



## North East & North Cumbria (NENC)

### Position around service provision, access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in Maternity and Neonatal Services

1 June 2022 – 15 June 2022

**PLEASE NOTE THE VISITING RESTRICTIONS DETAILED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT ARE CURRENT AT TIME OF PRODUCTION. RESTRICTIONS MAY CHANGE BEFORE THE NEXT UPDATE.**  
**FOR CURRENT UP TO DATE INFORMATION WITHIN EACH TRUST CONTACT YOUR COMMUNITY MIDWIFE**

This information is to explain what restrictions are affecting maternity services in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) and to help you to make your choice about where you would like to have your baby and maternity care.

We understand that these measures are not ideal for women and their families and we are sorry that during these unprecedented times we must put them in place for everyone's safety.

The risk associated with the number of people in a hospital is very different from the risk at a bar, cafe or shopping centre. Social distancing is difficult when providing health care and the more people who come into the hospital ('footfall') the greater the amount of virus staff and patients could be exposed to. Increased footfall increases the risk of people catching COVID19 in hospital, which would increase the numbers of staff who cannot work due to illness. Lack of staff increases the risk that we would not be able to provide the level of maternity services we would like. Ultimately the safety of our staff, our birthing people, their babies and their families are our greatest priority.

Risk assessment within hospitals (the level of COVID19) and visiting restrictions are reviewed regularly across the North East and North Cumbria and we will lift restrictions across our services when a reduced risk of contracting COVID19 makes it appropriate to do so.

A birth partner or accompanying adult can be any adult who does not have symptoms of COVID19. They will be asked to follow hospital guidance when in attendance. Nobody should visit if they have symptoms of COVID19. If your birth partner has COVID19 or has symptoms, please consider an alternative support person. Hospitals continue to ask birth partners to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). If the pregnant person has symptoms, they should call before attending so a scan or appointment can be rearranged, or their healthcare providers can take extra precautions.

Please **DO** contact your maternity unit if you are at all worried about your health or that of your baby - these restrictions make our units safe to attend and we are open and here for you.

Please do follow the government advice regarding COVID19.

Wash your hands regularly and before/after touching your face or mask.

Maintain social distancing from people not in your household/support bubble.



Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.

NB: In exceptional, extenuating circumstances or cases of specific clinical need, a bespoke visiting/accompanying plan may be put in place, please discuss with your maternity team i.e. if you require a translator, bespoke emotional or physical support.

## Rationale

What we can offer may depend on our staffing levels, how many babies are being born each month and whether more people are needing more complicated care or longer stays in hospital.

Restrictions to visiting across maternity are under constant review depending upon local restrictions.

There are particular challenges to maintain social distancing with regard to restricted environmental space in the waiting areas and the large number of women who are seen daily within any hospital environment. Each hospital has a different layout which is why there are different measures in place across the region, some units have a larger waiting area or SCBU than other units and the restrictions are in line with the ability to keep families and staff safe by adhering to social distancing regulations. For example, scan appointments – the waiting rooms may not be large enough to facilitate a partner at all scans due to social distancing regulations. To space out the scan appointments to allow fewer people in the waiting room at any one time would reduce scanning capacity and ability to deliver scans in accordance with SBLCB V2 (Saving Babies Lives Care bundle V2).

To reduce the footfall into the hospital, visiting restrictions may still be in place, except for exceptional, extenuating circumstances or cases of specific clinical need or for those in established labour\*/giving birth. Transmission of the infection can be caused by contamination of surfaces and therefore restrictions help to reduce the number of people attending the hospital to maximise the potential to reduce transmission rates.

The decision to introduce these measures is made after much deliberation of the facts and revised on a daily basis. Labour rooms are single rooms so able to accommodate one birthing partner. The space available differs within each provider trust, therefore, check with your midwife regarding number of birth partners that can accompany you. Some rooms are not big enough to support social distancing for two birthing partners to attend. This may also apply in the postnatal wards whereby there may be bays with more than one bed in or single rooms accommodating only one partner. Also, Special Care Baby Unit visiting restrictions apply in some units to enable social distancing between cots, a limited number of people in attendance keeps staff, families and their babies safe.

\* Established Labour is when your midwife sees that your contractions are becoming longer than a few seconds, are more intense/painful and occur at regular intervals, less than a few minutes apart. A vaginal examination may confirm that your cervix has dilated to 4cm or more, consent will be requested to undertake a vaginal examination by the midwife. Some women prefer not to have a vaginal examination so please discuss your preferences with the midwives to ensure you receive the personalised care you require.



