

# Changes to maternity and interdependent services at Ealing Hospital

## FAQs for GPs and midwives

### When will Ealing Hospital's maternity service close?

- Ealing maternity unit will close on 1 July 2015.

### I am booked to give birth at Ealing Hospital – what do I need to do?

- Ealing Hospital will be contacting all women who are due to give birth at Ealing Hospital to advise them if they are affected and, if they are, what their options are for the transfer of their care to another unit of their choice.

### Can women still give birth at Ealing Hospital even though it is closing?

- Yes, if your baby is due before 24 June 2015 and you are already booked to have your baby delivered at Ealing Hospital, we have no plans to change this.

### I am due to give birth just before the last admission date – what if I am late?

- If your baby comes late and falls after the closure date then we will transfer your care to your chosen next unit.
- You will have the choice of transferring your care at the beginning of June so you have time to familiarise yourself with the unit. Equally, you can choose to plan to deliver at Ealing and transferring after the 24 June 2015 to your new unit. Ealing Hospital will support you to make that choice.

### I am due to give birth just after closure – what if my baby is premature?

- If you are due to give birth after the closure, Ealing Hospital will contact you and arrange for your care to be transferred to another hospital.
- If your baby is early and you have had your first antenatal appointment undertaken by your new trust then you should go to your new trust. If you have not had your antenatal appointment done by your new trust then you should continue to go to Ealing.

### I am booked to give birth at Ealing Hospital before the closure date – is it safe?

- Absolutely. Ealing Maternity unit continues to provide safe care to women and we can give full assurance to women who are currently booked to have their baby at Ealing Hospital to use the unit with confidence.
- The changes are about planning for the future and improving care for women across North West London. We can do this by increasing consultant cover and investing in six maternity units in North West London, rather than the current seven.

### What does this mean for antenatal and postnatal care?

- Most women from the borough of Ealing who choose to give birth at Hillingdon, West Middlesex, Northwick Park, Queen Charlotte's and St Mary's hospitals will still be able to have the majority of their antenatal and postnatal appointments at Ealing Hospital, if they wish.
- Ealing Hospital will contact all women who are currently receiving antenatal and postnatal care at Ealing Hospital and discuss their options with them as the provision of this care will depend on when their next appointment is in relation to the closure date.

### What does this mean for paediatric services?

- There will be no change to children's services at Ealing Hospital and you should continue to use the service as normal.

### I am worried about the increased travel times this will result in – won't this increase risk?

- *Before the conversation:*
  - *Make a note of their postcode and check their nearest hospital*
  - *Have materials referenced below to hand / websites on screen in case they want to know how to reach their nearest alternative hospital*

- Changes to travel times will depend on where the patient lives and their individual healthcare needs.
- Many people will continue to be treated in exactly the same place and travel times will be no different, while in many cases, with increased provision of midwife-led antenatal and postnatal care in the community, travel times will be reduced. A good example is women in Ealing who previously chose to deliver at Queen Charlotte's Hospital and would have had to travel the Hospital for their antenatal and postnatal care.
- Where travel times are longer, that needs to be balanced against the fact that treatment and outcomes will be better.
- If you are still concerned about travel, please visit Transport for London's website ([www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)) which has lots of useful information such as maps and a journey planner to help you plan your route and also the NHS Choices website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) which has details on services near you as well as travel information. *(Use these resources to take them through the travel journey and print off the information so that they have a personalised guide).*
- We have also produced a number of materials which may be helpful to you, including a public transport map, and a booklet with information on the maternity units in North West London, which includes maps and travel and car parking information which I can give to you to take away.

**Advice is fine, but is there any financial or practical support available to women who will have to travel further and spend more money getting there?**

- Yes, at their first appointment after the changes come into effect, midwives will assess whether an expectant mother is 'vulnerable' to missing appointments due to their social and economic circumstances
- If that is the case then the midwife will support her to provide care locally where possible to avoid traveling and help make travel plans to the hospital with the support of hospital transport and taxis if necessary
- Approximately just 2.4% of women are estimated to fall into this 'vulnerable' category
- Some NHS patients will also be eligible for reimbursements under the Healthcare Costs Travel Scheme ([www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Travelcosts.aspx))

**What if I have any further questions?**

- If you have any further questions about your care, or what the proposed closure date means for you, as well as speaking to your GP or midwife, you can also call the dedicated phone number, staffed by midwives, 9am-5pm Monday-Friday on 07528 361562.

**(For GPs only)**

**Can I still refer women to Ealing maternity unit?**

- No, you should now stop referring women to Ealing Hospital to give birth.
- Ealing's maternity services are now provided at six sites across North West London at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Hillingdon Hospital, Northwick Park Hospital, Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea Hospital, St Mary's Hospital and West Middlesex University Hospital.
- Women should be given the choice of one of these six hospitals, or a home birth option.
- Women can also refer themselves to their chosen place to give birth.