

When I took over transitional care unit (TCU) in maternity as the new ward sister I would often see babies that had been brought to us for feeding support or to keep warm. This made me really sad as these babies were only a few hours old and were being separated from their mums who were still on the labour ward. Sometimes it would be two or three hours or more until the mum could come to the ward and be reunited. I knew this had a massive effect both on how mums bonded with their babies but also recognising how babies stress levels go up when they don't know where their mum is.

And so we have developed the TCU outreach service. When a baby is born that needs extra care the labour ward will phone us. Either myself, a midwife or maternity support worker, or a support worker from our colleagues on the postnatal ward, will attend the labour ward and give the baby all the care the baby needs there by mums bedside. We have also used this as a training opportunity so we are sharing our knowledge and skills with the labour ward midwives and support workers so that they may be more confident to keep the babies on the labour ward with our continuous support.

I have some lovely stories of patient care feedback to me including a maternity support worker completely cared for a baby on the labour ward whilst mum was very unwell going back regularly to check on the baby even though she was working on the busy TCU and another who told me that she looked after a baby on the labour ward after a mum had gone to theatre, she said she did it for the grandma who had just watched her very unwell daughter go into theatre and was asked by one of our ANNPs to take the baby up to TCU she said she just thought "No I'm going to look after this baby here because that's what this grandma needs". So she told the annp who replied ok good for you... she told me she felt lovely after she had done it and she realised why I had wanted to do it so much.

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