

Press release

Charity partners with NHS to improve care and save babies' lives

Twins Trust announces partnership with St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust during Twins, Triplets & more week (July 6-12).

National charity Twins Trust has partnered with St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to help all units improve care and save babies' lives.

The world-first Twins Trust Centre for Research and Clinical Excellence at St George's Fetal Medicine Unit will demonstrate that it is one of the best providers of care for multiple pregnancies and offer support to other units throughout the UK.

Twins Trust will be working with Professor Asma Khalil, Consultant Obstetrician and Multiple Birth Lead at St George's and her team to carry out vital research, and promote good care in line with the [NICE multiple birth guidance](#).

The Fetal Medicine Unit at St George's has exemplary standards of care for families expecting twins, triplets or more and recent research has shown a 70% reduction in stillbirth after introducing the NICE guidance.

One research trial currently under way at St George's aims to determine whether inserting a cervical cerclage can help to prolong twin pregnancies and prevent early delivery. The procedure (also known as a cervical stitch) is a treatment for cervical weakness, when the cervix starts to shorten and open too early during a pregnancy.

Faye Ward, from Tooting, gave birth to healthy twins Finn and Edie in October 2019 after having a cervical stitch inserted at 21 weeks.

Faye said: "At our 20-week scan I was shocked to discover my cervix was shortening. Shortly afterwards, my cervix started opening. To prolong my pregnancy and help my cervix to stay closed, Professor Asma Khalil recommended I have a cervical stitch. This procedure was successful and I stayed on Carmen ward for 11 weeks under the supervision of Asma and the wonderful midwifery team.

"If it wasn't for Asma's quick decision making and her experienced teams incredible care and attention to detail, it's likely Finn and Edie wouldn't be here today. Thanks to the team at St George's, I gave birth to a healthy, happy boy and girl at a miraculous 36 weeks."

Twins Trust CEO Keith Reed said: "We've always had great links with the team at St George's and the remarkable results they have had in reducing stillbirths and better outcomes all round from multiple births shows what can be achieved when following the NICE multiple birth clinical guidance.

“It is why we launched our Maternity Engagement Quality Improvement project. Whilst this project has been on hold due to Covid-19, we are now starting to re-engage with units and look forward to working with them to improve antenatal care and achieve better outcomes for babies.

“The research undertaken will allow us to input into national policy initiatives to ensure the care needs of families expecting twins, triplets or more are taken into account.”

Professor Asma Khalil said: “We’re delighted that Twins Trust has chosen to partner with St George’s Fetal Medicine Unit. It reflects the successes and achievements of our team so far, and our commitment to making the UK one of the best and safest places for multiple births.

“The centre will develop a national education programme for health professionals to share learning, and design new research studies to improve the outcomes of multiple pregnancies and save babies’ lives.”

Expert clinicians at the centre will be able to provide peer-to-peer support and there will be a series of free webinars to replace the study days that we would normally run.

The centre is home to the first ever registry of cases of TTTS (twin to twin transfusion syndrome) and a specialist TTTS/Multiple Pregnancy research study coordinator, who looks after the registry and liaises with parents.

The research study coordinator also trains midwives throughout the country to manage and upload their own cases. The registry provides a deeper insight into the knowledge and understanding of TTTS, which can be a devastating condition which could lead to the loss of one or more babies.

The first ever twin-specific growth charts, developed by Professor Khalil and funded by Twins Trust, can be accessed freely via the centre. The charts are used to measure twins in the womb, so health professionals can recognise whether they are growing appropriately.

Mr Reed added: “We expect the centre will become a beacon for research and our plan is to publish three papers each year – topics include ‘Perinatal outcomes of monochorionic triplet pregnancies’ and ‘hypertensive disorders in twin pregnancies: risk factors and perinatal outcomes’.

“We will be looking for funding to start this research later in the year.”

To support the centre’s launch, Faye Ward, who is a film and TV producer, has produced a series of short films telling the stories of families who have been cared for by St George’s Fetal Medicine Unit. To watch the films, please visit www.twinstrust.org.

Further information

Interviews with Professor Asma Khalil or Faye Ward to be arranged by the media team at George’s University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust via philippa.harper@stgeorges.nhs.uk or sophia.alipour@stgeorges.nhs.uk. Photos are available.

For further information on Twins Trust please contact Alyson Chorley alysonchorley@twinstrust.org or pressoffice@twinstrust.org call 01252 332344 / 07791 383494.

About Twins Trust

Twins Trust is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to improving the lives and wellbeing of families with twins, triplets or more. Representing 20,000 members and 100 local clubs in the UK, Twins Trust provides help and support to both parents and professionals to meet the unique challenges faced by multiple birth families. We invest in research to save lives, change lives and create better futures for multiple birth families. We also run a unique quality improvement project at Maternity Units to encourage and help with adherence to NICE QS46.

For further information, please visit www.twintrust.org

1. Follow us on: Twitter/Facebook/Insta @twintrust
2. For confidential and emotional support for families with multiples, please call Twinline which is staffed by trained volunteers that are parents of multiples and can offer support on sleeping, feeding, crying, behaviour, discipline, school issues or special needs. It is free to call on 0800 138 0509 and is open Monday to Friday from 10am–1pm and from 7pm–10pm.

About St George's

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the largest healthcare provider, major teaching hospital and tertiary centre for south west London, Surrey and beyond – and one of the largest healthcare providers in the UK – serving a population of 3.5 million.

Its main site, St George's Hospital – one of the country's principal teaching hospitals – is shared with St George's, University of London, which trains medical students and carries out advanced medical research.

St George's is one of 11 adult and children major trauma centres in the UK, one of eight hyper acute stroke units and one of the biggest and busiest of the eight heart attack centres in London.

It is also an accredited centre of excellence for trauma, neurology, cardiology, cancer and blood pressure services and is the national centre for family HIV care and bone marrow transplantation for non-cancer diseases.