Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Birth choices outside the usual recommendations

Maternity

Published: January 2025

Patient information

Does this apply to me?

If you choose to have your baby in a way that is different from the usual medical advice or guidelines recommended by NHS healthcare staff in the UK, then this applies to you.

This might include:

- Choosing care during pregnancy that may be different to recommendations (e.g., declining blood tests, routine antenatal appointment or ultrasounds, etc).
- Choosing a different birth setting (e.g., home birth instead of a hospital, or a birth centre not recommended based on medical conditions).
- Choosing a birth plan that differs from usual recommendations (e.g., declining certain procedures, medications, or monitoring that are typically advised).
- Making choices that focus on what matters to you. This may include your personal preferences, cultural beliefs, or alternative care approaches over recommended medical advice.

These choices are usually made after talking about the risks and benefits with a Midwife and/or Doctor, so you can give informed consent and feel in control of your birth plan.

Your rights

Under common law in England and Wales, and in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, you have the right to make informed decisions about your body during pregnancy and birth. According to the law, healthcare professionals must get your permission (informed consent) before any medical procedure and respect your decisions, even if they don't agree with them.

We will work with you to create a care plan that is right for you. You will get support to make informed choices through clear and ongoing communication. Your partner and family can also be involved if you want.

Who can I speak to?

The Birth Options service, which helps you with exploring your care options beyond the usual recommendations. It gives you time to talk, understand the reasons for recommended care, and share your concerns and preferences. The service focuses on your choices, informed decision-making, and open communication.

Making an informed choice

We recommend the B.R.A.I.N.S decision-making tool as a clear guide to help you make informed decisions. It breaks the decision process into steps to help you think through your options carefully. It helps you to think about everything that is important, including practical results, your feelings, and the choice of doing nothing.

B – What are the **benefits**?

R – What are the **risks**?

A – What are the **alternatives**?

I – What does you **intuition** or **instinct** tell you?

N – What if you do **nothing**?

S – Would you like a **second opinion**?

This approach follows human rights law and supports your independence by making sure you are fully informed and able to make choices about your care. It creates an environment that is a respectful, where you and those caring for you work together as a team.

After your appointment...

A plan for pregnancy and birth will be made and shared with you. It will also be written in your pregnancy notes.

You may be referred to another member of the healthcare team to talk about your care. This could include an Anaesthetist, Obstetrician, mental health service for pregnancy (Perinatal Mental Health Service), ultrasound, or a service for discussing your birth experience (Birth Reflections Service). It is your choice whether to accept the referral.

How to contact the birth choices service

Should you wish to discuss choices outside of usual recommendations, your community midwife will offer you a referral to our Birth Options Cinic with our Consultant Midwives for an appointment. This can be made at any stage in your pregnancy although we would encourage starting these discussions as early as possible.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience team on **01932 723553** or email **asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net**. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise on how to make a formal complaint.

You can also share your feedback with our Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP) via email **asphmvp@gmail.com**

We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.

You can use Text Relay to turn telephone communications into text. Use the Relay UK app on your phone, tablet or PC. You can also use Relay UK via Minicom or Uniphone.

اگر نیاز به ترجمه دارید، لطفا با شماره 01932 723553 تماس بگیرید.

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤਰਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اُردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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Review: January 2028