

Maternity Services

Your Birth Options

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

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.

In Coventry and Warwickshire, we have a Local Maternity and Neonatal System, this is often referred to as the **LMNS** and means the services available to you and your family in our local area.

The LMNS includes 3 hospitals for maternity services.

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

Planning 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 maternity units in the tranquil birthing units, one of our labour wards or in the comfort of your own home supported by our community midwifery teams.

Your options about where to have your baby will depend on your choice, your needs, and your risks. If your pregnancy is considered low risk (if you



Patient Information

have no pre-existing health conditions or pregnancy problems), you could consider any of these 3 birth locations.

For women with a high-risk pregnancy that may need some specialist input, it is often safest to give birth in hospital, where specialists are available to support you during childbirth.

Each of our hospitals offer different levels of service, and despite your informed choice, it may be necessary for you to adapt to different services. For example, if you develop any serious complications before 32 weeks gestation and your baby needs specialist neonatal care, your care may need to be transferred from either GEH or SWFT to UHCW.

To enhance and support the care that you receive, we work in partnership, liaising daily to ensure that, based on acuity, any delays in patient care around induction of labour are escalated and prevented where possible. As a result of the regional escalation process, you may be offered a transfer of care during the induction of labour process if necessary.

Your community or named midwife can help you decide which birth option is right for you based on the information you give her during your initial booking appointment. You can choose which one to go to.

Wherever you choose, the place should feel right for you. Making your decision on the place of birth later in pregnancy will give you more time to make an informed decision. At the beginning of your journey, you will need to decide which hospital you plan to start with for scans and arrange antenatal care appointments.

You are welcome to change your mind at any point during your pregnancy. However, it's important to note that the earlier you choose your hospital, the sooner plans of care can be made and documented for you. Our teams are here to guide you through all your care choices and we aim to support you throughout your pregnancy, birth and postnatally regardless of your needs.

You may have personalised birth choices, which should be discussed with your community/named midwife. Some women make choices that do not

Patient Information

align with the local and national guidance that NHS trusts have in place. An example of this is if you wish to give birth in a low-risk setting but have a higher-risk pregnancy.

In these circumstances, you will be offered a discussion with a senior midwife or Consultant to develop a detailed personalised care support plan.

The Consultant Midwife at UHCW can be contacted by email:

Louise.Clarke@uhcw.nhs.uk or 02476964000 Bleep 5056

The Consultant Midwife at SWFT can be contacted by email:

Kate.morse@swft.nhs.uk

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: It is advised that you book one of the antenatal sessions, which your community midwife can give you information about. The trust is updating it's virtual tours, which will be accessible online in the near future.



South Warwickshire: Virtual tours of the maternity unit and Bluebell birth centre are available on the Trust website: <https://www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/adult-hospital-services/maternity>.



Patient Information

University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire: A virtual tour of our maternity unit is available on the trust's website: www.uhcw.nhs.uk. Lucina Birth centre tours can be arranged by contacting the Lucina Birth centre on 024 7696 7425 or emailing Lucina.birth@uhcw.nhs.uk.



Home Births

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

Many women choose to labour and give birth at home because they feel more comfortable in a familiar environment where they can move around freely. This can often reduce the need for strong pain relief, although gas and air (Entonox) can still be used. You also have the option to arrange for a birth pool, which provides excellent pain relief and offers huge advantages for labour positions.



A homebirth can be arranged through all hospitals within Coventry & Warwickshire LMNS and can be requested via your community/named midwife. If you choose to give birth at home, you'll be supported by a midwife who is experienced and confident in providing delivery care in the community. The midwife will remain with you throughout your labour and stay until after your baby has been born and had a successful feed. A second midwife will also join you before the birth to give extra help and support.

If you need any additional help during labour, or your labour is not progressing as expected, your midwife will arrange for you to be transferred to a hospital. In such a situation, the midwife will request the appropriate level of urgency from the ambulance service. The community midwives

Patient Information

would continue to 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.
- Avoiding interruptions to your labour by going into the hospital, which allows 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 birth and being 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 likely need less pain relief during labour** due to the support of the midwife and the comforting environment.
- **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 vaginal 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 help. This can reduce the pressure on the tissue and make a cut less likely.
- A positive birth experience at home increases the likelihood of successfully **establishing breastfeeding**. Women and their partners

Patient Information

often describe home births as positive experience, which can positively impact breastfeeding initiation and success.

- **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 or named midwife is on call 24 hours, 7 days a week to support your birth. If the team is already supporting another home birth, you may be advised to attend the hospital. 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 or named midwife whether a home birth is suitable for you and your baby.



Labour Ward / Delivery Suite

Labour Wards, also known as delivery suites, are staffed by a multidisciplinary team consisting of doctors who specialise in birth (Obstetricians), anaesthetists, midwives and maternity support workers. Additionally, they receive support from specialists such as baby doctors (neonatologists). All our staff are experienced in both low and high-risk care, ensuring support and encouragement throughout your labour and birth.

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

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

All of our Labour Wards offer birthing pool rooms, providing a calm and relaxing environment to ensure that your labour and birth is as comfortable as possible.



Patient Information

All trusts have telemetry wireless baby monitoring equipment available, allowing you to continue experiencing the benefits of water for pain relief. However, the quality of this form of monitoring your baby when in the water is dependent on many other features. You can discuss your suitability for using the birthing pool with your midwife and include it in 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 physiological process. They have been designed to feel more like home, these centres aim to make you feel comfortable and relaxed during your birthing experience.

There are 2 Alongside Birth Centre's within the hospital available in your area within our LMNS:

- **The Bluebell Birth Centre** at South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT) 8 minutes from the Labour ward
- **Lucina Birth Centre** at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW) is situated a short distance from the Labour ward

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 into your pregnancy.
- Your BMI is less than 35 at the start of your pregnancy.
- You are between 16 and 40 years of age.

Patient Information

- 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, they 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, your care will be overseen by a consultant and 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 low-risk pregnancy and birth. The midwife will advise you on different ways to cope in labour, such as using alternative positions, relaxations techniques, and water for labour. You will be in an environment that does not look like a hospital and is more like a homely environment.

- **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.

Patient Information

- **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.
- **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, 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 choose to give birth at a birth centre typically have a good state of health, so they are less likely to have problems during birth. All our midwives are qualified, experienced, skilled, and able to recognise when there is a problem and can 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 located in the Labour Ward. We do not provide epidurals, continuous fetal monitoring or provide caesarean sections in our birth centres but are offered in the 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 transferred to 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 be advised to give birth in the Labour Ward. If your complication resolves, you may be able to return to the Birth Centre for your care. A small percentage of women may experience difficulties during birth and so will be transferred to the nearby Labour Ward

Patient Information

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 you are both well after 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 return home, usually starting the next day. If you need to stay longer, you will be transferred to the postnatal ward after birth. Most women are discharged home after 6 hours or as soon as all examinations and paperwork have been completed.



George Eliot Hospital (GEH): Rae of hope and Rae of light rooms. As a smaller maternity hospital, we provide 2 beautifully equipped birth rooms, each offering a relaxed environment and the opportunity to experience our 2 birth pools. These rooms are located within a quiet area in our Labour Ward. 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. Approximately 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



Patient Information

Delivery Suite

024 7686 5246

9 modern delivery rooms, including:

2 ensuite delivery rooms

6 larger delivery rooms

2 birth pool rooms with mood lighting and a sound projector

1 room with bariatric facilities

2 obstetric theatres

A Bereavement suite

A Level 1 Special care baby unit that takes infants from 32 weeks gestation.

We offer 24-hour free parking for birth partners whilst their partner is in labour.

George Eliot NHS Trust

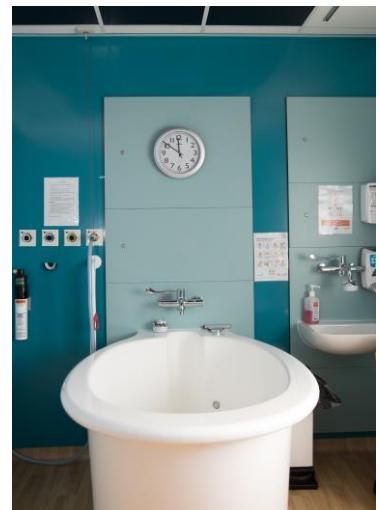
College Street

Nuneaton

CV10 7DJ

www.geh.nhs.uk

024 7686 5090



Patient Information



Approximately 3000 women choose to give birth at South Warwickshire University Foundation Trust 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

A Level 1 Special care baby unit that takes infants from 32-week gestation.

Labour Suite

01926 495321 Ext: 4552

3 maternity triage assessment beds

6 birthing rooms all with ensuite

1 birthing pool room

A Bereavement suite

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 and double beds in all rooms

A private garden

The birth centre is on site but is some distance away from the Labour Suite

Patient Information

South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust

Warwick Hospital

Lakin Road

Warwick

CV34 5BW

www.swft.nhs.uk

01926 495321



Patient Information



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.

Level 3 Neonatal intensive care unit taking babies from 22 weeks gestation.

Labour Ward

024 7696 7368

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

A soundproofed delivery room for bereaved parents on the Labour ward, as well as a new bereavement suite with 2 rooms, is currently being designed and developed, with work starting soon.

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

Patient Information

Lucina Birth Centre

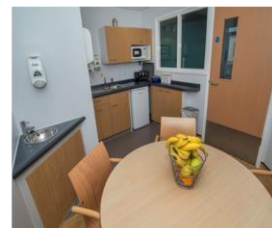
024 7696 7425

3 ensuite birthing rooms all with birthing pools, 2 with double beds.

Mood ceiling lighting

Access to a shared kitchen with staff

Lucina is adjacent to the Labour Ward



University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust

Clifford Bridge Road, Coventry, CV2 2DX

024 7696 4000

www.uhcw.nhs.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact.

024 7696 4000 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

Department:	Maternity
Contact:	27213
Updated:	April 2024
Review:	April 2026
Version:	2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/2380/19

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us to make further improvements and to recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback

