

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

PALS Maidstone Hospital	☎ 01622 224960
PALS Tunbridge Wells	☎ 01892 632953
PALS Email	mtwpals@nhs.net
PALS SMS	☎ 07747 782317
PALS Maidstone Fax	☎ 01622 224843
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Choice for Place of Birth at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust



Introduction

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust aims to provide the highest and safest standards of care for mothers and babies, and to enable you to have as straightforward a birth as possible. This leaflet explains what options are available and provides information to help you to make an informed choice, including information from the recent "Birth Place in England" study.

Women who have a straightforward pregnancy may choose to have their baby at home, or in the Maidstone Birth Centre, or in hospital. For women who have a medical problem or a pregnancy complication, it is always recommended that hospital is the safest place to give birth.

The options for place of birth will be discussed with you at your booking visit and throughout your pregnancy.

Choices for place of birth

- Hospital
- Birth centre
- Home

Giving birth in hospital

The new Tunbridge Wells Hospital is unique in the NHS. Every woman has her own room for antenatal and postnatal stay as well as for labour and birth. The rooms are spacious, have en-suite facilities and some have woodland views.

The Delivery Suite has two large birth pools and a variety of equipment such as birth balls, couches, mats and comfortable chairs to help you get into a range of good positions for labour and birth. We aim to provide one to one care in labour and a full range of options to help you cope in labour, including an epidural service.

What if there is a problem?

The maternity unit has two operating theatres in the Delivery Suite and is staffed by midwives and a team of doctors specialising in women and children's care. The Delivery Suite is situated immediately next door to the Neonatal Unit.



Birth rooms at Tunbridge Wells Hospital

Making the right choice for you

We suggest that you discuss your choice of place of birth with your midwife or doctor. Tours of the Birth Centre are available (please ring the Birth Centre for details). We are also developing our website for maternity services which will provide further information about our service, including a virtual tour of the maternity unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

Contact details

Should you have any questions, please contact your community midwife. You may also find the following contact numbers helpful:

Urgent clinical concerns or problems

Triage at Tunbridge Wells Hospital ☎ 01892 633500

Birth Centre at Maidstone ☎ 01622 220161

Other non-clinical matters

Midwifery Liaison Office ☎ 01892 638158

A Supervisor of Midwives can also be contacted via the Midwifery Liaison Office.

Please see Trust website for further information:

<http://www.mtw.nhs.uk/>

Further information and advice can be obtained from

NHS Direct

☎ 0845 46 47

NHS Direct online

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Giving birth at home

Home births are a popular choice for some women who have an uncomplicated pregnancy. Approximately three to four per cent of women in our area opt for this because they want to have a non-medical experience in familiar, homely surroundings.

The 2011 “Birth Place in England Study” showed that home births were as safe as hospital births for second and subsequent babies but that there was a very small increase in problems for babies of first time Mothers. Women having their babies at home have the highest chance of an uncomplicated birth and lower chance of needing a caesarean section or other medical assistance. They are also more likely to breastfeed successfully and be satisfied with their birth experience.

What if there is a problem?

If your labour is progressing slowly, you require an epidural or there are complications, you will be transferred by ambulance to Tunbridge Wells Hospital. Journey time will depend on where you live. You may need to consider childcare arrangements.

Comments from parents

Rebecca (pictured on the front of this leaflet) had two home births. She said:

“We always hoped that giving birth would be as positive an experience as possible and so when home was an option we thought why not...no pressure to go anywhere, we would be in familiar surroundings and still have access to entonox [gas and air] and a birthing pool¹. We had one to one care from a very conscientious and caring midwife. There was never any compromise over mine or the baby's safety and we never felt isolated as the home care continued for several days. When planning the birth of our second child we had no hesitation in wanting to be at home and feel fortunate that Noah and Bella were born into the environment they will grow up in.”

¹ birthing pools for home use are not provided by the hospital.

Following the birth, unless you decide to transfer straight home, you will be cared for on the Postnatal ward, staffed by midwives and support workers. Most first time mothers choose to stay for at least one night to have some help and support in caring for and feeding their babies.



Postnatal room

Comments from parents

‘ We loved the brand new facilities the hospital had to offer but most of all, what really impressed us, was the quality of the staff themselves and, we would like to compliment them all for their professionalism, care and sensitive manner in which they went about their work helping women to gain the best from their birth experience’. Georgina and Stephen (January, 2012)

Giving birth in the Maidstone Birth Centre

The Birth Centre in Maidstone is a brand new, purpose built unit, staffed by midwives, where mothers can give birth and learn how to care for their babies in a relaxed, home-like setting. If your pregnancy has been straightforward, and there is no reason to think that you or your baby are likely to need medical support during labour or after the birth, then the Birth Centre could be a good choice for you.

The 2011 “Birth Place in England Study”, which studied more than 62,000 women with a straightforward pregnancy, found that:

- Birth centres are just as safe as hospital for ‘low risk’ women
- Women who give birth in a birth centre are more likely to have a straightforward birth with less medical intervention
- Women who give birth in a birth centre are more likely to breastfeed successfully.

What facilities does the Birth Centre have?



The Birth Centre has two spacious birthing rooms and four postnatal bedrooms with en-suite facilities (see pictures above).

The birthing rooms have large pools, comfortable home-like furnishings and equipment to help you cope in labour. They also have air conditioning, dimmable lighting and flat screen televisions. Most of the bedrooms have double beds so that partners can stay. A kitchen diner means you are able to help yourself to drinks and snacks whenever you want (picture below). There is a garden room and small garden that provides a special place for you to walk around or just relax in labour.



What if there is a problem?

Women who come to the Birth Centre are usually in good health so there is no reason to expect a problem during birth. Midwives are trained to detect if labour is not progressing as well as it should and to make sure you and your baby are safe. Our figures show that around 70% of first time mothers and more than 90% of second time mothers using a birth centre give birth without needing any medical care.

If medical help is necessary, or if you decide you would like an epidural, you will be transferred to Tunbridge Wells Hospital by ambulance, accompanied by your midwife. The journey is approximately 25 minutes.

Extra emergency equipment is kept in the Birth Centre, should unforeseen problems arise for a woman or baby. Staff receive regular training to deal with such situations.

Comments from parents

One Maidstone mum, Charlotte, who used the Birth Centre but needed to be transferred to hospital when a problem arose said:

‘I received wonderful care and support at the Birth Centre and I do not regret my decision to start labour there. I can understand people’s concerns about travelling some distance, but they needn’t. The midwives are very experienced and didn’t take any risks. I was also able to return to the Birth Centre following the birth which was great.’



Charlie and Lee with baby Brodie, born at Maidstone Birth Centre January 2012