Asian Women around an expressive way of interpreting their maternity journeys using a variety of artistic methods. The women also shared their maternity stories with us. The aim of the project was to learn more about racial inequalities in maternity care. Report produced which included a number of suggested recommendations.



Bump to Baby  
Consultation Final F





## Wider Work



### Meetings

Attend a variety of forums, network meetings across both Rochdale and Oldham to raise awareness of the ROMVP, to update on the work we are doing and give residents opportunities to feedback about local maternity services.

#### **Regular Meetings with Commissioners and Service Providers.**

This has been extremely beneficial the ongoing support and advice alongside the opportunity to get to know everyone.

#### **Rochdale Grass Roots Gathering**

Attendance at Grass Root Gathering meetings hosted by Action Together to promote ROMVP, encourage the sharing of feedback and recruitment of voluntary members.

#### **Women's Foundation Network**

A collaborative group of women from grass root organisations across the Rochdale borough, includes discussions around perinatal mental health, Menopause after childbirth and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Organisations Groups involved: Petrus, Soul Sisters, Social Prescribing Team, Action Together, Kashmir Youth Project, Rochdale Women's Welfare, Rochdale and District MIND.

#### **Rochdale BAME Forum**

Hosted by Rochdale and District MIND and focusing on mental health and wellbeing. ROMVP gather perinatal mental health feedback and share their work via this forum.

#### **Communities and Faiths Network**

This monthly group gives insights into local neighborhoods and residents. Attendees from a variety of backgrounds. An opportunity to discuss the work of the ROMVP, gather feedback and offer our Volunteering roles.

## Campaigns

ROMVP has actively shared and taken part in campaigns for the following:

- ICON – baby crying campaign
- Safer Sleep
- Maternal Mental Health
- FASD Awareness
- Drymeister
- International day of the Midwife
- Strep B Awareness
- Positive about Down Syndrome
- International Volunteer Week
- World Breastfeeding Week



## Building Networks

Linking with Health Visitors, Early Attachment team, Perinatal Infant Mental Health team, Well Family steering group, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Greater Manchester Forum; locally and working collaboratively with other third sector organisations such as Dad Matters, Home-Start Host, BAME Connect and Relax with Lucy.



## Safer Sleep Awareness

Thanks to funding from Action Together, the ROMVP created a number of “Safer Sleep” packs that were distributed at local Ante-natal classes via the Rochdale health Visiting Team. This was to help raise awareness of keeping baby safe, warm and well in Winter and linking to healthy sleep habits and routines.



## Communications and Social Media

As Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership reformed during the Covid – 19 pandemic social media was key in raising the profile and providing a platform for information sharing and opportunity to feed back. To ensure Service User Engagement the Facebook page and Twitter Accounts were re-established, and later Instagram was added to the social media. These have all proved to be a useful way of communicating quickly with service users, they have allowed online conversations, enquiries, the sharing of factual information and a way to easily share surveys and the feedback link.



There has been a significant increase in followers to all the ROMVP Social Medias.

Instagram was a platform that many maternity services used during the pandemic and has been of great benefit when recruiting for the Chair, Vice Chair and Volunteer Advocates.



- On Instagram 16.9% of followers are from Rochdale and 12.1% from Oldham. The highest age of follower is 25–34 years old with 91.5% of followers' female. Instagram has 275 followers in total.

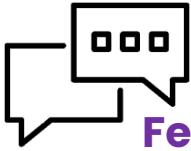


- Twitter has 390 followers. In July 2022 alone we shared 24 tweets, we received 1107 profile visits and 13 other twitter account mentioned us. Twitter is good for engaging professional audiences.



- Facebook has a total of 653 followers, with 560 likes. The age of the majority of followers are between 35 and 44 years old (44.4% which is almost half) 95.9% of followers are women, 138 (21%) Oldham based with 93 (14%) Rochdale based with an additional 32 (5%) being specifically from Heywood and 18 (3%) from Littleborough; both within the Rochdale Borough.

*\*Figures quoted at time of reporting period*



## Feedback

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, a large proportion of feedback has been gathered using online platforms and online meetings.

Feedback can be given via our easy use feedback link which uses prompts and drop-down boxes to help fill in information. For more detailed service user stories/feedback accounts these can be submitted via email direct to the ROMVP inbox and via the social media direct messaging facilities. Towards the Summer of 2022, on the ground engagement has resulted in more face-to-face feedback being received which has helped in further reaching voices of the seldom heard.

Generally, feedback trends towards a more negative experience of maternity services and care this heightened in the height of the pandemic around restrictions on partners, inductions, scans, inductions and birthing choices.

Key trends over the reporting period have been around:

- **Inconsistency of Breast Feeding support:** Oldham funded, Rochdale not.
- **Lack of staffing:** impacting on continuity of care and quality of care
- **Lack of support:** in particular after a Cesarean, or directly after birth such as a de-brief
- **Health Visiting:** Less visible, weigh in clinics not running (pandemic)
- **Hyperemesis Gravidarum:** Support, Education, Other services such as PIMH, Medication, accessing services.
- **Social Isolation:** Pandemic meant no antenatal, midwife visit, health visitors, surestart groups.
- **GP 6-8 weeks postnatal maternal health checks:** lack of consistency in offering appointments and format of checks.