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
<p><b>Newcastle RVI</b></p> <p><u>Maternity Assessment Unit</u> <b>0191 282 5748</b></p> <p><u>Labour Line</u> <b>0191 282 6363</b></p>	<p>Partners may attend all scans.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p>	<p>Partners may attend all antenatal appointments.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p>	<p>Partners may attend with women for IOL.</p> <p>A second birth partner is welcomed when the woman is transferred to a delivery room.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p> <p>A Lumeira (rapid result) test will be performed on all</p>	<p>Two birth partners may stay throughout the labour and birth and until the woman moves to the Postnatal Ward.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p> <p>A Lumeira (rapid result) test will be performed on all asymptomatic women on</p>	<p>Two birth partners may stay throughout the labour and birth and until the woman moves to the Postnatal Ward. For women being discharged directly from the MLU one birth partner can stay postnatally until discharge.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p>	<p>Your birthing partner is welcome to visit 8am- 8pm on the Postnatal Inpatient Ward with a second adult and your children are welcome to visit between 10am–12noon and 3pm–5pm via a scheduled arrangement.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all antenatal and postnatal care for all pregnant people and their support person.</p>	<p>Access is available for both parents together. Parents are encouraged to perform daily lateral flow tests if possible.</p> <p>A parent with a positive PCR/ lateral flow test must self-isolate for 10 days or have two consecutive negative daily lateral flows from day 5 of isolation. During the period of isolation, they cannot attend the Unit. If both parents are isolating, they can nominate a designated</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
			asymptomatic women on admission to hospital. A PCR test will be performed on any symptomatic women on admission to the labour ward.	admission to hospital. A PCR test will be performed on any symptomatic women on admission to the labour ward.	A Lumeira (rapid result) test will be performed on any asymptomatic woman on admission to the hospital. A PCR Test will be performed on symptomatic women on admission to the labour ward/MLU.		person they have not had contact with to visit their baby.
<p><b>County Durham &amp; Darlington Foundation Trust</b></p> <p><b>University Hospital of North Durham</b></p> <p><b>0191 333 2908</b> <b>0191 333 2142</b> <b>0191 333 2910</b></p> <p><b>Darlington Memorial Hospital</b></p>	<p>One accompanying adult may attend all scans.</p> <p>Lateral flow device (LFD) testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for</p>	<p>One accompanying adult may attend all antenatal appointments as with scans</p> <p>Lateral flow device testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and</p>	<p>One birth partner may be present when a woman is admitted to the antenatal ward for Induction of labour as per the scheduled visiting times provided.</p> <p>When Induction of labour is</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman when she is admitted to labour ward in established labour.</p> <p>A PCR test will be performed on women and birth partners on admission</p>		<p>One birth partner may stay for up to six hours after the birth on delivery suite.</p> <p><b>Transfer to postnatal ward:</b></p> <p>One partner may visit on the postnatal ward for 1 hour</p>	<p>Both parents can visit together at UHND and DMH</p> <p>UHND- due to number of cots and space in the unit, scheduled visiting will be provided.</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
<p>01325 743449 01325 743025 01325 743494</p>	<p>all antenatal women and their support person.</p> <p>There will be an expectation that you will comply with social distancing guidance and use appropriate personal protective equipment when attending for appointments.</p>	<p>admissions for all antenatal women and their support person.</p>	<p>commenced on the labour ward, one birth partner may accompany a woman.</p> <p>LFD testing is encouraged prior to attendance at any appointments.</p> <p>A PCR test will be performed on the woman and her birth partner 24-48 hrs prior to the procedure at trust testing sites.</p>	<p>to the labour ward.</p>		<p>per day. (A visiting time will be provided)</p>	<p>Lateral flow device testing is encouraged prior to all visits.</p> <p>There will be an expectation that you will comply with social distancing guidance and use appropriate personal protective equipment.</p>

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing is part of the government response to the pandemic and its commitment to controlling infection and this has now been introduced for women and partners/support person within maternity at CDDFT. Women and their identified support person will be offered twice weekly Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing from booking. The results must be recorded onto the Health Call app. If women/support person do not have a recent result, on presentation at the unit, a PCR test will be taken to confirm COVID Status to plan safe care accordingly. PCR testing is performed for all elective cases prior to admission. PCR testing is performed on admission to the delivery suite. There are communications, a Standard Operating Procedure and patient information all to support this introduction for testing. This will be discussed with you by your community midwife.



