Maternity Department, Ipswich Hospital - Skin-to-Skin at Elective Caesarean Birth Project

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Ipswich Hospital is a national outlier for the number of term babies admitted to the Neonatal Unit. There are a number of initiatives underway designed to reduce unnecessary admissions.

Dr Clare Astbury, Consultant Obstetrician and Labour Ward Lead, led a project to change delivery of care by the team at elective caesarean sections.

There is good evidence of the benefits of immediate skin to skin between mother and baby at birth, but not at caesarean section. The project involved stakeholders from across midwifery, neonatal unit, obstetrics, anaesthetics and theatres to redesign and test the care pathway at delivery. Babies are delivered directly onto their mother's chest following cord clamping, with no separation during the first 'golden hour' of life. Women were involved in the project via consultation before, and via feedback after the changes, which have been overwhelmingly welcomed. As well as admissions to neonatal unit rolling monthly average from elective caesarean falling from 4.3% to 2.8%, women's self-reported nausea and pain symptoms have improved.