Having your baby in Gloucestershire

Introduction
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides maternity services to women in Gloucestershire. We are extremely proud of our maternity services which can offer you a full range of choices for your care and where to have your baby. This leaflet will help to guide you through these choices, services, and support available to you. When you first discover you are pregnant, it is important to make contact with a health care professional as soon as possible. This is to make sure that you receive maternity care and advice that takes account of all your health needs and preferences. You can book an appointment directly with your community midwife as soon as you know you are pregnant or make an appointment to see the midwife by phoning your GP surgery.

Community midwifery services
At your first contact with the midwifery services, you will be introduced to your named midwife. Community midwives are linked to GP surgeries, and in some larger surgeries, there may be more than one. Your midwife is usually your first point of contact with maternity services. She will arrange to meet with you for your first appointment. This may be at your home, at your GP surgery or in a local children’s centre. At your first appointment (your booking appointment), you will receive information and options to help us plan your care for your pregnancy, birth and the early days with your new baby.

Your midwife will ask you lots of questions about your health and the health of your family. Taking into account your preferences, the midwife will be able to plan your care to best suit the needs of you, your baby and your wider family.

In most cases your community midwife will be the lead professional for you; this type of care is called Midwife Led Care. If there are any concerns or problems, your midwife can refer you to a doctor at any time during your pregnancy. Your midwife will usually see you at your GP’s surgery in a special antenatal clinic.
If you work, your employer needs to make sure you can attend the clinic for your care. Some midwifery antenatal care may be offered at midwife clinics in children’s centres or at your local hospital or birth centre, some appointments may be at your home. Your midwife will have details of what is available to you locally.

If you have any health or medical needs, your midwife will refer you to a consultant care at an antenatal clinic where you will be seen by an obstetrician to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy, and to plan for your birth. However, you will still be seen by your community midwife, but an obstetrician will be your lead professional.

**Your maternity records**

Your maternity care will be documented in your orange hand-held notes. You must keep these notes with you during your pregnancy so that all the professionals involved in your care can write in them during any consultations.

It is important that you bring your notes along to any appointments that you have, together with a urine sample if you are having an antenatal check.

Please ask your midwife for a sample bottle. Your maternity records also have important information within them, such as when you should seek advice about any symptoms or concerns you may have. These notes will remain with you throughout your pregnancy, but your community midwife will return them to the hospital to be filed after you have had your baby.

**Contacting your midwife**

Your community midwife will make sure that you have all the contact telephone numbers you may need during your pregnancy on the front of your records, including contact numbers for your community midwife and community midwifery team. If you have been given a mobile number to use please be aware that this phone will not be in use on the days the midwife is not working and at times she may not be able to answer your call immediately. However, if your call does not require an urgent response, you will be able to leave a voicemail or send a text message.
If you are concerned or worried and need an immediate response, or wish to speak to someone urgently regarding a pregnancy related problem, you should contact your GP surgery or out of hours prior to 16 weeks of pregnancy, or the Triage department at the Women’s Centre in Gloucester after 16 weeks of pregnancy.

If you live in the Stroud or Cheltenham areas you may be seen with some conditions at your local unit, and you will be given the telephone numbers to use to phone for advice.

The ultrasound department

During your pregnancy you will be offered routine ultrasound scans. These are dating scans, usually carried out at about 12 weeks of pregnancy and an anomaly scan at about 20 weeks of pregnancy. You should receive an appointment in the post with additional information you will need to know beforehand, such as how much fluid you need to drink to make sure your bladder is full for the scan. Your midwife will provide you with further information about why we perform ultrasound scans. These scans may be arranged at your local hospital, and are performed by sonographers. Some women may require additional scans during their pregnancy. These will be discussed with you by a midwife or doctor. You can bring your partner or any other supporter along to your scan, and you will be offered the opportunity to purchase photographs of your scan for you to keep. Payment for the photographs needs to be in cash.

Early Pregnancy Assessment (EPA) Clinic

Women who are in the early stages of pregnancy and are experiencing problems such as pain and bleeding from seven weeks of pregnancy and up to 15 weeks and six days can be referred to our EPA clinic by either their GP or midwife after eight weeks. These clinics are held in the Women’s Centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and St Paul’s Wing at Cheltenham General Hospital.

