Choosing where to have your baby

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides maternity services to women across a large part of Hampshire and beyond, welcoming around 6000 babies a year. Having a new baby often means making lots of decisions, one of which is choosing where to give birth – this leaflet gives you information about the options available under the care of the Trust.

We support women to give birth at home, in our hospitals in Basingstoke and Winchester and in our Maternity Centre in Andover. If you are healthy and have had a straightforward pregnancy you are able to choose any of these locations in which to give birth. If your pregnancy or previous births have been complicated or you have a medical history which may affect your birth, you could be advised to give birth in one of our obstetric units. Deciding where is right for you to give birth may depend on how your pregnancy progresses so do not feel that you need to make a final decision early in pregnancy. If you are not sure which option is best for you, or you want to discuss the choices further please speak to your named community midwife or obstetrician.

What we offer

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<td>Your home (within our community catchment area)</td>
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<td>Midwives</td>
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<td>Hampshire Hospitals Maternity Centre in Andover</td>
<td>Stand-alone birth centre. Two birth rooms</td>
<td>Midwives</td>
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| Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester | Obstetric unit. Five birth rooms on Labour ward. | Midwives. Obstetricians, anaesthetists and paediatricians if needed. | Women who
- want to have an epidural
- may be more likely to have complications in labour
- may need paediatricians and special care available for their babies |
| Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester | Two low risk rooms on the labour ward | Midwives | Women who are not expected to have complications in labour |
| Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital in Basingstoke | Obstetric unit. Six rooms on Labour ward. | Midwives. Obstetricians, anaesthetists and paediatricians if needed. | Women who
• want to have an epidural
• may be more likely to have complications in labour
• may need paediatricians and special care available for their babies |
| Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital in Basingstoke | Two low risk rooms on the labour ward. | Midwives | Women who are not expected to have complications in labour |

**Why choose home birth?**

Home birth can offer you all the advantages of staying within your own environment, something which can help you remain relaxed, calm and in control of your birth. Planning home birth can increase the likelihood of giving birth on your own and can be very satisfying.

Home birth is safe for the majority of women however it is not usually recommended for women who may be more likely to have serious complications in labour and need care from an obstetrician. If complications occur unexpectedly in labour or there are any concerns about the baby immediately after the birth, the midwife will ask you to transfer into hospital, usually by ambulance. Healthy women with straightforward pregnancies, who have given birth before are less likely to need transfer than those who are having a first baby.

If you have your baby at home you are more likely to be cared for by your community midwifery team in labour and possibly by your named midwife. You will have the support of a second midwife for the birth.

If you are considering a home birth, you might find it helpful to talk to other women who have had home births in your area. They can tell you what having a home birth is like, the practical tips and knowing others have that have had home births can be a great confidence boost. Contact homebirth@basingstokenct.org.uk for further information.

**Why choose Hampshire Hospitals Maternity Centre?**

The Maternity Centre in Andover can offer you a ‘home from home’ environment as an alternative to the traditional labour ward or home. Birth centres like this one are suitable for
women having a healthy pregnancy and those expecting to have a straightforward birth. You can choose the maternity centre even if this is your first baby.

Hampshire Hospitals Maternity Centre at Andover is run by midwives and support staff, the centre offers a calm and friendly environment for the best possible start for both your baby and for you in your new life as parents. Women giving birth here stay in the unit for 2-4 hours after giving birth and then return home.

Transferring into hospital

If you plan to give birth at home or in the Maternity Centre at Andover you will be cared for by our midwives. Should complications arise you may need additional specialist care from obstetricians or other medical personnel. Midwives are trained to quickly detect the onset of problems and, in the rare event that you or your baby need emergency treatment, midwives are able to provide first level emergency care, however if further care is needed you will be transferred in an ambulance to the obstetric labour ward for specialist care.

Transfer can be disappointing but you can be reassured that procedures are in place for transfer to hospital when it is necessary. The safety of you and your baby is always our priority and the midwife caring for you will explain why transfer is indicated. The majority of transfers take place during labour, although situations can arise after the birth where medical treatment may be necessary.

Why choose our ‘low risk’ birthing rooms?

At the Royal Hampshire County Hospital Winchester there are two spacious birthing rooms called Willow and Water Meadow. These rooms provide a relaxed environment for women and their partners, both have birthing pools and en suite facilities. At North Hampshire Hospital Basingstoke we have two low risk rooms; one with a birthing pool and one with ‘pelvitrack’ birth frame. The low risk rooms are adjacent to our obstetrician-led unit and are suitable for women wishing to have a natural birth in a homely environment and relaxed atmosphere.

The low risk rooms are suitable for women with no complications in pregnancy or labour, however if a problem were to develop or if you needed to have an epidural, you would be transferred to a different room within the labour ward, to be cared for in the obstetric unit. Healthy women with straightforward pregnancies who plan to give birth in low risk midwife led settings are more likely to give birth normally and have low risk of complications.

Why choose our obstetric labour wards?

Our two obstetric units are based in the maternity units within our Basingstoke and North Hants Hospital and the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester. They are primarily for women with medical, pregnancy or labour complications or for women planning to have an epidural for labour. The operating theatres are on the same floor in order to allow rapid
transfer if necessary. We have specialist obstetric anaesthesia services that cater for women needing an epidural, spinal or general anaesthetic.

Women who require additional monitoring in labour and need to give birth on the obstetric labour wards can still experience active birth in a comfortable setting. We try to ensure that your environment is relaxing and we promote a multidisciplinary team approach to encourage each woman to make informed choices about her labour and care, striving to meet her needs and respect her wishes while maintaining the highest level of safety for both mother and baby.

**Neonatal unit**

There are neonatal units on both of our hospital sites at Basingstoke and North Hants Hospital and at The Royal Hampshire County Hospital Winchester. Both neonatal units are on a different floor to the labour wards, however they are within the same building.

**Your choices**

No matter where you give birth, we will offer advice and compassionate care to you and your birth partner(s) in labour. We will encourage you to remain active throughout your labour, supporting you to have an active birth.

Your midwife or obstetrician may recommend that you have your baby on one of our obstetric labour wards in The Basingstoke and North Hants Hospital or The Royal Hampshire Hospital in Winchester. This may be because you have medical problems such as heart problems, a body mass index (BMI) of over 35 at the start of your pregnancy, are expecting twins, triplets or more, or if you have previously had a problem giving birth. For more information it is advisable to speak to your named midwife about making your choice. If you want to discuss this further you can contact the on call Supervisor of Midwives through the Trust switchboard on either 01962 863535 or 01256 473202.

**Your care**

All women in established labour will receive one-to-one support from a midwife. Depending on your preferences and your location we can also offer:

- Comfortable birthing aids such as birthing balls, bean bags and mats
- Water (in the birthing pools and showers / baths)
- Dim lighting, music and relaxation
- Aromatherapy
- Advice on using your TENS machine (either bringing in your own machine or hiring one of our machines from 37 weeks of pregnancy).
- Gas and air (Entonox)
- Pethidine
- Epidural analgesia (on the main labour wards).

Please speak to your midwife if you have questions about these options.
Tours of our maternity centre, low risk rooms & obstetric-led units

The tours can be booked through our website and you will receive a reply to your request. You cannot just turn up for a tour – please book your tour at: www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk

Maternity unit Tour details:
- Basingstoke and North Hants Hospital - Saturday and Sunday at 2pm
- The Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester - Wednesday at 7pm and Saturday at 2pm.
- The Maternity centre offers tours on Saturday at 2pm and can accommodate individual tours (by appointment only).

When labour starts

When you think your labour is starting, please phone our Labour Line service at South Central Ambulance Service for assessment and reassurance. This is staffed by our experienced midwives who will take your details, give you advice and plan your individualised labour care with you.

- The number for All labour advice and support is 03001239001

Always bring your antenatal notes with you when you see a midwife in labour, they contain the full history and details of your antenatal care.

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