

## **Brief**

As part of the Black Maternity Matters initiative, the maternity team at Great Western Hospital, Swindon delivery team launched a project to make theatre experiences more comfortable and inclusive for patients and staff.

## **What was the project about?**

During Improving Together Quality Improvement Training, the team identified a simple but powerful idea:

- Introduce theatre hats that fit all hair types and improve communication in the operating theatre.
- This initiative supports dignity, comfort, and collaboration, because every patient and staff member deserves to feel respected and included.

## **How the team made it happen:**

- Funding: Supported by the Trust EDI team 'Count Me In project', which provides small grants for inclusion-focused ideas.
- Collaboration: Weekly 10–15 min touchpoints using an Improvement Board to share updates and track progress.
- Action: Staff worked together to design, test, and implement hats that accommodate diverse hairstyles.

## Project Timeline

Project Plan												
Milestones	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25
Application for funding via 'Count Me In'	█											
Application approved	█											
Stakeholder analysis	█	█										
Identification of headgear suppliers		█										
Headgear samples obtain		█										
Communication with colleagues and sharing of samples (including images)		█										
Collate colleague feedback on size, comfort and type of headgear		█	█									
Act on feedback from colleagues (liaise with suppliers re options)		█	█									
Confirm quantity and type of headgear to be ordered		█	█									
Order headgear		█	█									
Create and disseminate baseline surveys			█	█								
Create a local process for washing and restocking the headgear			█	█								
Headgear received				█	█							
Update to 'My Caesarean Birth' to include bring your own bonnet or be provided one				█	█							
Creation / amendment of community hubs infographics				█	█							
Pre op pack to include do you want to bring your own bonnet				█	█							
Distribution of headgear (Colleagues, ad hoc, Patients, birthing partners)				█	█	█						
Collate patient feedback to understand impact of project								█				
Collate staff feedback to understand impact of project									█			
React to feedback where required										█		
Project closure											█	█

## Patient feedback on new theatre Hats



### Impact So Far

- 80% of patients and birth partners said the hats fit well and loved the name badges for easy identification.
- Staff reported feeling empowered and heard, with new ideas emerging during discussions.
- Patients described the initiative as “Nice idea”, “Great idea”, and “Informative.”

## Why It Matters

This project is about more than hats, it's about equity, dignity, and teamwork. By listening and acting together, we're improving experiences for patients and staff alike. Reusable hats helping to reduce emissions by 50-80% compared to disposables.

## What is next

- Scale up the project to other teams across the hospital.

## Staff Stories – Maternity headgear

**Cohort: Bootcamp**  
**Improvement: Implementing**  
**Role: Delivery Suite Manager**



### Bootcamp Training Experience

- Bootcamp was insightful and provided a deeper understanding of organisational processes, strategy, and how things work beyond the clinical setting. It offered valuable context on the Improving Together approach and what it aims to achieve and I left wanting a more in-depth session on some of the tools introduced.
- Following bootcamp, we used the Improving Together approach to launch an initiative to provide appropriate theatre hats/bonnets to accommodate diverse styles and cultures, for both patients and staff in Maternity services.

### Early Challenges

- Initially, most project actions sat with the manager, which made progress difficult.
- The wider team couldn't take ownership, and while the improvement board helped us visualise and track progress, updates became repetitive—often highlighting the same incomplete actions without resolution.

### Early Benefits

- Built connections with colleagues that the department wouldn't normally work with which increased awareness of available support.
- More ideas emerged from the team leading to colleagues feeling empowered, heard, and more involved.

### Future Plans

- Following this project we have reviewed and reduced stock in delivery rooms which likely wouldn't have happened without the Improving Together approach.
- We plan to roll out the 'hats' initiative in theatres, using this project as a springboard to spread knowledge and inspire other improvement efforts.

**Patient Feedback** – “Great that my partner had his hat fitted by the midwife as he has very long dreadlocks. We felt this was an amazing idea and he even had Birth Partner on which made him feel so involved”

**Patient Feedback:** “I knew to ask questions too as the staff had badges on their hats”



The manager's hands-on leadership and collaborative approach made colleagues more confident in sharing ideas and engaging with improvements