Your GP or midwife will ring the EPA team who will contact you with an appointment within 24 hours of the referral being received.
An appointment will be given, usually within 48 hours of referral. Some women in very early pregnancy only need telephone advice. Clinic investigations that are performed may include ultrasound scans, urine tests and blood tests. Appointment times are given for the clinic, but due to the nature of the clinic, waits may be inevitable. Women attending the clinic can bring along their partner or a friend.

**The antenatal clinic**

We provide consultant antenatal clinics in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Cirencester and the Dilke hospitals. The team running these clinics includes obstetricians, midwives, maternity health care assistants and support staff such as receptionists. You will be seen in one of our clinics after your dating scan for routine blood tests. Generally, appointments are sent to you in the post following referral from your community midwife.

If you are unable to attend for your appointment, please telephone us to arrange another appointment. Please bring your maternity notes to the clinic, so that we can make sure everyone involved in your care remains informed and up to date about your pregnancy.

You will also need to bring along a urine sample, your midwife or GP surgery can provide you with a bottle. The doctors and midwives involved in your care may arrange for you to see other professionals during your pregnancy, such as anaesthetists, paediatricians, dieticians or teams that specialise in certain conditions or health needs. The antenatal clinics in Cheltenham and Gloucester also have Maternity Assessment Centres (MACs). You will be asked to attend the centre if you require a higher level of care during pregnancy such as the electronic monitoring of your baby’s heartbeat, blood pressure assessment and glucose tolerance tests. These are more detailed assessments and can take a couple of hours. Appointments are arranged by your doctor or midwife either as part of the plan for your pregnancy care or, if concerns about you or your baby arise during pregnancy.
The triage department

The triage area is next to delivery suite at the Women’s Centre. You can contact this department for advice 24 hours a day once you are 16 weeks pregnant, to discuss any urgent concerns about your pregnancy or your baby. You may also be referred to Triage by your midwife or doctor if they feel that you or your baby requires an assessment. For non-urgent enquires or advice not related to your pregnancy, you should contact your GP or own community midwife, they will be able to advise you. For urgent advice before 16 weeks you should contact your GP.

If you live in the Stroud or Cheltenham areas you may be seen with some conditions at your local unit, and will be given the telephone numbers to phone for advice. Women attending this department are seen according to the urgency of their condition, rather than by arrival times. If you feel that your symptoms, such as pain, are becoming worse whilst you are waiting to be seen, please let us know. Within the triage area you will be seen by an experienced midwife and if necessary a doctor.

Your maternity notes also provide information and advice within them about symptoms or concerns that you may have, and when you should seek advice.

The physiotherapy department

We are able to offer a physiotherapy service especially for pregnant women or for women who have just had a baby. If you are experiencing problems such as backache or sciatica during your pregnancy, or in the early post natal period (up to six weeks after you have given birth), you can refer yourself to the physiotherapy department. You will be seen initially in a small group advice clinic and then, if necessary, during further appointments. This is not an emergency service, so if your symptoms are sudden or very severe, seek advice by using one of the emergency contact numbers. A physiotherapist will often see new mums on the maternity ward to discuss pelvic floor and post natal exercises. All mums should receive leaflets giving general advice and explaining different exercises that they should do during pregnancy and after the birth.
Where shall I have my baby?

It is important to think carefully about what sort of care you would like during your birth and where you would like to give birth. You do not have to decide where to have your baby until later in pregnancy but it is a good idea to start to think about your options early on. Information can be found on the website www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/maternity and also www.nhs.uk/mypregnancy.

Your community midwife will have additional information, particularly about local facilities and parent education classes that help you to make choices and prepare for your baby’s birth.

All pregnant mums and their partners are offered parent education classes. These classes offer you the opportunity to:

- Meet other mums-to-be
- Find out more about giving birth to your baby
- Find out more about feeding your baby
- What to expect during the early days.

Some sessions may be offered at a local birth centre and others are in your local community in venues such as children’s centres.

