

# Making Mothers

A research project partnership,  
between Birmingham City University and Craftspace

## Brief for Maker / Artist

**Making Mothers** is a project looking at improving pregnancy outcomes through the unusual combination of midwifery care and facilitated making. Pregnancy gives a window of opportunity to influence all aspects of health both physical and psychosocial. In this feasibility study, we will assess the viability of implementing and evaluating a novel antenatal intervention, which combines an empowering antenatal health care model supported by a midwife and purposeful group sessions led by a professional maker.

### Project Aims

*Making Mothers* aims to test an approach to the provision of antenatal care. Using a collective making activity alongside midwifery support we hope to prove the value of creative engagement as part of midwifery care, suggest new models for antenatal intervention and offer a group of pregnant women an experience at a significant moment in their lives. The project builds on sympathy group theory (Costello 2018) where group support solves challenges and difficulties and thus communities become stronger.

### Background and Context

With the support of a small grant from the Community & University Partnership Initiative Programme, Craftspace with Trixie McAree Professor of Midwifery at BCU hosted a consultation event in October 2018. Maker and textile expert Deirdre Nelson facilitated the discussion and making session with midwives, service users and other health professionals exploring the impact of making on health outcomes and how this could be tested through a research pilot. Participants responded positively to the experience of making in the session. They felt strongly that the process of stitching, particularly in relation to creating an item for their unborn child could help to build bonds and relieve neo-natal stress. The activity of stitching promoted peace, quiet and a safe space within a group to speak freely. By making something across a series of sessions women could be encouraged to continue attending. Working as a group could build a network and combat loneliness and isolation. We know from past work with other cohorts including young women that the collective making process can bring about transformation in individuals and equip them with a tool kit for their future life.

### Project Information

We propose to establish a making circle working with 8 -10 first-time pregnant women who may be facing challenges in other aspects of their lives. They will be able to attend sessions from between 16 -30 weeks pregnant until after their baby is born. Sessions will take place every 2 weeks and run from approximately March 2019 to June 2019. The sessions will be based in South Birmingham and will draw from local residents.

We are looking to recruit an experienced artist to deliver workshops to women in South Birmingham starting in March 2019. We are particularly interested in makers working with textiles who can devise and deliver a making activity which links expectant mothers to their unborn child.

Women will be able to attend sessions for 2 hours approximately every 2 weeks, there will be a total of 6 prior to the birth and 1 after delivery.

## Roles

Trixie McAree, is lead researcher and co-ordinator, she is Professor of Midwifery and Maternal Health, a joint academic post with BWC NHSFT and Birmingham City University. Craftspace's Learning & Engagement Team, Katy Sadler & Deirdre Buckley (job share) will attend each session alongside the appointed maker. They will observe and gather evidence of outcomes and contribute to evaluation.

Appointed artists must have current public liability insurance and either hold or be prepared to undertake a check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

## Timescale

Deadline for expressions of interest from artists is Tuesday 5th February 2018. Interviews for artists will be held on the afternoon of Monday 11th February. A pre-project start team meeting will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 10.00am-12.00pm. The first making session will take place week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and at 2 week intervals onwards with 6 sessions in total. A further session will be held in mid-June post-delivery which will focus on evaluation.

## Sessions

Mondays 2-4pm – venue to be confirmed: 18 March, 1st April, 15th April, 29th April, 13 May, 03 June. (Please note there will be a 3 week gap between 13<sup>th</sup> May and 3<sup>rd</sup> June as there will be no session on the Bank Holiday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019). The post birth session with run on evaluation meeting for the team – Monday 24th June, 2pm.

## Fees

The total fee for the project will be £1080 (including VAT) plus £200 materials to cover:

- Planning and delivery for 6 x 2 hours making sessions with women.
- 6 hours preparation and set up time for the sessions.
- 2 hour post birth session with participants and additional evaluation session with the team.
- Time for a pre-start meeting and visit to venue prior to commencing the project.

Travel expenses up to £350.00 can be claimed.

Craftspace 

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Making Together is a research project partnership with Craftspace and Birmingham City University School of Midwifery and has received funding from the following programmes/organisations.

 Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

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