



Birth Options

Great Western Hospital (GWH) maternity services are proud to offer a variety of choices for your birth; a consultant supported midwifery unit, the White Horse Birth Centre or your own home.





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Home If you prefer the option to give birth in your own home, feel free to discuss this option with your community midwife, who will be able to provide you with additional information and direct you to local sources of support such as local home birth groups.

The White Horse Birth Centre at GWH has been open since 2011.



The birth centre offers a number of benefits for you and your baby.

The birth centre is led by a dedicated team of midwives who are passionate about helping you achieve the kind of natural birth you would like.

The birth centre provides a home from home environment which consists of four birthing rooms all equipped to support natural labour.



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Two rooms have birthing pools which can be used for pain management or to have a water birth.

All rooms are equipped with birthing slings, birthing stools, wedges, bean bags and specialist birthing beds to encourage physiological birth; we encourage you to arrange the furniture to provide the best environment for you.

The birth centre offers intermittent fetal heart monitoring rather than continuous fetal monitoring. Pain management options include: water therapy; gas and air (Entonox); TENs machines; opiates (Pethidine) and the aromatherapy service.

The essential oils used in aromatherapy can help to reduce pain and anxiety in labour.

There are some occasions where essential oils are not recommended, please speak to your midwife for further information.

There is a communal sitting room with facilities for making drinks and eating meals, should you wish to do so outside of your room.

We are situated in close proximity to our consultant led obstetric unit in the Great Western Hospital. This provides Consultant-led medical care where you will be transferred to continue your care if labour does not go according to plan.



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Our consultant supported midwifery unit has twelve birthing rooms, of which one is a pool room.

There are two operating theatres dedicated to Delivery Suite where instrumental (forceps/ventouse) or operative birth (Caesarean section) is performed, facilitating smooth transition of your care.

The obstetric unit provides 24 hour obstetric and anaesthetic cover, where labour can be induced and augmented if necessary.

Fetal heart monitoring can be monitored continuously and medication and epidural pain relief administered.

A neonatal paediatric service based in our Neonatal Unit is also on site.

In each birthing room there are en-suite facilities and the use of patient information line.

The furniture in the rooms can be moved, to suit your requirements, providing a cosy environment, influencing calm and relaxation.

When relaxed your body produces more hormones that help your labour, encouraging mobility which plays a key role in progressing labour.

There are opportunities to use birthing balls/aids and we encourage you to bring in items from home that will help



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labour to progress. Your midwife will be able to give you some suggestions.

Midwives value your privacy and will always knock before entering a room.

After the birth of your baby

A midwife will visit the day after you go home.

If you have not heard or had a visit by 4.30pm, please call your local unit.

We hope that your stay with us is a happy and positive experience, please help us to continue to provide excellent care by letting us know what we did well and how we can improve.



You should receive a text message from the NHS Friends and Family Feedback Service following the birth of your baby to provide anonymous feedback regarding



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your care; we appreciate any feedback you may have and use it to improve our services.

Useful Information

Partners: are warmly welcomed, we offer reclining chairs in most of our environments. Toilet facilities are available, although washing facilities for your partners are not available at this present time.

Visiting: during your time in the birth room we welcome your birth partner(s), although please be aware that space can be limited and for many women this is a very private time. There will be opportunities for others to visit following the birth.

Parking: car parks operate by issuing a ticket on arrival and you pay for your stay when you exit. During your delivery stay you will be provided with one parking ticket, which will allow you to exit the car park for £1.10.

Security: the safety and security of both you and your baby are very important to us during your stay. We operate an intercom system to monitor all visitors. Please be patient when ringing the bell, midwives are often busy with women in labour and may not be able to answer the bell to the intercom as quickly as you may like. Please make sure you do not let others in when you enter, even if someone is in uniform, as this poses a security risk. We ask you to ensure there is always someone with your



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baby. Let staff know if there is anyone you do not want to visit.

Going home: depending on you and your baby's needs if you are low risk, we are happy to support you to return home a few hours after the birth. How long you stay may vary and your midwife will discuss this with you. You are welcome to raise any issues.

Amenity rooms: depending on your requirements you may like the privacy of a single room on the postnatal ward. There is a charge for this which is usually per stay rather than per night.

Refreshments: we provide food for you during your stay, but we are unable to provide food for your partner, however, we are happy for you to bring food in for both yourself and your partner.

There is a Costa coffee shop which opens Monday – Friday 06.30 - 20.30, Saturday – Sunday 06.30 - 17.30 and a hospital canteen open daily 07.00 - 19.30 (except Christmas) to purchase food. There are also vending machines around the hospital and in the canteen for your use.

Mobile phones/Internet: mobile phones can be used on the wards. The GWH has free access to the internet.

Donations: some people like to express their thanks through making donations. Please ask your midwife if you would like to donate.



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Maternity Voices Partnership: if you would like to give any additional anonymous feedback on any part of your Maternity care, please complete the survey at: <https://www.bswmaternityvoices.org.uk/survey/>

Contact telephone numbers:

Delivery suite (24 hours): 01793 604575

White Horse Birth Centre (24 hours): 01793 604042

Community Office: Enquires between Mon to Fri 9.00am – 9.45am (excluding bank holidays) 01793 604814 – 18 and 605576

Community Bleep holder between 8.30am - 4.30pm, 7 days a week 01793 604020 ask for bleep 1583

Maternity Bleep holder between 4.30pm - 8.30 am, 7 days a week 01793 604020 ask for bleep 1465

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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