

ELIZABETH BRYAN MULTIPLE BIRTHS CENTRE Newsletter



THE
ELIZABETH BRYAN
Multiple Births Centre

0121 331 5185

multiple.births@bcu.ac.uk

www.bcu.ac.uk/ebmbc

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Welcome

We hope that you and your families are keeping well during these difficult times. Like all organisations, Birmingham City University and the Multiple Births Foundation had to adapt rapidly to accommodate the changes for safety of students and staff. The development of the West Midlands Multiple Births group is currently on hold due to the impact of Covid-19 but we are very pleased to say that the core work of the EBMBC has continued.

The Health Visitor survey

‘Supporting multiple birth families; establishing an evidence base to inform health visitor practice’.

The national survey of health visitors, undertaken collaboratively between the Elizabeth Bryan Multiple Births Centre, the Institute for Health Visiting (iHV) and the Multiple Births Foundation, has been published. For the first time we now have a national picture of the experiences of health visitors working with multiple birth families.

Generously supported by The Burdett for Nursing, the Executive Summary and the full report can be found at: www.bcu.ac.uk/support-mbf.

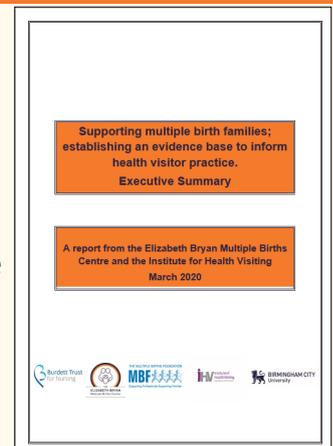
Health Visitors (HVs) currently practising in the UK were invited to complete an online survey. The questionnaire asked about their understanding of the needs of multiple birth families and their experiences in providing support.

The study provided HVs with the opportunity to clarify their challenges, needs and concerns both about working with multiple birth families and the wider challenges of the HV role.

The HVs recognised that parenting multiple birth children can be more complex for parents and babies, which may affect family life and wellbeing. The first year is particularly difficult and HVs are uniquely placed to provide essential support to the families. The findings clearly demonstrated the challenges and pressures that they face in meeting the needs of multiple birth families.

Here are a selection of the findings:

- ◆ Most HVs have twins on their current caseload.
- ◆ Most HVs received no specific training to prepare them for supporting multiple birth families during their initial HV training.
- ◆ Discussion with colleagues and professional experience are the most common methods of developing their knowledge and skills.
- Both HVs and parents needed more information about daily tasks of caring for multiple birth children such as breast-feeding, weaning and managing crying.



Health Visitor survey continued

Having identified these gaps in the education and professional development currently provided, the EBMBC will work with service, education and continuing professional development providers to address the shortfall. The study also highlights the challenges and pressures that health visitors currently face including the lack of recognition of the more time consuming needs of multiple birth families in their workload configuration. Strategies to give health visitors more support for helping these families need to be explored, enabling them and the service more generally to provide more effective help.

The role of a multiple pregnancy midwife

Pam Langford was a student on the first delivery of the online module 'The Individualised Care of Multiple Birth Families'. Pam is a specialist multiples midwife and has recently been named as a runner-up for the Johnson's Excellence in Maternity Care and Innovation award.

We asked her to tell us more about her role.

'I implemented the multiple pregnancy case loading pathway at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust in September 2018. This resulted from my passion for providing care to women expecting multiples and eagerness to implement the recommendations from the Better Births National Maternity Review to improve the maternity experience and outcomes for women.

The service has experienced numerous successes including, being accredited as outstanding by the Twins Trust; featuring in a NICE best practice publication; significantly improving the patient experience feedback and improving compliance with NICE guidance following the development of personalised care plans; improved breastfeeding rates; a reduction in admissions of multiples to the neonatal unit and 100% of women receiving continuity of carer in the antenatal period.

There have also been challenges and a key one was my initially being the only midwife to support the service and therefore not available for the women when on leave. I have subsequently identified midwives with a specific interest in the care of multiples. They support the service when I am away and the goal is for a further multiple pregnancy midwife to be appointed.

I am extremely proud of the service which we are able to offer women expecting a multiple pregnancy and strive to continually improve the service and the experience of women'.

Congratulations to Pam – an excellent advocate for multiple birth families.

What are your educational needs?

In addition to the online module, we are developing further CPD opportunities for all health care and allied professionals as part of the EBMBC work stream.

We would appreciate your thoughts on what would be most useful for you. Possibilities include:

- Developing more online accredited modules
- Shorter, CPD taster modules available online at any time
- Written resources; hot topics / guidelines
- Bespoke study days / master classes

Please share with us any key topics that you would like covered and thoughts on how they can be delivered by emailing multiple.births@bcu.ac.uk. ***All ideas welcome.***

Multiple Births Online Module

We were very pleased to start the third delivery of the online module 'The individualised care of multiple birth families from conception to 1 year' in March. We had a cohort of UK students from neonatal, midwifery and health visiting backgrounds plus three International students. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we had to pause delivery for the home students but we look forward to them recommencing in September.

The next delivery of the module will begin on **Monday 28th September 2020** and runs for 10 weeks. The content covers:

- Introduction to multiple births including incidence, how multiples occur and the diagnosis of a multiple pregnancy (including zygosity & chorionicity)
- The experience of pregnancy, birth and postnatal care, including neonatal care
- Parenting multiple babies during the first year, including maternal and paternal mental health, infant feeding, child development and promoting healthy relationships

The module is available at Level 6 and 7 or as a non-accredited CPD module. If you would like further information about the module, please email: mbm@bcu.ac.uk or visit the website where details about the application process can also be found: www.bcu.ac.uk/births

Felicity Bryan (1945-2020)

It is with great sadness that we report the death on 21 June of Felicity Bryan, sister of MBF founder, Dr Elizabeth Bryan after whom the EBMBC is also named. Felicity was a very successful literary agent who has been a committed, very generous and much valued supporter of the MBF since its start in 1988, attending both the launch of the EBMBC in September 2017 and the Multiple Realities Exhibition held at Birmingham Library last September. She will be sorely missed by all who knew her and we send our condolences to her family at this very sad time.



Recent Publications and Research

* The **Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority** has recently published their annual report 'Fertility treatment 2018: trends and figures' which has identified that the multiple birth rate has continued to decrease and nationally only 8% of IVF births resulted in a multiple birth. The report can be found here: <https://www.hfea.gov.uk/about-us/publications/research-and-data/fertility-treatment-2018-trends-and-figures/>

* The **National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP)** Impact report has been recently published, highlighting the positive impact of the NBCP for both bereaved parents and the staff who are delivering the care. Further information can be found here: <https://nbcpathway.org.uk/about-nbc/nbcp-impact-report-2020>

* Researchers at the University of Alberta, Canada, are looking for recruits for their study aiming to understand the experiences of **physical activity in women who are, or who were, pregnant with multiples**. Women are invited to complete a 20-25 minute online survey which is available here: <https://redcap.link/momofmultiples> Please share this link.

Best wishes from all at the EBMBC

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