These themes have helped to launch targeted feedback campaigns and the feedback then shapes actions included in annual workplan for ROMVP to deliver. The workplan is signed off by the Trust and at LMNS level and can be found on our website.

Service user feedback is also fed into the monthly Trust meetings which are escalated to board level and used to make decisions of how future services, strategies and improvement programs are designed and delivered in line with what is important to the people accessing the services.

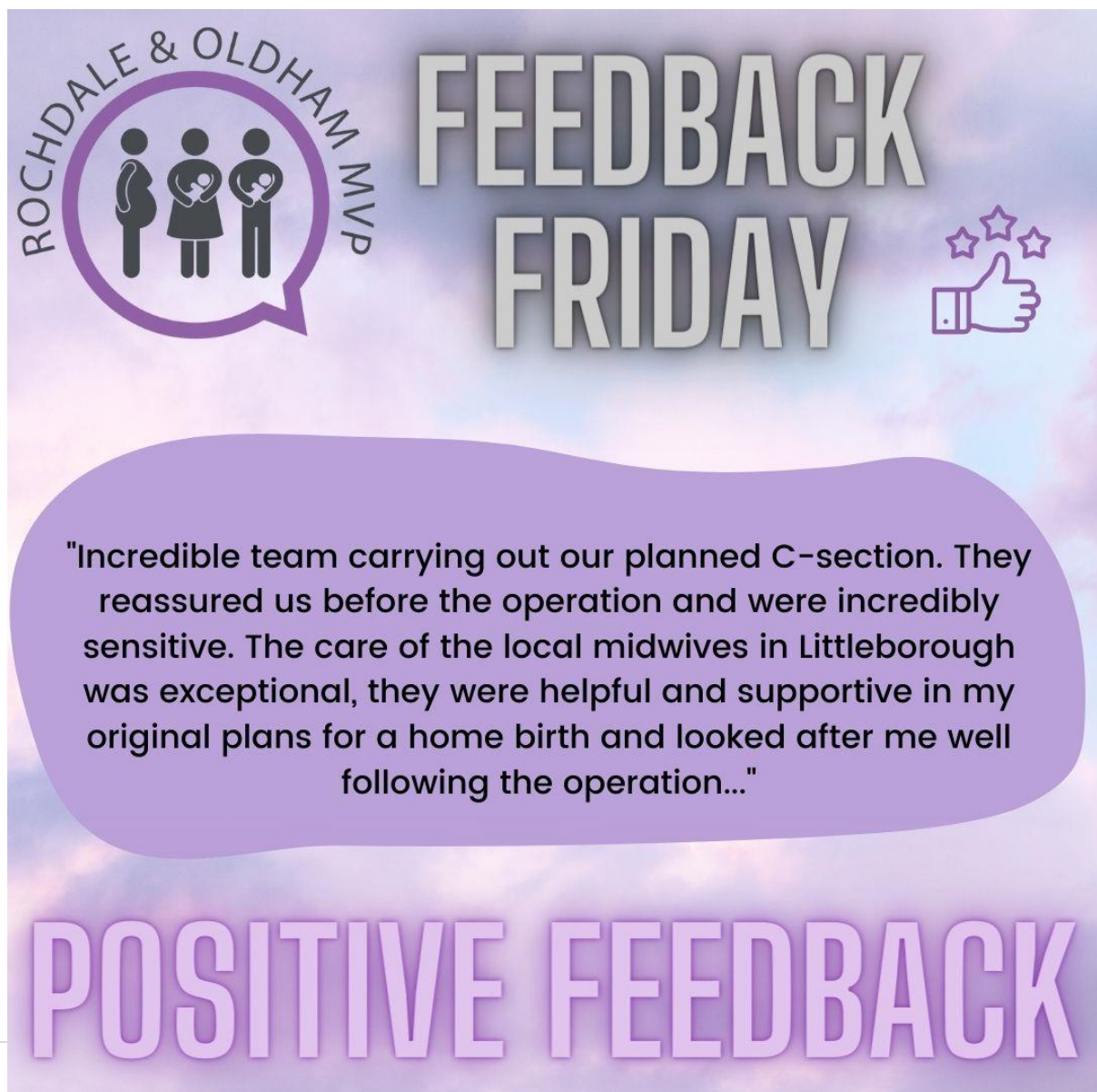


Below are ways to engage with Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership and ways to share feedback:

- **Twitter Page @ro\_mvp**
- **Instagram Account ro\_mvp**
- **Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/RochdaleOldhamMVP>**
- **Rochdale and Oldham MVP Web page <https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk/romvp>**
- **Email address [info@romvp.org.uk](mailto:info@romvp.org.uk)**

On our social media channels we frequently publish #FeedbackFriday positive quotes from service users across Rochdale and Oldham.

