

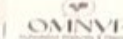
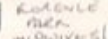


# Early Lives, Equal Start: Working together to improve health inequalities

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Local Maternity & Neonatal System

Oxford University Hospitals



## Context

MBRRACE (2023) continues to show stark inequalities in maternity outcomes especially those women and birthing people from ethnic groups and those living in deprivation.



### Not all "Dreaming Spires"

17 areas ranked within 20% most deprived in England mainly within 30 wards - 1 in Abingdon, 3 in Banbury & Oxford

Areas of greatest ethnic diversity located in most deprived wards e.g. Blackford Leys

Rise in number of asylum-seeking women & resettled refugees - new dispersal accommodation in Banbury, Oxford and Didcot, resettlement programmes

Single maternity support, Saplings, Lifes team, Oxford Rose Clinic (ORC), H&P

## NIHR

Health Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley

### Logic model Early Lives Equal Start Focused



## What is Early Lives, Equal Start (ELES):

"Early Lives Equal Start" launched late 2022, in response to local and national research in 2021. Omotunde Coker, a community researcher with HealthWatch, collaborated with mothers from Oxford's Black and ethnic minority communities and Oxford Community Action (OCA) to create a film discussing their views on maternity care

### Working within the current system:

"The model is predicated on people coming to us, not us to them"

- Based on numbers not need
- Resource constraints
- Barriers to staff engagement
- Silo-ed approaches

### Are there other/better ways of working? What can we learn from elsewhere?

Neighbourhoods can be primary units of change and critical starting points for efforts to improve health inequalities. Early Lives Equal Start is place-based working in action; improving the way organisations work together and with families, to shift attitudes and resources towards preventing problems that can start in early life.

### Why OX4?

One of most deprived areas in Oxon and home to our most ethnically diverse community. Community Midwifery services already located in OX4, Flo's at the Park, Flo - a social enterprise at heart of OX4 community life.

Currently Funded by BOB LMNS & BOB ICB H&P

### Aim:

To support mothers and birthing people from the diverse migrant population of OX4, who are at greater risk of adverse outcomes to thrive in pregnancy and early parenthood.

### Specific objectives:

- Better Access, Experience and Outcomes for women and birthing people in OX4
- Co-produced targeted and effective community based antenatal education and support for minoritized communities in OX4
- Coordinated place based social prescribing with an anti-poverty, legal literacy lens

## What has been achieved to date:

### One year on:

- Improved access & experience for pregnant women in OX4
- Including obstetric outreach clinic for Timorese women and birthing people
- Social prescribing with an anti-poverty, legal literacy lens (Maternity Advocate and Community Organiser (MACO) casework)
- Continue to Co-produce community based antenatal education and support
- New maternity advocates peer support network
- Shared Learning Event March 8<sup>th</sup> for International Womens Day



Launch of the Equal Start Maternity Advocates programme

## What do we do?

Place-based co-produced innovation which builds on existing partnerships, relationships & networks.

### Maternity Advocates and Community Organisers (MACOs):

- Maternity Health Justice partnership in action
- Referral pathway to MACO team created
- Worked with over 100 families (Jan 23 to present)
- Antenatal classes
- Co-produce community-based antenatal education and culturally-appropriate health literacy information with relevant interpretation
- Training in community outreach, peer-to-peer support and advocacy
- Advocacy and empowerment (ESMA - Equal Start Maternity Advocates) - stories for change
- Peer to peer support (ESCOs - Equal Start Community Outreach)

## Done by community, for community...

"When we do change to people they experience it as violence, when people do change to themselves, they experience it as liberation"

Rosabeth Moss Kanter



## References:

- Knight M, Bunch K, Felker A, Patel R, Kotnis R, Kenyon S, Kurinczuk JJ (Eds.) on behalf of MBRRACE-UK (2023) Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care Core Report - Lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2019-21. Oxford: National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford 2023.
- Healthwatch film: *Early Lives Equal Start - Flo's | The Place in the Park* ([floxford.org.uk](https://floxford.org.uk)) and updates at [maternity-update-and-outcomes.pdf](https://maternity-update-and-outcomes.pdf) ([healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk))