

Obstetrics

Your Birth Options

An information guide to help pregnant women and their families with their birth choices.

Choosing your birth location

The aim of this leaflet is to help you decide where you would like to give birth by outlining all options available to you in this area. Our Local Maternity System (LMS) has been set up in response to a national report: NHS England's "Better Births". This report sets out plans to make care safer and give women greater control and more choice. The vision is for a safer, more personalised maternity care that reflects women's' choices and offers continuing joined-up care.

Coventry & Warwickshire LMS Organisational Structure

The LMS includes 3 acute trusts providing maternity services:

- **George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust (GEH)**
- **South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT)**
- **University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW)**



Patient Information

Ensuring mothers, babies and their families are at the centre of the care we provide is the highest priority. We want to ensure that you can make informed choices about your pregnancy, place and type of birth. We encourage women and their families to work in partnership with health care professionals to ensure that continuity of care and the needs of each individual and their families are met.

Planning on where to give birth is a very important decision that you will need to consider in your pregnancy. You can choose to have your baby at **any** of our tranquil birthing units or in the comfort of your own home or on one of our labour wards.

Your options about where to have your baby will depend on your needs, risks and, to some extent, on where you live. If you're healthy and have no complications (low risk) you could consider any of these birth locations. For women with some medical conditions (high risk pregnancy), it's safest to give birth in hospital, where specialists are available. This is in case you need treatment during labour. Women who give birth at home or in a midwifery led environment are less likely to need assistance such as forceps or ventouse (sometimes called instrumental delivery). You are less likely to need assistance as pain in labour is better managed requiring less need for epidurals, or the need for interventions.

Your midwife can help you decide which hospital feels right for you. There is more than one hospital in your area; you can choose which one to go to. Wherever you choose, the place should feel right for you. There is no need to make a firm decision on place of birth early in your pregnancy. Making your decision on the place of birth later in pregnancy will allow you more time to make an informed decision. You are welcome to change your mind at any point in your pregnancy. At the beginning of your journey a decision of which hospital you plan to start with for scans and plans for antenatal care will be required to progress with making appointments.

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Our teams are here to guide you through all of your care choices and we aim to support you, whatever your needs, throughout your pregnancy, birth and postnatally.

Maternity Unit Tours

To help you decide where to give birth or to familiarise yourself with your maternity unit, please see details regarding our tours:

- **George Eliot Hospital:** Please call **024 7686 5090** between 9 -11am Monday to Friday to book on a tour. Our tours take place every weekend. Early bird tours can be booked when you are considering becoming pregnant.
- **South Warwickshire:** Please contact your community midwifery team to book onto one of our tours. Alternatively please contact Bluebell Birth Centre by calling **01926 495321 Ext: 6973 / 6976**
- **University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire:** A virtual tour of our maternity unit is available on the trusts website: www.uhcw.nhs.uk



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Home Births

Home is an ideal place to have your baby. A home birth is an option for you if you have an uncomplicated low risk pregnancy. Birthing in a comfortable, familiar setting will help you to feel more in control and relaxed. Having your baby at home will also increase your chances of having a normal birth. Your partner and children will be able to see the baby straight away and your family will remain together after the birth.

Women often decide that they would like to labour and give birth at home because they are in a familiar environment where they have the ability to move around more freely. This can reduce the need for strong pain killers, although gas and air (Entonox) and aromatherapy can still be used. You could arrange to hire a birth pool which is an excellent form of pain relief and has huge advantages for the positions required in labour.



A homebirth can be arranged in all trusts within Coventry & Warwickshire LMS, which can be requested via your community midwife. If you give birth at home, you'll be supported by a midwife who is experienced and confident in the delivery care in the community. The midwife will be with you while you are in labour and stay with you until after your baby has been born and had a successful feed. A second midwife will join you before the birth to give extra help and support.

If you need any additional help or your labour is not progressing as well as it should, your midwife will make arrangements for you to travel to a hospital. If the situation arises that you need to transfer to hospital the midwife will request the level of urgency that is appropriately required from the ambulance service. The community midwives would continue to

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provide care for you throughout your time at home and during any transfer to hospital.

The advantages of giving birth at home include:

- Being in **familiar surroundings**, where you may feel more relaxed and better able to cope.
- Not having to interrupt your labour to go into hospital which enables your labour hormones to **progress better**.
- **Not needing to leave your other children**, if you have any, although childcare arrangements should be made. Your children and family members can be part of the process when your baby joins the family.
- Not having to be separated from your partner after the birth and able to **relax in your own bed**.
- Increased likelihood of being **looked after by a midwife you have got to know during your pregnancy**.
- **You will need less pain relief in labour** because of the support of the midwife and the environment you are in.
- **You are more likely to be upright during labour and birth** as you will be encouraged to walk and move around. This helps in progressing your labour as lying on a bed is usually uncomfortable and does not make the most of gravity to aid your progress.
- **You are more likely to have a normal birth** because you will need less pain relief and are more likely to be upright and mobile, you will be doing everything to help yourself, giving you the best chance of having a normal birth.
- **You are more likely to have a water birth** if you chose to hire one as it is only for your use. Being in water helps assist with the discomfort of labour and assists you in adopting better positions for labour and delivery.
- **You are less likely to need an episiotomy (cut to perineum)**. We know that women who are active in their labour, when it comes to pushing their baby out are more likely to do this naturally without much

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help. This can reduce the pressure on the tissue and make a cut less likely.

- **You are more likely to establish breastfeeding** and breastfeed successfully if you have had a positive birth experience. Women and partners having homebirths almost always describe their birth experiences as a positive experience.
- **You can have more than one birth supporter** if you wish. It's your home you can have who you want present. We do suggest you only have people that are helpful to you though.

Be assured that a community midwife is on call 24 hours, 7 days a week to help you give birth. Our midwives will support you during your pregnancy and birth and help you to adjust to parenthood. All our midwives will discuss your care with you in an open and honest manner and you will be made the centre of your care. Ask your community midwife whether a home birth is suitable for you and your baby.



Labour Ward / Delivery Suite

Labour Wards (also referred to as a delivery suite) are staffed by a full team of doctors who specialise in birth (Obstetricians), anaesthetists, midwives and maternity support workers who are supported by other specialists such as baby doctors (neonatologists). All our staff are experienced in both low and high risk care to support and encourage you throughout your labour and birth.

Labour Wards are a consultant led unit where you will either be cared for by a midwife or you will have shared care with a midwife and a consultant.

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If you have a low risk or high risk pregnancy you can birth on the Labour Ward. We all aim to provide a relaxed and friendly environment for you, which promotes privacy, maintains dignity and is sensitive to your individual needs and preferences.

All our Labour Wards offer birthing pool rooms which have a calm relaxing environment to ensure that your labour and birth is as comfortable as possible. All trusts have telemetry wireless baby monitoring equipment for you to continue to experience the use of water for pain relief. You can discuss your suitability for using the birthing pool with your midwife; include it on your birth plan. The midwives on the Labour Ward will review and advise you regarding the use of the pool during your labour and birth. Every effort will be made for you to use the birthing pool if appropriate but there may be occasions when it is already in use.



Birth Centres

Birth Centres are small maternity units which are staffed and run by experienced midwives and maternity support workers. They offer a comfortable environment where birth is treated as a 'normal' process. They have been designed to feel more like home and aims to make you feel comfortable and relaxed.

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There are 2 Birth Centres available in your area within our LMS:

- **The Bluebell Birth Centre** - South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT)
- **Lucina Birth Centre** - University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW)

Birth Centres offer you a safe place to give birth if you are assessed as low risk. Your midwife will risk assess the progress of your pregnancy at each visit and will confirm that your pregnancy has been uneventful around your 36 week appointment.

