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Building a safe space: optimising maternity care for survivors of modern slavery by co-creating supporting resources for women and professionals

Submission date
12/07/2024

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
03/02/2025

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
14/08/2025

Condition category
Other

[_] Prospectively registered
[_] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Modern slavery is the exploitation of individuals through activities such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced criminal activity, the sale of children and the forced movement of people via human trafficking. Estimates suggest up to 122,000 adults live in modern slavery in the UK, with over 18,400 women and girls confirmed as potential victims since 2018. Around three in every ten women survivors of modern slavery are pregnant while being trafficked. These women and their babies are more likely to experience poor health outcomes. All childbearing women should receive care that is respectful, safe and appropriate to their situation. Maternity care professionals have limited knowledge about how best to provide care for survivor mothers. Collaborative working between maternity services and community agencies requires support. We want to understand how the best maternity care and support can be provided for survivor mothers and their babies.

Who can participate?
Survivor mothers who have experience of maternity care in the UK.
Maternity professionals (working clinically or strategically) and non-statutory service staff providing care and support to women survivors.

What does the study involve?
We will work with organisations that support women survivors nationally to complete interviews or focus groups with up to 22 survivor mothers from varied backgrounds and cultures. We will also interview up to 8 staff in total from support agencies and maternity professionals. We will be flexible in how we work with everyone. Women will have access to emotional and language support, anonymity will be maintained, and survivors' time will be paid for. We will use recognised approaches to analyse the data collected. From this information, we will co-create with stakeholders best practice resources to support women's decision-making and guide those providing care and support during maternity.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
We cannot promise that the study will be of direct help to the participants, but the information we get from this study may help improve future care provision for women and their babies. Some participants enjoy taking part in interviews and sharing their views and experiences. There are few risks involved in interviews/focus group research, including emotional distress. We ask that people only share what they are comfortable with. If the participants become distressed during the interview/focus group due to the sensitive nature of the discussion, they will be free to pause or terminate their participation.

Where is the study run from?
University of Nottingham (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
June 2024 to December 2025

Who is funding the study?
NIHR Research for Patient Benefit and Salvation Army (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Sara Borrelli, sara.borrelli@nottingham.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal Investigator

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number
Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers
Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title
Building a safe space: optimising maternity care for survivors of modern slavery by co-creating supporting resources for women and professionals

Study objectives
Project aims:
1. To identify how optimal maternity care and support should be provided for survivor mothers and their babies
2. To co-create recommendations and resources for survivor mothers, maternity professionals and non-statutory service staff.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 25/06/2024, University of Nottingham, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Ethics Committee (Faculty Hub, Room E41, E Floor, Medical School, Queen's Medical Centre Campus, Nottingham University Hospitals, Nottingham, NG7 2UH, United Kingdom; -; FMHS-ResearchEthics@nottingham.ac.uk), ref: FMHS 191-0524

2. Submitted 09/07/2024, The Salvation Army, Research & Development Unit (Territorial Headquarters, 1 Champion Park, London, SE5 8FJ, United Kingdom; -; rdu@salvationarmy.org.uk), ref: -

Study design
Qualitative study

Primary study design
Observational

Secondary study design
Qualitative study

Study setting(s)
Charity/Voluntary sector, Other

Study type(s)
Other

Participant information sheet
Not available in web format, please use the contact details to request a patient information sheet.

