

What help will I get?

- an MSLC information pack
- informal session with the MSLC chair to give you more information about the MSLC and your role before attending your first meeting
- a visit to the maternity wing of Torbay Hospital
- support of other MSLC members
- access to Torbay Hospital library

Will it cost me anything?

Any reasonable amounts of money you have to spend on agreed items to attend meetings or find out the views of other parents will be repaid by the MSLC. This includes travel costs to get to MSLC meetings, costs of childcare so you can attend the meetings, stationery, postage and telephone calls. As the meetings usually take place at lunchtime, the MSLC provides sandwiches and drinks.

Why should I bother?

- Parents' views are essential to improving maternity services in the ways that parents want. The MSLC is one of the main ways that health workers get to hear the real opinions and experiences of parents using the maternity services.
- If you have any comments about the local maternity services this is your chance to be involved in shaping and improving the maternity service.
- Most parent members find their work interesting and rewarding.
- Being on a committee like the MSLC can give you new skills and confidence to help you with other work you may do

Torbay, Teignbridge and South Hams Maternity Services Liaison Committee

What is it?

How can I get involved?

Can I be a parent member?

What will I have to do?

What help will I get?

Will it cost me anything?

Are you keen to be involved in shaping and improving the local maternity services? This is your opportunity to have your say.

What is the Maternity Services Liaison Committee?

The aim of Torbay, Teignbridge and South Hams Maternity Services Liaison Committee (MSLC) is to ensure that parents' views of local maternity services are taken into account.

Maternity services include:

- ante-natal care, such as check-ups with the midwife and scans at the hospital
- care during labour and delivery, whether at home or in hospital
- support offered to new parents and their babies by midwives and health visitors

The MSLC is made up of about 20 people including

- NHS midwives, health visitors and doctors involved in maternity services, some from Torbay Hospital and others who are based in the community e.g. at health centres and Sure Start projects
- members of voluntary groups who offer services to new parents and their babies such as the National Childbirth Trust
- parents who live locally

At MSLC meetings the members discuss a huge variety of issues ranging from practical details such as how the ambulance crew find an address when called to a woman in labour in a remote farmhouse, through to policy issues such as reviewing the local home birth rate and caesarean section rates. Parent members are particularly encouraged to express their opinions and suggestions at the meeting. In between meetings, parent members find out the experiences and opinions of other parents they know, so they can represent these at the next meeting.

Can I be a Parent Member?

Yes, if you are a parent/guardian and live in Torbay or Teignbridge or the parts of South Hams served by Torbay Hospital. You must also be interested in finding out the views of other parents and parents-to-be, and willing to represent these views at MSLC meetings. So you need to be in touch with parents of babies and toddlers (although your own children may be older). Mums and Dads are equally welcome.

What will I have to do?

- Attend six meetings a year. Meetings take place at lunchtime and are held at Torbay Hospital.
- Between meetings find out the views of other parents and parents-to-be on issues which the MSLC plans to discuss at the next meeting. Also ask parents about issues they would like the MSLC to deal with. Some parent members do this at places where parents already meet regularly, such as parent and toddler groups. Others invite a small group of parents to meet informally every few months to discuss MSLC issues.
- Explain and discuss these views at the next MSLC meeting – the meetings are informal and friendly so most parent members find it easy to express their opinions.

Who to contact?

- Judith Walsham (Chairwoman) – 01803 654668
- Catherine Johnson (Vice-Chairwoman) – 01803 392297