You attend the Birth Centre with your birth partner when you are in labour.

You will be designated as low risk when you go into labour if you:

- Have had an uncomplicated pregnancy
- You are 37 to 42 weeks in your pregnancy
- Your BMI is less than 35 at the start of your pregnancy
- You are 16 - 40 years of age
- You are not anaemic
- Your baby has developed normally and is head down
- Your waters break and they are clear in colour
- You have contractions that are regular and strong when labour starts



If at any point during your pregnancy the midwife has a concern she will inform you and may ask for the opinion of a consultant. If all is well you will stay low risk, however if the problem means that your pregnancy needs further treatment or there might be a problem during labour you will be put under the care of a consultant. Your pregnancy is then referred to as high risk.

What are the benefits of giving birth in a Birth Centre?

You will find that the approach to your labour and the birth of your baby is not medical. Midwives are trained to a high level to offer support and encouragement. A midwife is the best person to care for you when you have a normal low risk pregnancy and birth. The midwife will advise you on different ways to cope in labour such as using alternative positions, relaxations and water for labour. You will be in an environment that does not look like a hospital, for example you can even have control over the lighting in the room.

- **You will need less pain relief in labour** because of the support of the midwife, the environment you are in and the facilities available to help you through your labour.
- **You are more likely to be upright during labour and birth** as you will be encouraged to walk and move around. This helps in progressing your labour as lying on a bed is usually uncomfortable and does not make the most of gravity to aid your progress.
- **You are more likely to have a normal birth** because you will need less pain relief and are more likely to be upright and mobile, you will be doing everything to help yourself, giving you the best chance of having a normal birth.
- **You are more likely to have a water birth.** There are birthing pools available for labouring and or birthing in water. Being in water helps you to be in comfortable positions for labour.
- **You are less likely to need an episiotomy (cut to perineum).** We know that women who are active in their labour, when it comes to pushing their baby out are more likely to do this naturally without much help. This can reduce the pressure on the tissue and make a cut less likely.
- **You are more likely to establish breastfeeding** and breastfeed successfully if you have had a positive birth experience.

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- **You can have more than one birth supporter if you wish.** Your family can be with you throughout the birth, but please check with the midwife first.
- **You will be able to have your birth partner stay with you** after the birth and until you are ready to go home.
- **The environment of a birth centre gives women positive birth experiences.**
- **Aromatherapy** a complementary therapy and is available in both our birth centres as an alternative form of pain relief.

How is a Birth Centre different to the Labour Ward?

Women who come to a birth centre have a good state of health so they are less likely to have problems during birth. All of our midwives are qualified, experienced, skilled and able to recognise when there is a problem and get the right help for you and your baby if needed. It is important to know that the Birth Centre does not have doctors; they are based in the Labour Ward. We do not provide epidurals or provide caesarean sections in our birth centres; these are provided on Labour Ward for women who choose these options, or who have complications with their pregnancy or labours.

What if something goes wrong?

Most women who give birth in a birth centre do so without any problems. However, there are a few women who need to have their care under a consultant on the Labour Ward. If there is a complication during your pregnancy you will be seen by a doctor. If this is likely to complicate your pregnancy or labour then you will give birth on the Labour Ward. If it is all right for you to continue to give birth in the Birth Centre, then you will come back to the midwives for your care. A small percentage of women may experience difficulties during birth and so will be transferred to the nearby Labour Ward to receive care from a consultant. If your baby experiences any complications, we will perform all the necessary emergency procedures and ask for the help of the Neonatal Department.

After the birth of your baby

Normally you will stay in the Birth Centre until you and the midwife are happy that everything is well following the birth of your baby.

The midwife will check that you and your baby are well and ensure you are happy with how your baby is feeding and responding to you. Once the midwife and you are happy you will be given information about who to contact if you have any concerns when you are at home. You will receive ongoing care from a midwife when you get home, usually starting the next day. If you need to stay longer, once the birth is over you will be transferred to the postnatal ward. Most women are discharged home after 6 hours or as soon as all examinations and paperwork has been completed.