Our website, www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/maternity, offers you the opportunity of a virtual tour of the maternity unit. If later in your pregnancy you would like the opportunity to visit the place in which you are planning to have your baby, we may be able to offer you a tour of the area.

Please discuss this with your community midwife and she can advise you further and explain how to book this. In Gloucestershire, we offer a full range of choice of place to have your baby; this may be in one of our three birth centres across the county, the Delivery Suite at the Women’s Centre, or your own home. Your midwife will also be able to advise you on the safest place to give birth based on research evidence and you and your baby’s health.

Together with your community midwife you will make a final plan for your birth towards the end of your pregnancy, usually at 36 weeks.
The community midwife will be able to help you choose where you plan to give birth based on your individual circumstances, where you think you would feel more comfortable and relaxed, and take into consideration what sort of plans you may have for your birth whilst taking into account any health needs you or your baby may have. If you do not have any health issues and have had a straight forward healthy pregnancy, you will be offered midwifery led care in one of our birth centres or a homebirth.

**Midwifery Led Services**

The results of a large Birth Place Study (2011) found that for healthy women with a straight forward pregnancy, planned births in Midwifery Led Units have the same outcomes for babies, compared to obstetric units with fewer interventions such as instrumental delivery, forceps and ventouse and a reduced chance of a caesarean section.

Midwives are experienced in recognising problems during labour, and if there are any signs of complications, you will be transferred to the consultant unit located in the Women’s Centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Giving birth in a relaxed and calm environment such as your home, or one of our birth centres helps you to feel calmer and more relaxed, which in turn will help you feel more in control of your birth. If you plan to deliver at home or in one of our birth centres, your midwife will give you further information. Should you need to be transferred into the consultant unit in labour from home or from the birth centre at Cheltenham or Stroud, this would be by ambulance. The transfer times would not only depend on traffic but also the time it takes for the ambulance to respond to an emergency call. In times of high activity, there may be a delay. If you wish to discuss emergency transfers, please discuss this with your midwife.

**Giving birth at home**

Many women may choose to give birth at home because they wish to be relaxed and at ease in familiar surroundings. This helps the natural process of labour and birth, and women often find that they need less pain relief. For women who are fit and healthy, particularly if you have had a baby before, research shows that a home birth is just as safe as a hospital birth.
However, if it is your first baby, studies suggest that there is a slight increase in problems if a baby is born at home rather than an obstetric unit.

First time mothers are also more likely to need to be transferred to hospital than second time mothers. For more information to help you make the right choice for you and your baby ask your midwife or go to: www.birthchoiceuk.com.

Some women hire a birthing pool or a TENS machine (Trans Electrical Nerve Stimulation). Your midwife will have gas and air (entonox) for you to use and will also provide all of the equipment necessary for your birth.

Community midwives are experienced in supporting women to give birth at home and are trained to deal with any possible emergencies. If any problems arise during the birth, she will discuss these with you and arrange transfer for you by ambulance to the consultant unit, staying with you at all times. Your community midwife will be able to discuss transfer times to hospital for you and your baby in an emergency; she will also be able to discuss any other questions you may have about our home birth service that is offered throughout Gloucestershire.

**Midwife Led Birth Centres**

All of the birthing rooms are furnished in a homely way to create a relaxing and comfortable environment in which to have your baby. Many have en-suite facilities and are well equipped to make sure you are comfortable and relaxed during labour. We offer birthing balls, mattresses and cushions, lighting can be dimmed and you can play your own choice of music. All of our birthing centres have birthing pools for you to use. Midwives in the birth centres are trained in aromatherapy and massage and we are able to offer a range of aromatherapy oils for you to use. Entonox (gas and air) is available in all the units as are pethidine and diamorphine injections which provide pain relief. Once you have had your baby, all of the centres offer you the opportunity of early discharge home, usually within six to 12 hours, if there are no concerns with you or your baby. This ensures you are able to relax and bond with your baby in your own home with the support of your community midwife. If you need to stay in hospital, you will be transferred to the maternity ward.
Cheltenham Birth Centre
This birth centre is a freestanding birth centre which means it is within your local community and is run by experienced midwives including community midwives from the Cheltenham and North Cotswold areas who you may have met during your pregnancy. Should you need to see a doctor, or if your baby requires specialist treatment, you would be transferred by ambulance to the Women’s Centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. Transfer times not only depend on traffic but also the time it takes for the ambulance to respond to the call. All emergency calls from the Cheltenham Birth Centre for an ambulance are categorised as very high priority, however, in times of high activity, occasionally there may be a delay in the ambulance arriving at the birth centre. Once the ambulance has arrived, a midwife would accompany you or your baby in the ambulance for the transfer, which is approximately ten minutes door to door. Your community midwife will be able to discuss transfer times to Gloucester Delivery Suite for you and your baby in an emergency; she will also be able to discuss any other questions you may have about our midwifery-led birth centres service throughout Gloucestershire.

