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Innovative New Facial Recognition System Enhances Access for Neonatal Families

The Neonatal Unit at Arrowe Park Hospital is believed to be the first in the North West to introduce facial recognition technology, helping parents have 24-hour access to their babies more easily while maintaining high levels of security.

The new system was made possible through funding secured by the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP), led by Service Lead Steph Dalby, using Birth Inquiry uplift funding allocated to strengthen neonatal family engagement and ensure the voices of neonatal families are reflected in service development.

The funding, totalling over £1,600, covered the installation of a facial recognition entry system that allows approved parents to access the Neonatal Unit independently, 24 hours a day.

Once registered, parents can gain entry using facial recognition technology without waiting for staff to answer the door. This reduces delays while preserving the unit's existing security measures.

The system is now fully operational and has already received very positive feedback from both parents and staff. Families have welcomed the ease of access, while staff have recognised the benefits of fewer interruptions when delivering clinical care, alongside continued robust security arrangements.

The initiative was developed in direct response to feedback from neonatal families. Parents told staff and the MNVP that waiting to access the unit could be stressful, particularly during periods when clinical teams were busy providing care to babies on the unit.

By improving access, the new system helps reduce anxiety for parents and creates a more welcoming, family-centred environment.

A key benefit of the project is its support for Family Integrated Care (FiCare), an approach that recognises parents as partners in their baby's care. Providing 24-hour secure access allows families to spend more time with their baby, helping to strengthen bonding, build confidence in caring for their child and support involvement in decision-making throughout their neonatal journey.

Steph Dalby said:

"This project is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when staff and service users work together. Families told us that waiting to access the unit could add stress

during an already challenging time, so we worked with the Neonatal Team to find a solution. We're delighted to have been able to fund a project that improves the experience of neonatal families and supports Family Integrated Care."

The project demonstrates the Trust's ongoing commitment to listening to patient and family feedback and working collaboratively to deliver meaningful improvements that enhance experiences for patients, families and staff alike.



Pictured: Members of the Neonatal Team with Steph Dalby, Service Lead for the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (third from left), who secured funding for the facial recognition entry system at Arrowe Park Hospital's Neonatal Unit.