



# Birth Centre in the Hospital

Midwives support you to birth in a non-medical environment within a hospital. If there is a complication you will be moved to the doctor-led part of the hospital.

## **Advantages of planning to have your baby in a birth centre in the hospital are:**

- More homely environment where you may feel more relaxed, and you are able to mobilise easy
- Less likely to have medical interventions such as caesarean, forceps, ventouse or episiotomy
- You are more likely to be able to use a birthing pool
- If your birth is straightforward, you are usually discharged home from the birth centre
- If there are any concerns with you or your baby, you can be quickly transferred to the labour ward or delivery unit within the hospital
- If transfer is needed this will be quicker than from home or birth centre in the community

## **What is the environment like?**

The two midwife led birth centers within the hospitals (Manchester Birth Centre at Wythenshawe and Bluebell Birth Centre at North Manchester) are staffed and run by experienced midwives. They have been designed to feel more like home and aim to make you feel comfortable and relaxed. The birth centres support women who want a birth without medical interventions. Women and birthing people are actively encouraged to be mobile throughout their labour supported by midwives and their choice of birth partners.

All rooms are set up with furniture and facilities designed to help you feel calm and in control such as :

- A birthing pool.
- Soft mood lighting and choice of music
- Birthing Aids such as birth balls, and birth stools.
- Private bathroom with toilet and shower facilities
- Birth Centres have essential equipment which includes standard and emergency medication and any equipment needed if your baby requires any support with breathing following birth (resuscitation).



# Is this type of birthplace suitable for you?

Giving birth in a birth centre may be an option for you if

You are healthy

Your pregnancy has been straight-forward

You are full-term (37 weeks or more of pregnancy).

If you would really like to use the birth centre, but have complications or other risk factors, please discuss your options with your midwife or consultant at the hospital. They will be able to talk you through the risks and benefits of your options. This might include referral to a birth options clinic. You have the option to give birth in a birth centre at North or Wythenshawe even if you are booked with Saint Mary's Oxford Road (where there is no birth centre).

## Who looks after you?

You will be cared for by a midwife during your labour. Another midwife or maternity support worker may be present at other times or for the birth.



## Who else can be with you?

It is essential to think about who you would like with you at your birth. Having the right people with you during labour can help provide the additional support to make birth a much more relaxing experience. You can have 2 support people with you during your labour and birth.

The different support people might be:

- Partners and Family members - You may have a preference to have immediate or extended family with you
- Doulas - Doulas act as non clinical, practical and emotional support birthworkers, who can assist with comfort measures, support you (and your partner) during birth and ensure your wishes are being upheld.
- Religious Leaders/Practices - such as Imans, Priests, for Namkaran (naming ceremony).

# What happens when it's time to give birth?

When you think you might be in labour please call triage or the birth centre.

## What pain relief is available?

The following types of pain relief are available in the birth centre setting:

- Birthing pool
- Gas and air (entonox)
- Pethidine or diamorphine

You may also wish to use other alternative pain relief options such as TENS, massage, hypnobirthing and aromatherapy. Speak to your midwife about how to organise this yourself.



## How are you and your baby monitored?

When you are in established labour, the midwife will want to closely monitor the wellbeing of your baby. In the Birth Centre this will involve monitoring the baby's heart rate intermittently (usually every 15 minutes and more frequently before the birth). For more information see [fetal monitoring](#).

Regular maternal observations will also be taken such as blood pressure, temperature and pulse. You will be offered internal examinations to help assess how your labour is progressing.



## What happens if there is a problem?

If there are any concerns during labour or immediately after your baby is born you will be transferred to the labour ward or delivery suite within the hospital. The labour wards are on the same floor of the hospital as the Birth Centre and transfer is usually very quick. Once transferred you will be looked after by a team led by doctors with support from midwives.

If there are concerns with your baby after birth, specialist support is available from the neonatal team and your baby may be transferred to the neonatal unit within the hospital if required. The most common reasons for transfer from the birth centre to hospital labour ward are for further pain relief (such as an epidural) or for a delay in labour.

## What happens after your baby is born?

Once your baby is born, you and your baby's wellbeing will be checked. You will normally stay in the same room until you are discharged. This is usually 6-12 hours after your baby is born. Your birth partner may also stay with you the entire time, including overnight depending on what time you gave birth.

If there are any concerns with you or your baby you will be transferred to the postnatal ward. Read more about [Postnatal Care](#) on our website or view the [Postnatal Padlet](#) for further information.

## Where are the Birth Centres in a hospital located?

Saint Mary's Hospitals have 2 Birth Centres located at:

- The Bluebell Birth Centre at North Manchester Hospital
- The Manchester Birth Centre at Wythenshawe Hospital



# What do people who chose this birth place say about it?

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“I chose to have my baby at the birth centre at Wythenshawe Hospital as it was a very calming environment to bring my baby into the world. It was as comforting as being at home, but you knew the midwives and doctors were on hand just in case. I felt 100% comfortable in the birth centre and I loved the fact that we had the consistent care of one midwife as opposed to being in a very medical/clinical environment.”



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## What if you want more information?

**My Birth My Choice: Greater Manchester & Eastern Cheshire Local Maternity System**

**Birthrights factsheet: choice of place of birth**

**AIMS: choosing place of birth information**

**NICE: choosing where to have your baby**

