



# Supporting mothers with babies on the Neonatal Unit

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

Jo Hankinson

- ✦ Star Buddies' personal experiences with their own babies on NNU was the catalyst for passion to support mothers on NNU
- ✦ Star Buddies have always supported mothers with babies on NNU, on the postnatal ward.
- ✦ In addition to the support given to mothers during their hospital stay, in 2012 a dedicated neonatal Star Buddy began offering support for 10 hours per week on the neonatal unit
- ✦ Mothers with babies are supported by the whole team including volunteers and the community team.
- ✦ Training and mentoring for Star Buddies, paid and volunteers
- ✦ Building relationships with women , their family and NNU staff.
- ✦ Sharing experiences with Royal Lancaster Infirmary

# A Mother's Journey

✦ Mother may know baby may be born early

Mum may meet us during her pregnancy

✦ Mother goes into labour early without warning

✦ Baby is delivered and taken almost straight away so mum may not have met her baby yet

We offer support to the mother as soon as she feels able

✦ Mother is given a photograph of her baby by staff from the neonatal unit

✦ Mother may not be able to visit her baby straight away if she is unable to get out of bed

If mum is unable to see her baby we will go to the NNU to collect something that has been in contact with her baby so mum has something physical to hold

# A Mother's Journey



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✦ Mum may feel overwhelmed or may feel positive that the baby has been delivered safely.



Listening

✦ Mums may or may not want to talk through the pregnancy and birth



Listening

✦ Mum may or may not have intended to breastfeed



Listening

✦ NNU may ask mum to start expressing or mum may want to get started knowing that her milk will help her baby



- We try to start supporting mothers as soon as possible after birth. This may be on delivery suite, the postnatal ward or on NNU
- Mothers are encouraged to start hand expressing within 6 hours of birth
- Most mothers will do some hand expressing



# A Mother's Journey

- ✦ Mum may feel frustrated if expressing doesn't work straight away
- ✦ Probably will only be able to take information in bite size pieces
- ✦ The mother may feel she is on a emotional rollercoaster with highs and lows
- ✦ May need support with building milk supply
- ✦ May need support with the practicalities of having a baby on NNU, expressing and fitting things around the family
- ✦ May need a regular listening ear



Continuous  
support



Supporting mothers with  
expressing using a breast pump

Helping mothers initiate  
breastfeeding as soon as mum  
and baby are ready





In 2012 NHS Blackpool funded a gift scheme to encourage more mothers to express their milk for their baby on NNU.



The kit not only provided mothers with things they may need but also enabled the initiation of relationship building with mothers and Star Buddies.

# Potential obstacles

- Things took a while to get going
- The hospital volunteer process can be lengthy
- There may be medical things we may not be aware of
- Parents may not want support
- Building trust with staff
- Training
- Not everyone feels comfortable on a NNU

# A Mother's Journey

