

Maternity services in Buckinghamshire

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Overview of maternity services provided by Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT)

Overview

In order to be among the best maternity care providers, BHT strives to put women, babies and their families at the centre of their care.

In BHT, as with the national picture, the birth-rate continues to increase. Women are giving birth later in life and with increasingly complex medical conditions. Professionals working together across boundaries to ensure the right care in the right place has never been more important.

Maternity sits within the Division of Women and Children at BHT. The service structure in Maternity is:

- Based at Wycombe
Freestanding Birth Centre (WBC) – on average 25 births per month
Community Midwifery Teams (Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks areas)
Antenatal Clinic
Postnatal drop in clinic
Antenatal anaesthetic appointments
BCG vaccination clinic
Newborn examination clinics
Home birth service
- Based at Stoke Mandeville
Alongside Birth Centre (ABC) – on average 60 births per month
Obstetric-led Labour Ward – on average 350 deliveries per month
Obstetric Theatres
Neonatal Unit
Inpatient Antenatal and Postnatal Wards
Antenatal Clinic including specialist fetal medicine and pre-term birth clinic
Postnatal drop in clinic (weekends only)
Maternity Day Assessment Unit
Community Midwifery Teams (Aylesbury Vale)
Home Birth Service

During April 2015 - March 2016, BHT provided labour care to women who delivered 5541 babies throughout the service including 43 home births. In addition the community midwifery service provided a comprehensive antenatal and postnatal service to a similar number.

Clinical outcomes for the year 2015/16 are outlined below:

Clinical outcome	BHT figures	National benchmark/best practice
Perinatal mortality	5.3 per 1000 births	5.9 per 100 births
Vaginal birth rate	55.3%	63%
Caesarean section rate	27.2%	26.5%
Midwife to birth ratio	1:32	1:28 to 1:32
Breastfeeding initiation rate	79.9%	80%
Complaints	13	(There were 30 the year before)
Friends and Family Test approval rating	97.8%	82%

The national picture shows that the UK is short of 2300 midwives. Buckinghamshire is not immune to this pressure and in order to improve our recruitment and retention the maternity service has established a 'Great Place to Work Group' engaging the midwives and support staff in strategies to make BHT an attractive place to work. This group has already identified more flexible and effective midwifery shift patterns. In addition BHT has offered jobs to all of our local midwifery students and additional 15 midwives will join us in October 2016.

Quality improvements

BHT is a learning organisation and encourages external scrutiny. We have recently commissioned the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) to undertake a peer review to offer independent scrutiny of our care and processes. Recommendations from this review will be incorporated into our ongoing quality improvement programme.

Strong multi-professional links are essential to promote a safety culture. BHT has just been accepted to participate in a pilot labour ward leadership programme run by the RCOG which promotes team working.

Last year, together with our Commissioners, we commenced a pre-term birth clinic in order to reduce the number of low birth weight babies. We are measuring the outcomes from this first cohort which will be reported later this year.

This year the focus is on women for whom English is not a first language and improving communication through the whole of the maternity pathway.

In partnership with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, BHT is making perinatal mental health a priority. To this end we have employed a specialist mental health midwife.

Choice agenda

The Maternity Matters Department of Health report underlines the importance of providing high quality safe care and also its commitment to four national choice guarantees:

1. How to access maternity care
At BHT, women access their community midwives usually via their GP surgery
2. Choice of type of antenatal care
All women have a named community midwife who provides continuity throughout their antenatal care.
3. Choice of place of birth
As outlined above all Buckinghamshire women have a choice of home delivery, birth centre care, or consultant led care.
4. Choice of place of postnatal care
BHT works from children's centres across the county. All women get their first visit at home and subsequent visits are arranged in partnership with the woman and her family

Modelling current and future antenatal and postnatal care

We provide continuity of midwifery care antenatally and 1:1 care in labour.

There are opportunities for further improvement in continuity throughout the whole pathway. To this end we have applied to be part of the first tranche of early adopters to implement the recommendations of the national maternity services review. This will enable us to review all our pathways and provide the right professional in the right place as well as ensuring the woman's voice is central to our service planning. We are working with our commissioners and other partners to ensure we are responsive to future demands of the service and sustaining high quality care and maintain choice for women in Buckinghamshire.