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Maternity care and support for survivor mothers and their babies

Interventions
In depth, semi-structured, audio-recorded face-to-face/virtual interviews or focus groups (depending on participant preference) with survivor mothers; in-depth, semi-structured, recorded virtual interviews with professionals; template analysis; co-creation.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome measure
To identify how optimal maternity care and support should be provided for survivor mothers and their babies measured using qualitative interviews and focus groups

Secondary outcome measures
There are no secondary outcome measures

Overall study start date
25/06/2024

Completion date
31/12/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Survivor mothers:
1. Experience of maternity care in the UK (pregnancy or labour or postpartum)
2. Self-identify or identified by professionals as a survivor of modern slavery
3. Aged 18 years or over; within 5 years of giving birth. We will include a range of characteristics to support heterogeneity (various ages, nationalities, ethnicities, rural/urban areas)

Professionals:
1. Maternity professionals (working clinically or strategically) and non-statutory service staff providing care and support to women survivors

Participant type(s)
Health professional, Service user

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
100 Years

Sex

Both

Target number of participants
30 (22 survivor mothers + 8 professionals)

Total final enrolment
34

Key exclusion criteria
Survivor mothers:
Mothers who have no experience of any aspect of UK maternity care

Professionals:
Not meeting the inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
01/09/2024

Date of final enrolment
16/06/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

Study participating centre
Non-statutory services who have agreed to support recruitment, including Causeway, VITA Foundation, Unseen and Human Trafficking Foundation. Existing professional and Third Sector networks and organisations across England, including VITA Foundation, Causeway, The Salvation Army and Royal Colleges (newsletters, webpages and mailing lists).
United Kingdom
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Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Nottingham

Sponsor details
University Park
Nottingham
England
United Kingdom
NG7 2RD

+44 (0)115 951 5151
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Sponsor type
University/education

Website
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/

ROR
https://ror.org/01ee9ar58

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Research for Patient Benefit Programme

Alternative Name(s)
NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme, RfPB

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan
Findings, recommendations and resources will be presented at a half-day virtual end-of-project knowledge exchange event (month 14), which will launch recommendations and resources. Invited stakeholders will include survivor mothers, NHS maternity professionals, non-statutory services staff, commissioners and policy makers. The event will be advertised through newsletters, webpages and mailing lists via established links with statutory and non-statutory services who have agreed to support the project, including VITA Foundation, The Salvation Army, Unseen, Human Trafficking Foundation, Maternity Stream of Sanctuary, University of Nottingham Rights Lab and Causeway. Representation will be invited from relevant government agencies (Home Office Modern Slavery Unit), professional bodies (Royal Colleges) and academic departments engaged in this field. Twenty-five stakeholders who attended our pre-project

stakeholder event expressed an interest in further supporting the project and will be invited. The organisations invited have committed to rapid incorporation of recommendations and resources into existing materials (newsletters, online platforms, webpages) and into training resources (detailed above as part of project Phase III); this will, in turn, support our dissemination strategy. The event will be supported by a Press Release and attendees will be asked to provide informal feedback about use of resources and to support future formal evaluation. We have noted the project to the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC), with whom the Rights Lab Director has already met for preliminary partnership discussions. We intend to invite her to chair the end-of-project knowledge exchange event launching recommendations and resources.
Additional dissemination of outputs will take place through the following publications and presentations: co-created recommendations and resources for use by maternity professionals, staff of non-statutory agencies, policy-makers and service commissioners and for incorporation into education (HEE) and training packages (e.g. VITA, RCM i-learn and e-Learning for Health) (Project team); a co-created infographic version of the recommendations and resources for survivor mothers; interim and final reports to funder; two papers will be submitted for publication to high-quality, open-access, peer-reviewed academic and practice-facing journals; a paper for a survivor audience will be co-produced and co-authored with the PPI Group for dissemination through survivors' networks e.g Survivor Alliance, Maternity Stream of Sanctuary; a briefing paper prepared for professional bodies (RCOG/RCM/RCPCH) and NHS systems (Maternity Transformation Programme, Head of Safeguarding, Integrated Care Systems, NICE; two presentations offered to national/international conferences, targeting maternity audiences and organisations supporting survivors of modern slavery. Participants will be offered a summary of findings, recommendations and resources at study completion.

Intention to publish date
01/06/2026

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The databases generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not expected to be made available due to confidentiality issues.

IPD sharing plan summary
Not expected to be made available