Summary of responses to Births in Scottish Hospitals publication consultation

A consultation was carried out noting it was important for ISD that the Births in Scottish Hospitals publication met users’ needs. Comments were invited on a number of changes proposed for forthcoming publications. These changes were outlined in our publication of 29 November 2016 (page 2) and also appeared on our website in the ‘News and Updates’ section. In addition an email was sent to key stakeholders at the Scottish Government with a deadline of 14 July 2017 for responses to be received.

ISD would like to thank those who provided feedback; this will be used to ensure the information meets users’ needs.

A summary of the responses received on the consultation and the changes to forthcoming publications is provided below:

Responses received on the consultation

- Miscarriages which have been counted - especially those which have required the time and services of a midwife, a GP, an obstetrician or any other professional engagement during aftercare - make a valuable contribution to validating the work done by those professionals - particularly midwives, whose quotas have for too long been calculated on live births only. Please keep the statistics. They will become of great interest to the teams of academics who are trying to understand the incidence of unexplained stillbirth, all imagining that Syntocinon was used safely. They will also be of use for the education of student midwives who have never used Syntocinon safely.
- It would be useful to have data on women who have suffered multiple miscarriages if that is possible
- We are content that smoking at first visit is removed
- Is the assumption that Board level data for maternal health, substance use and BMI during pregnancy will only be available on Discovery or will there be embedded data tables available as now which will include Board level? If the former, many users don’t have access to Discovery.
- Condensing the PDF which will focus on key findings from the data would seem sensible, but splitting the technical information about data sources, data quality and changes in methodology and metadata could lead to data results being misinterpreted. We would want, as a minimum, for labelling in tables to continue to contain key caveats on data quality/data sources with the changes in methodology and metadata possibly being shifted to a separate document.

Changes to forthcoming publications

- NHS Board and council area level data will be included in the tables in publications as from 28 November 2017.
- Data on miscarriages will no longer be published as these data are incomplete and therefore of low clinical value. Accurate assessment of the number of miscarriages that occur is not possible from hospital based data as only miscarriages that require hospital inpatient or daycase treatment are recorded. It is possible that some, particularly early, miscarriages are either managed solely by General Practitioners or may not be recognised by the women, who as such are never referred to hospital. Requests for specific information on this topic will continue to be provided through ISD’s information request service.
- Data on maternal smoking at health visitor’s first visit will no longer be published as these data are published in the ISD publication 'Breastfeeding Statistics Scotland'.
A condensed PDF report will be published which will focus only on key findings from the data.

Technical information such as details of data sources, data quality, changes in methodology and metadata will be provided in a separate technical supporting document. This is inkeeping with ISD’s move to provide more data in ‘open data’ format which will allow more flexible use of the data and specifically for users to carry out their own analyses of the data. There are specific requirements for data to be classed as ‘open data’ and information such as footnotes on data quality/completeness/sources will be provided separately to the data tables.

Revisions to data tables to allow more flexible use and analysis of the data by users, further details of which can be found in the document ‘Births In Scottish Hospitals Publication – Revisions To Tables’.