

# Giving birth in a midwife-led birth centre

## Introduction

This leaflet explains what a midwifery-led birth centre is and the options available to you in Gloucestershire. If you have no major medical conditions and have a straightforward pregnancy, the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) recommend that the safest and best place for you to have your baby is in a midwifery led birth centre (follow the link at the end of this leaflet).

## What is a midwifery-led birth centre?

Midwifery-led birth centres are small, intimate, homely, non-medicalised facilities where you can give birth to your baby. Some birth centres are located within or next to a main hospital with a maternity unit, these are called ('Alongside') and others are located separately from a maternity hospital, these are called ('Freestanding').

## Is there a midwifery-led birth centre in Gloucestershire?

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust offers you the choice of 3 Birth Centres.

**Aveta Birth Centre Cheltenham** – Freestanding  
**Gloucester Birth Unit** – Alongside  
**Stroud Birth Centre** – Freestanding

Clicking on the web link below or copying it into your URL browser will take you to the electronic virtual tours for all of these birth centres.

### Virtual tour

Website: <http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/en/Wards-and-Departments/Maternity-Wards/Maternity-Tour/>

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Department

Maternity  
Services

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**Patient  
Information****What is available at the birth centres**

- Birth centres have been likened more to a spa than a hospital
- The birthing rooms are designed to have a homely and relaxing feel. They are all equipped with birthing balls, bean bags, cushions and mattresses for your comfort during labour
- Birthing pools are available to use
- The midwives are trained to provide massage and aromatherapy to you during labour
- Lighting in the rooms can be dimmed and some of the rooms have mood lighting tubes to help create a calm environment
- Facilities are available to play your choice of music
- If the staff have no concerns regarding you or your baby's health following birth, early discharge home is encouraged so you can go home and bond with your baby in the privacy of your own home
- Facilities are available for partners to stay
- Our midwives pride themselves on helping you to achieve a satisfying and memorable birth.

Our centres have all been designed this way because there is a wealth of research which tells us that the more comfortable and relaxed a woman feels the more likely she is to have a straightforward birth.

Birth centres are run and staffed by midwives who are experts in providing individualised midwifery care.

**Benefits of having your baby in a midwifery-led centre**

There is strong research evidence to suggest that medical interventions during labour and birth such as caesarean section are reduced for births planned in a midwifery-led birth centre (Birthplace Study, 2011). The birth experience in a midwifery-led birth centre has also been shown to be more satisfying.

**Patient  
Information**

## What is not available in the Birth Centres?

Induction of labour, epidurals, medical input and surgical procedures such as caesarean sections are **not** available in the birth centres. If these interventions are required during your labour you will be transferred to The Women's Centre Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester, GL1 3NN. The most common reasons for transfer are:

- If labour progress is slow and you require the Syntocinon® hormone drip to help speed up labour
- There are concerns regarding the well-being of you and/or your baby.

If you do need to be transferred in labour from Cheltenham or Stroud, you will travel by ambulance and will be accompanied by a midwife.

Transfer time will vary depending on traffic and how long it takes the ambulance to respond to an emergency call. During busy times, there may be a delay.

If you wish to discuss emergency transfers further, please speak to your midwife.

Please be aware if you need transfer during labour your partner will need to travel separately and they will need to make their own arrangements for transport. We would recommend you familiarise yourself with the location of maternity on the main Gloucestershire Royal Hospital site beforehand.

## Can I have my baby in a midwife-led Birth Centre?

Providing you have no significant medical conditions (such as diabetes, cardiac problems and epilepsy) or pregnancy complications (such as a twin pregnancy, prematurity and high blood pressure) you should be able to plan to give birth to your baby in one of our birth centres. This can be discussed with your midwife and your decision will be confirmed at around 36 weeks of pregnancy.

**Patient  
Information**

## When would it not be suitable for me to have my baby in a midwife--led birth centre?

You will be advised to have your baby in the consultant unit at the Women's Centre Gloucester if you have any significant medical conditions or pregnancy complications. This can be discussed with your midwife.

## Are midwifery--led centres safe?

Midwifery--led centres are considered the safest and best option for women who have no medical or pregnancy complications. The results of the Birth Place Study (2011), which looked at the outcomes of 64,538 women who gave birth in midwifery--led birth centres, showed that they were significantly less likely to have interventions such as ventouse, forceps and caesarean deliveries. Midwives are experienced in recognising problems early during labour and if there is any sign of complications the midwife will transfer you to the consultant unit in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

## How do I decide which birth centre to have my baby at?

You do not have to go to the birth centre closest to where you live. View the online tours on our maternity webpages to help you decide where you might like to go to give birth. You are welcome to visit our birth centres to help you decide. All of our birth centres run tours which you can book onto:

**Aveta Birth Centre (Cheltenham)** – Call the birth centre to arrange a tour, the number is at the end of this leaflet. Coffee mornings are also held at Aveta on the last Monday of every month at 10.30 for you to go and have a look around the birth centre, chat to the midwife and meet other mums who have had their babies at Aveta.

**Gloucester Birth Unit** – There are tours every Monday evening at 6:00pm and 6:30pm (booking is essential). Once your midwife has assessed you at 35 to 36 weeks and says it is suitable for you to have your baby in a birth centre, please call the unit to book onto a tour.

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**Stroud Birth Centre** – Tours are run every Wednesday evening at 6:00pm (booking is essential). Once your midwife has assessed you at 35 to 36 weeks and says it is suitable for you to have your baby in a birth centre, please call the birth centre to book onto a tour.

## **What if the birth centre I opt to have my baby at is busy on the day I go into labour?**

We always try our best to make sure that you give birth in your chosen place. However, occasionally during exceptionally busy periods this may not be safe or possible. In these circumstances we would recommend that you attend one of our other birth centres. You may wish to go and visit a couple of the birth centres during your pregnancy and to have a second choice option.

## **Contact information**

If you require any further information about the midwifery-led birth centres your community midwife will be happy to discuss this further with you or you can telephone the centres directly:

**Aveta Birth Centre**

Cheltenham

Tel: 0300 422 2324

**Gloucestershire Birth Centre**

Tel: 0300 422 5523

**Stroud Birth Centre**

Tel: 0300 421 8018

**Lines are staffed 24 hours a day.**

## **Further information**

**NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)**

Guidelines confirmation about midwife led care during labour.

Website: <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/midwife-led-units-safest-for-straightforward-births>

**NPEU (National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit)**

Information about the Birth Place Study 2011

[www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/birthplace/results](http://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/birthplace/results)

**Patient  
Information**

**Birth place decisions**

Information for women and partners on planning where to give birth

Website:

[www.pdcap.cz/Texty/PDF/Birth\\_place\\_decision\\_support.pdf](http://www.pdcap.cz/Texty/PDF/Birth_place_decision_support.pdf)

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**Tel: 0300 422 3231**  
**[www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/charity](http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/charity)**