Briefing for women booked for maternity services

SWFT Maternity Services

We would like to provide some reassurance to you about our plans for our maternity services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pregnant women were placed in the vulnerable group list by the chief medical officer on 16 March 2020 and we have developed robust plans to respond to this, detailed below:

In response to the Covid 19 Pandemic:

- We are committed to supporting all three current birth choices around place of birth: Obstetric Unit, Birth centre and Homebirth.
- We are committed to maintaining our midwifery teams out in the community, so that you have a known midwife, supported by a team.
- We are actively encouraging our well (no Covid symptoms), birth centre suitable women to consider homebirth. An additional benefit of homebirth (alongside the known clinical benefits, please view useful information on home birth below) is the reduction in risk of exposure to Covid -19 for both women/families and staff.
- If we reach a point where we have >50% Covid-19 positive women on Labour ward, our plan will be to use the Birth centre footprint as a step-down facility for postnatal women requiring isolation. This is due to the limited single bathroom facilities on the Labour Ward. In the event of this, we will endeavour to keep at least one birthing room open on the Birth Centre: having separate areas for known and unknown risk, in the same way that we are keeping the areas separate on the Labour Ward.
- If the Birth centre is required as a facility for postnatal isolation, home birth will remain an option. We have been working closely with West Midlands Ambulance Services and we are assured that they have the capacity to support our home birth services.

Useful information

NHS Information for low risk women having their first baby

Information for healthy, low-risk women who have had a baby before

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology – Information for women and their families

International Confederation of Midwife’s statement

Public key messages:

- Home birth is a safe option – Please access the links above on place of birth.
- In countries where the health systems can support homebirth, healthy women experiencing a normal pregnancy and with the support from qualified midwives who have appropriate emergency equipment, may be safer birthing at home during the Covid -19 pandemic (ICM 2020
• Women are encouraged to access extra support available virtually from other local birth support agencies
• Women with known COVID 19 or symptoms of Covid 19 are advised to birth in hospital (RCOG 2020)
• Women who are self-isolating with no symptoms but family members have symptoms are advised to birth in hospital (RCOG 2020)