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<stephen.anderson6@nhs.net>
Sent: 11 July 2020 13:03
To: Edward Morris
Cc: Birte Harlev-lam; Gill Walton; Mary Ross Davie; shall@rcog.org.uk; Anita Powell;
 Jenny Priest; Christine Ekechi; egilgunn-jones@rcog.org.uk; Jo Tanner; **NR**
NR (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24); **NR**
 (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24); TRANKA, Sue (NHS ENGLAND &
 NHS IMPROVEMENT - T1520)
Subject: RE: Attendance of partners at maternity appointments

Thanks, Eddie and Birte.

You will no doubt appreciate that we cannot address this issue within maternity in isolation, notwithstanding the particular need women have for support during maternity appointments, and we are operating within a fixed set of parameters, including in particular the decision that there will be no relaxation of the 2m social distancing rule in hospitals in England. But I am very happy to have a conversation next week about what might be possible. Would that be helpful? If so, maybe you could let me have your availability.

It might be helpful to involve Sue Tranka, the Deputy Chief Nursing Officer who has particular responsibility for infection prevention and control.

Steve

Stephen Anderson | Head of Maternity Programme | NHS England and NHS Improvement | **I&S** | For diary enquiries:
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From: Edward Morris <epmorris@rcog.org.uk>
Sent: 10 July 2020 17:32
To: ANDERSON, Stephen (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) <stephen.anderson6@nhs.net>
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NR (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) **NR** @nhs.net
Subject: RE: Attendance of partners at maternity appointments

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your email. While we understand restrictions on visitors remain in place in some Trusts in England to ensure compliance with social distancing measures and prevent the spread of coronavirus, we think it's vitally important that NHSE/I urgently produce a framework or set of principles to enable Trusts to take a consistent

approach to the relaxing of out-patient and in-patient visiting restrictions on maternity units. There needs to be a reasonable balance between continuing to protect women and staff from in-hospital transmission and enabling vital support at appointments, during induction of labour and from visitors on postnatal wards.

The priority of everyone working in maternity services will always be safety, whether that's the safety of staff or the women in their care, but we understand how frustrating it will be that pregnant women in Scotland or Northern Ireland will be able to share the experience of antenatal scans with their partners, while women in England and Wales cannot.

The problem with allowing decisions to be taken locally is that this will lead to significant variation, groups of professionals feeling isolated and unsupported, and continued frustration from women and their partners. We recognise that there are practical issues, like the lack of ventilation and the size of rooms used for scans and also that antenatal and postnatal wards have very different availability of space in different hospitals. We also know how innovative maternity teams across the country are at finding ways to get round those challenges and would encourage NHSE/I and other national bodies to share those solutions across their networks.

Additionally, we do not believe the position of the Society of Radiographers is a barrier to producing this framework. The SCoR statement, which we've been involved with, is already written in a way that it is ready for changes to visitor restrictions. It says 'where there are trust-wide restrictions on visitors, the following recommendations apply...' i.e. where there are no restrictions, the following recommendations are irrelevant.

As such, on Monday we intend to welcome the range of measures re-introduced in Scotland and Northern Ireland which will enable birth partners to accompany pregnant women to antenatal and postnatal appointments, including pregnancy scans. We do not underestimate how difficult the pandemic has been for pregnant women, many of whom have had to attend appointments alone, and for the staff who care for them.

While we understand infection control in hospitals remains a high priority to reduce transmission of the virus, we would like reassurance that the NHS in England and Wales is currently looking to how they can safely start to re-introduce measures enabling partners to attend appointments with pregnant and postnatal women. This is an important step not only for the health and wellbeing of pregnant women but for their partners who have been affected by missing out on these appointments and bonding time with their babies.

We're very keen to work with you on developing such a framework and look forward to your response.

Eddie and Birte (deputising for Gill this week)

Edward Morris MD RCOG

President



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From: ANDERSON, Stephen (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) [<mailto:stephen.anderson6@nhs.net>]

Sent: 10 July 2020 11:31

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