George Eliot Hospital (GEH): Rae of hope and Rae of light rooms.

Being a smaller maternity hospital we have two beautifully equipped birth rooms to give you the relaxed environment and experience of our 2 birth pools. These are located within a quiet area on our Labour Ward itself. The benefit of this is that we can also offer this experience to some of our higher risk women as they have quick access to the medical team if required.

More than 2000 women choose to give birth at the George Eliot Hospital every year.

At GEH there are several birthing options available for you to consider and discuss with your midwife:

- A home birth
- Low Risk Birthing Rooms
- Consultant Led Delivery Suite



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Delivery Suite

02476 865246

- 9 modern delivery rooms, including:
- 3 ensuite delivery rooms
- 6 larger delivery rooms
- 2 birth pool rooms with mood lighting and a sound projector
- 1 room with bariatric facilities
- Obstetric theatre suite



We offer 24 hours free parking for birth partners whilst their partner is in labour and a meal voucher for our restaurant.

George Eliot NHS Trust

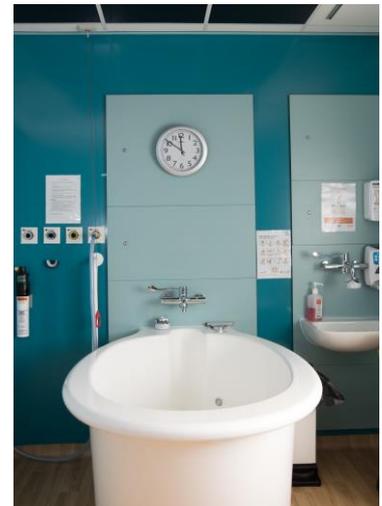
College Street

Nuneaton

CV10 7DJ

www.geh.nhs.uk

02476 865090





Approximately 3000 women choose to give birth at South Warwickshire Hospital every year.

At SWFT there are several birthing options available for you to consider and discuss with your midwife:

- A home birth
- The Bluebell Birth Centre
- Consultant Led Labour Suite

Labour Suite

01926 495321 Ext: 4552

- 7 birthing rooms including,
- 1 birthing pool
- 1 ensuite room
- 1 High Dependency Room (ensuite and suitable for a wheelchair user)
- 2 Obstetric Theatres

Bluebell Birth Centre

01926 495321 Ext: 6973 / 6976

- Own separate birth centre entrance
- 4 birthing rooms with birthing pools available in all
- Aromatherapy treatment room
- A separate snug room for parents to relax in with combined kitchen area
- A private garden
- Our birth centre is 4 minutes away from Labour Suite

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South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Warwick Hospital

Lakin Road

Warwick

CV34 5BW

www.swft.nhs.uk

01926 495321



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6000 women choose to give birth at the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire every year.

At UHCW there are several birthing options available for you to consider and discuss with your midwife:

- A home birth
- Lucina Birth Centre
- Consultant Led labour Ward

Labour Ward

02476 967368

- Based at University Hospital in Coventry
- 6 maternity triage assessment rooms
- 9 ensuite labour rooms
- 1 birthing pool room
- 1 multi-birth room
- 2 high dependency rooms (HDU)
- 1 induction ward with 2 bed spaces
- 2 Obstetric theatres

We have the latest equipment to monitor your baby's heart when you're in water in the birthing pool.

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Lucina Birth Centre

02476 967425

- 5 ensuite birthing rooms
- 4 of these rooms have birth pools
- Mood ceiling lighting
- Access to a shared kitchen with staff
- A snug room for birthing partners to relax in
- Lucina is adjacent to the Labour Ward
- Double beds in rooms

University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust

Clifford Bridge Road

Coventry

CV2 2DX

www.uhcw.nhs.uk

02476 964000



Patient Information



The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 02476 964000 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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