

Characteristics of good

We have developed the content below using national guidance and evidence from our recent inspection programme. This resource aims to set out the general characteristics of good maternity practice.

The characteristics of good healthcare equity

The needs and preferences of different women with protected characteristics under the Equality Act are considered when planning, delivering and coordinating the maternity service. Maternity services collaborate with other services and providers to provide a holistic package of support for women. The maternity service liaises with women, their families and carers to ensure all partners are informed of any diverse needs that should be addressed. Any reasonable adjustments are made and communicated, and action is taken to remove barriers when women struggle to access services.

The maternity service routinely collects and uses ethnicity data as part of their incident reporting process. When reviewing safety outcomes, trends are identified for women from ethnic minority groups and action is taken to respond to any risk factors. All maternity staff understand the importance of collecting demographic information, and how it is used to improve outcomes for women. The maternity service breaks down data by levels of deprivation and targets improvement initiatives to areas with the highest deprivation.

The provision of translation and interpretation services is readily available for women whose first or preferred language is not English or those who are deaf. Adjustments are made for women who are unable to read.

Maternity services actively promote equality and diversity within their workforce. If there are any areas of inequality identified action is taken to remove them. Staff, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, feel they are treated equitably.

Maternity leaders at all levels promote equality and diversity. They encourage pride and positivity in the maternity service and focus attention on the needs and experiences of women who use the service. Behaviour and performance that are inconsistent with the vision and values is identified and dealt with swiftly and effectively, regardless of seniority.

A full and diverse range of people's views and concerns is encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture. The service proactively engages and involves all staff (including those with protected equality characteristics), and ensures that the voices of all staff are heard and acted on to shape services and culture.