Example below:

A graphic for Feedback Friday with a purple and blue background. In the top left is the Rochdale & Oldham MVP logo. The text "FEEDBACK FRIDAY" is written in large, bold, white letters with a drop shadow. To the right is a thumbs-up icon with three stars. A purple speech bubble contains a quote. At the bottom, the words "POSITIVE FEEDBACK" are written in large, bold, white letters with a drop shadow.

**ROCHDALE & OLDHAM MVP**

# FEEDBACK FRIDAY

"Incredible team carrying out our planned C-section. They reassured us before the operation and were incredibly sensitive. The care of the local midwives in Littleborough was exceptional, they were helpful and supportive in my original plans for a home birth and looked after me well following the operation..."

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK

### Impact of Service User Feedback *an example*

At an MVP meeting we received feedback from a service user that her experience of postnatal health check conducted by GP was poor

This feedback was taken to the Clinical Commissioning Group for Oldham which is where the GP practice was located, and a number of actions were carried out as a result.

Oldham CCG funded a number of clinical sessions to work with the GP practice and delivered a development session for primary care.

A letter that was originally sent to GPs in January 2021 was recirculated reminding them of their responsibilities of offering a 6-week postnatal check.

Further detail was requested to enable targeted work with the practice involved and on receipt of the detail from the patient, the CCG treated it in line with the serious incident protocol.

Arrangements were made to undertake a practice visit to discuss further with the lead GP and the practice manager. An action plan was agreed with the practice with a review date given on progress.

All GPs across Oldham encouraged to use the Arden template within EMIS to ensure a high-quality check is undertaken and coding is consistent with other practices.

Primary care Development session undertaken with slides & recording shared afterwards with all GPs not just those who attended.

Following the successful role out of this, Rochdale CCG followed suit with a similar GP education program ensuring a consistent offer across both boroughs.



**The impact of this feedback is that now every person who has a baby should be offered a 6-week check and that check should be conducted consistently across all GP settings in line with the guidance provided.**



## Conclusion

In a short space of time the Rochdale and Oldham Maternity Voices Partnership built connections with organisations, groups, and service users from across the two boroughs. It recruited a Chair and held a successful first meeting with actions put in place and a draft workplan within the first quarter. There were engagement opportunities, which were mainly via a virtual platform, to ensure demographical service users voice is heard and links to further build the relationships, with South Asian women and their families in particular.

This has helped to ensure that the ROMVP has steppingstones in place to become a strong, effective working group.

The Chair was provided with a laptop initially from the Hospital Trust and then from Healthwatch Rochdale to further aid her in the development of her role. She has also undertaken an Induction session and will also look at further training needs to ensure continual growth and development.

Targeted recruitment drives will ensure that the group is representative across a range of areas and localities within Rochdale and Oldham and the professional interest list continues to grow. The recruitment and retainment of ROMVP volunteer members will also aid in gathering of feedback and for when engagement opportunities arise to assist the ROMVP Chair.

With the Social Media Channels now in place, with regular posts and shares, this will strengthen the ROMVP further and ensure a wider reach and is a way to keep service users informed. The addition of Instagram has been of great benefit in raising online presence and awareness of ROMVP.

The Chair was added to the exclusive MVP Chairs Facebook Group and WhatsApp Group. This enables relationships to be built with the other chairs and ensures ROMVP is kept up to date with hot topics, relevant MVP news and ongoing regional updates.

Good relationships have built with the Hospital however, the ROMVP needs to look at ways in which we can gather feedback from the Maternity wards and services effectively, efficiently and safely. In addition, more work is needed to ensure that the 15 steps recommendations are adhered to and acted upon.

## Ongoing and Future Plans

The work of ROMVP is largely shaped by the feedback of local service users. Key themes are identified from feedback for improvement and built into the workplan along with National guidance from NHS England, Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire Maternity Voices Partnerships and any other key statutory reports influencing maternity care and service provision.

### Key Areas of Focus

- **Ongoing recruitment of ROMVP Volunteer Advocates from across Rochdale and Oldham with a focus on building a diverse membership**
- **Develop better and meaningful engagement with seldom heard communities, minoritized parents/partners including teen parents/partners, those with neurodiversity, parents/partners with special educational needs and disabilities and/or autism and those who identify as LGBTQ+**
- **Review of how the service users and volunteer advocates can best contribute to service design and feedback**
- **Continue to gather local maternity service users' feedback and ensure it is being used to inform the ROMVP work plans alongside the local Trust and with commissioners**
- **Continue to work on Rochdale and Oldham MVP Priorities through true codesign.**

### ROMVP Work plan

Full details of the 23/24 work plan will be shared on the website which will outlay themes for improvement, what work needs to be done, who is responsible for driving the change and the desired outcome.



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## Contact Details

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A banner with a light grey background and faint text. On the left is the Rochdale & Oldham MVP logo. To its right is a black wireframe globe. Below these is the text "Did you know you can select the language you require on our website." followed by a purple hand cursor icon. At the bottom left is the URL <https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk/romvp>.

ROCHDALE & OLDHAM MVP

Did you know you can select the language you require on our website.

<https://healthwatchrochdale.org.uk/romvp>

Share your feedback