Stroud Birth Centre
This birth centre is a free standing birth centre which means it is within your local community and is run by experienced midwives including community midwives from the Stroud and Cirencester areas who you may have met during your pregnancy. Should you need to see a doctor or if your baby requires specialist treatment you would be transferred to the Women’s Centre at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. Transfer times not only depend on traffic but also the time it takes for the ambulance to respond to the call. All emergency calls from the Stroud Birth Centre for an ambulance are categorised as very high priority, however, in times of high activity, there occasionally there may be a delay in the ambulance arriving at the Birth Centre. Once the ambulance has arrived, a midwife would accompany you or your baby for the transfer, which is approximately 20 minutes door to door. Your community midwife will be able to discuss transfer times to hospital for you and your baby in an emergency; she will also be able to discuss any other questions you may have about our midwifery led birth centres throughout Gloucestershire.
Stroud Birth Centre also has the additional facility of post natal beds for those women who prefer not to have an early discharge home. In addition to this, women who require a postnatal stay, for example those who have had a caesarean section in the consultant unit, or women who would like additional support from the midwives, can transfer to Stroud. This enables women to recover with support of the midwives in a relaxed environment nearer their home.

The Delivery Suite

If you are under the care of a consultant, you will generally be advised to deliver in the Delivery Suite at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. We have facilities and rooms available that are similar to the birth unit environment. These are for women that wish to have a homely birth experience but have more complex care needs and are under consultant led care. We are dedicated to making your birth as ‘normal’ as possible whilst caring for any complexities your care may include. We aim to provide a comfortable and relaxing environment in a place that has all the specialist care available that you may need.

The Delivery Suite has 11 en-suite delivery rooms for your privacy and comfort, one with a pool facility, two obstetric theatres and two high dependency rooms for women who require additional care. Specialist teams and doctors such as paediatricians and anaesthetists are on hand 24 hours a day, together with obstetric consultants and doctors for women who may require this additional support.

This unit is also available for women who choose to have an epidural for pain relief in labour.

You can take a look around the Delivery Suite and the rest of the Women’s Centre with a virtual tour by logging onto our maternity website at www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/maternity. If you would like to visit the unit, we offer an orientation visit to show you which entrance to use and where the Delivery Suite and other departments are located, your community midwife will advise you how to arrange this.
What happens after I’ve had my baby?

If you give birth in one of our birth centres across the county, you will be able to return home as soon as you wish, providing that you are both well. Your partner will be able to stay with you and you can all return home together.

If you give birth on the delivery suite, most mums and babies are transferred to the maternity ward for a while before discharge home, usually the following day.

The Maternity Ward

This ward is designed to provide care for women who need to stay in hospital either before they’ve had their baby, or to rest and recover afterwards. The ward has several small bays with en suite facilities, and single rooms which are available to women whose medical condition may necessitate them. You may choose to book a single room during your stay by choosing to pay for an amenity room with en suite. Unfortunately, the availability is not guaranteed but ask the midwife caring for you when you have had your baby.

The team on the maternity ward include midwives, nursery nurses, maternity care assistants and support staff such as receptionists and domestics. Doctors and other staff groups such as physiotherapists involved in your care regularly visit the ward, as do doctors (paediatricians) who may be involved in the care of your baby.

Neonatal Unit (NNU)

Some babies require admission to the Neonatal Unit (NNU). These babies may be pre-term (below 37 weeks gestation), small or require special observation and treatment. Some babies need to stay in the NNU for just a few hours; others may need to stay longer. You may visit the NNU during your pregnancy if it appears that your baby may require admission to the unit.

Transitional Care Unit

This is a four bedded area within the Neonatal Unit (NNU) that we use for mums to be able to stay with their baby just prior to the baby’s discharge home.
General information

Visiting hours on the maternity ward are 9:00am to 9:00pm for partners and any other of your children. For all other visitors, visiting times are 2:00pm to 3:00pm and 6:00pm to 7:00pm. All visitors will need to report to reception, and the number of visitors in addition to your partner is limited to 2 per mum and baby. During labour and birth there are no visiting restrictions, but we ask you to keep the number of birth supporters you have to a maximum of 2.

Visiting hours on the Neonatal Unit (NNU) for parents and siblings are open. Visiting times for other visitors are between 2:00pm and 4:00pm, children must be accompanied by a parent. No other school age children, apart from siblings, and a maximum of 3 people total at any one time are allowed in the NNU.

Meals are provided for you during your stay; a choice is available. If you have any food preferences for dietary or religious reasons that are not on the menu, please ask a member of staff. Food and refreshments are available for your partner and visitors to purchase in Fosters Restaurant (9:00am to 7:00pm) and in coffee shop outlets within the main hospital. There are also vending machines, with hot and cold snacks available in the main corridor outside of the Women’s Centre.

Feeding your baby

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a Baby Friendly hospital and has been awarded the World Health Organisation Baby Friendly status for supporting women to breast feed successfully.

Midwives and maternity care assistants will support you to feed your baby in the way in which you have chosen. If you choose to breast feed your baby, you will be given support to make sure you are confident in latching your baby to the breast, together with advice for dealing with common problems. If you choose to formula feed your baby, midwives and maternity care assistants can show you how to make up feeds prior to you going home.
If you have decided to formula feed your baby, you will need to bring in some formula milk to use during your stay. It may be easier for you to bring in 'ready to feed' cartons. We are able to supply you with formula for your baby’s first feed, or if there is a medical need. During your stay, you may get additional support from voluntary breast feeding support workers or an infant feeding specialist midwife. You will also receive leaflets giving further information which will explain where to obtain support and advice.

**Security**

All staff wear identity badges and should always introduce themselves to you. Do not be afraid to challenge anyone of whom you are not sure. If anything or anyone gives you cause for concern, please let a member of staff know immediately.

We have additional security measures in place such as controlled access to all wards and departments. Visitors will need to ring the bell to gain access and leave the ward and departments. We use an electronic tagging system for all babies. Within The Women’s Centre a small tag is secured using a baby identity label on your baby’s feet. Taking a baby near to one of the ward exits will cause an alarm to sound. This tag will be checked and removed by a member of staff just prior to your discharge.

**Parking**

Parking on Gloucester and Cheltenham sites is controlled and monitored through a private company, Vinci. You will need to pay for parking either by purchasing a ticket from one of the machines in the visitors parking area, or prior to leaving if you are parked in the multi story car park in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. There are short stay drop off points near the entrance for your convenience. If you are coming to the Women’s Centre in labour, for your safety and convenience please use the emergency entrance (glass doors). Use the call bell for the department you require situated to your left. Staff will release the door. On entering the Women’s Centre, the lifts are on your left hand side. At all other times, use the main hospital entrance. Please note the parking restrictions. We are unable to enter into parking disputes between you and Vinci. Parking is free at Stroud Maternity Unit.
The hospital bus service
Stagecoach run a number 99 bus service between Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and the park and ride facilities at Cheltenham Racecourse. This is via Cheltenham town centre and Cheltenham General Hospital. This service runs every half an hour Monday to Friday. Local bus services also stop near all local hospitals. Details of bus times, fares and location can be found on the Stagecoach website www.stagecoachbus.com.

Smoking
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke free zone and smoking is not permitted by patients or staff within the Trust or within the hospital grounds. Maternity services are committed to supporting pregnant women and their families to quit smoking to protect their health and that of their baby, and offer nicotine replacement therapy during your hospital stay. Maternity services can also offer referral to Gloucestershire NHS Stop Smoking Service. Women and their families can also self refer to the service by contacting Tel: 0300 421 0040.

Spiritual care
The chaplains and other members of the spiritual care team may be contacted at any time during your stay in the hospital, and visit the wards regularly. Ask a member of staff if you wish to request a visit from a chaplain or wish a representative of any other religion to be contacted. Rooms for prayer are available within the hospital.

Translation, interpretation services and signing
If you need help with communication during your stay in hospital, please let us know as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Going home with your baby
The length of time you stay in hospital will depend on the type of birth you have and on you and your baby’s individual needs.
Your discharge from hospital will be planned in conjunction with you. Please check that the staff have your correct address and phone numbers and let the midwives know if you are not returning to your usual address so that we can arrange for a community midwife to visit wherever you are.

When you go home, you will be given your hand held notes and also your baby’s child health record (red book). Both of these health record books contain lots of useful information regarding you and your baby’s health and when you may need to seek advice. You will also be given lots of useful leaflets that include advice and information regarding registering your baby’s birth. During the drive home, it is a legal requirement that all babies are secured in an appropriate car seat. It is essential that you purchase the correct type of infant car seat for your vehicle and that you know how to fit the seat correctly before you leave the hospital with your baby.

Postnatal care for you and your baby

After you have returned home, a community midwife will either visit you at home the following day, or contact you by telephone. Postnatal care is planned in conjunction between you and your community midwife, and is flexible to suit the needs of you and your baby.

We will ensure that you have appropriate contact numbers should you require any support or advice between visits, and we also ensure that you have contact details for local and national breast feeding support groups.

You may be seen at home or in one of our clinics. These are held within the hospital or birth centres at the weekend and in some children’s centres during the week. These clinics enable us to be able to offer you flexibility and choice. Your community midwife will have details of these clinics and how to book an appointment for you and your baby. Please bring your notes and your baby’s red book.

A community midwife will provide care for at least ten days after you have had your baby, continuing as necessary until discharge is planned. Your health visitor will make contact with you and visit you and your baby between 10 to 14 days after birth; She will take over your care after you are discharged from maternity services.
Your GP will receive information regarding your baby’s birth and will arrange to see you for a postnatal check up between six and eight weeks after your baby was born. This is often the same time for your baby’s first vaccinations.

**Contact information**

Switchboard Tel: 0300 422 2222

**Gloucestershire Royal Hospital:**
Delivery Suite Tel: 0300 422 5525
Tel: 0300 422 5542
Triage Tel: 0300 422 5541
Maternity Ward Tel: 0300 422 5520
Birth Unit Tel: 0300 422 5523
Antenatal Clinic Tel: 0300 422 6103
Scan Department Tel: 0300 422 5099
Physiotherapy Department Tel: 0300 422 8303

**Cheltenham General Hospital:**
Birth Centre Tel: 0300 422 2324
Antenatal Clinic Tel: 0300 422 2346
Scan Department Tel: 0300 422 2354
Physiotherapy Department Tel: 0300 422 2344

**Stroud Maternity Unit:**
Birth Centre Tel: 0300 421 8019
Scan Department Tel: 0300 421 0825

You can contact your named Midwife or Community Midwives office:
Gloucestershire Royal Hospital Tel: 0300 422 5128
Forest of Dean Tel: 0300 422 8567
Lydney Health Centre Tel: 0845 659 8141
Newent Health Centre Tel: 01531 621 658
Cinderford Health Centre Tel: 01594 598 000
Coleford Health Centre Tel: 0300 421 8850
Cheltenham General Hospital Tel: 0300 422 2318
Stroud Maternity Unit Tel: 0300 421 8018
Bounty distributor

Bounty is a commercial venture and not part of the Trust. The distributor attends the ward daily to provide bounty packs which are free of charge and contain samples and information on services and products which women have told us they value. If you wish to obtain a bounty pack, please ask for details. The Trust gives none of your details to the distributor and you are not required to provide any personal or clinical details to the bounty distributor.

Content reviewed: March 2017