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
<p><b>Northumbria Healthcare</b></p> <p><u>Contacts</u></p> <p>Birthing unit, Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital <b>0191 607 2318</b></p> <p>Hillcrest midwife-led unit <b>01665 626 732</b></p> <p>Berwick midwife-led unit <b>01289 356 622</b></p> <p>Hexham midwife-led unit <b>01434 655 352</b></p> <p>COVID helpline <b>07823907484</b> Mon-Fri 9-4.</p>	<p>Partner/support person can attend all scans.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions.</p>	<p>Partner/support person can attend all appointments.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions.</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman throughout her Induction of Labour (IOL)</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions.</p>	<p>Two birth partners may accompany a woman throughout her labour and birth and remain with her until she is transferred to the Postnatal Ward.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions</p>	<p>Normal service at all three Midwifery Led Units in Hexham, Alnwick and Berwick.</p> <p>Normal service in co-located midwifery led service at NSECH.</p> <p>Waterbirths provided on each site.</p> <p>Negative COVID swab required prior to immersion in water.</p>	<p>One birth partner can remain with the woman on the ward in her own room, throughout a woman's stay.</p> <p>In addition, each family has two x 1 hour visiting appointments. Up to 2 adults can attend each appointment. Siblings are welcome in addition. Appointments must be booked in advance.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments</p>	<p>Both parents may visit together.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to all scans, appointments and admissions for all postnatal care and visits to SCBU for all women and their support person.</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
						and admissions.	
<p><b>South Tyneside and Sunderland</b></p> <p>Urgent queries – Immediate advice/answer</p> <p>Antenatal Day Unit SRH (7 days a week 8am – 8pm) <b>0191 5699181</b></p> <p>Delivery Suite SRH (out of hours) <b>0191 5699777</b></p> <p>Midwifery Led Unit Birthing Centre South Tyneside <b>0191 4041033</b></p>	<p>Partner/support person now allowed to wait with women in the waiting area of ANC when attending for scan/cons appointment.</p>	<p>One partner/support person may attend all hospital antenatal appointments.</p> <p>Community antenatal appointments – dependant on location of antenatal care visit</p>	<p>Two birth partners may now join a woman when admitted for induction of labour.</p>	<p>Two birth partners may now accompany a woman throughout her assessment, labour and birth and remain with her until she is transferred to the Postnatal Ward.</p>	<p>Intrapartum services currently suspended at South Tyneside Midwifery Led Birthing Centre. It is anticipated that this service will be suspended until further notice. Full provision of water birth service remains available at Sunderland site.</p>	<p>We continue to support mums and mums-to-be to have one partner or support person with them for the duration of their stay on the ward. In addition, you can have two other visitors (this can include a sibling) for an hour each day on our antenatal/postnatal ward. This should be arranged with the team in advance.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance</p>	<p>Both parents have 24 hour access to babies in the neonatal unit. Staff can also facilitate video calls for parents to see and check on their baby when they are not in the unit themselves.</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
						according to NHS guidance	
<p><b>North Tees &amp; Hartlepool</b></p> <p>Maternity Assessment Unit</p> <p>Stockton <b>01642 624239</b></p> <p>Hartlepool <b>01429 522879</b></p>	<p>We are happy to support one accompanying adult at all scans. This means that appointments may be undertaken at a site which is not within your locality.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance</p>	<p>We are happy to support one accompanying adult at all routine antenatal appointments.</p> <p>Partner/support person will be asked to wait outside the department until the time of the appointment and will receive a phone call from the woman to attend the unit and accompany the woman in advance of the ANC or ANDU appointment</p>	<p>One adult nominated birth partner may accompany a woman on admission for induction of labour and remain with their partner between the hours of 10am to 8pm.</p> <p>Antenatal visiting hours are 10am to 8pm for one birth partner only.</p> <p>Two nominated birth partners can join a woman when she is transferred to the delivery suite for IOL or</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman at any stage of an admission to delivery suite, and until the woman and baby move to the postnatal ward.</p> <p>Two identified birth partners can attend during labour and birth.</p> <p>The birth partners are asked to remain on the unit for the duration of labour to reduce footfall within the Trust.</p>		<p>One birth partner may visit between 10am and 8pm but may not leave and re-enter. Partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; fluid refreshments will be provided.</p> <p>Individual cases assessed if risks identified to facilitate partner staying.</p> <p>The birth partner is asked to remain on the unit for the duration of labour to</p>	<p>Both parents allowed 24hr access but may not leave and return to the unit in the same day. No extended family admitted.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance</p>





Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
		Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance	labour at any stage.  The birth partner is asked to remain on the unit for the duration of labour to reduce footfall within the Trust.  Birth partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; fluid refreshments will be provided.  Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance.	One partner is welcome to attend for elective caesarean section.  Birth partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; fluid refreshments will be provided.  Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance.		reduce footfall within the Trust.  Birth partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; fluid refreshments will be provided.  Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance.	
<b>Gateshead Health</b>	One accompanying	Currently we are able to	One birth partner may	One birth partner may	One birth partner may	One birth partner may	Both parents allowed 24hr



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
<p><b>Queen Elizabeth Hospital</b></p> <p>Maternity Assessment Unit <b>(0191) 445 2764</b></p>	<p>adult from the woman's household/support bubble may attend all antenatal scans.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance.</p>	<p>accommodate one support person attending with the woman for routine antenatal appointments.</p> <p>To wait outside until called in for review.</p> <p>Lateral flow testing is encouraged prior to attendance according to NHS guidance.</p>	<p>accompany a woman throughout her induction of labour (IOL).</p> <p>If second birth partner requested negative lateral flow test is requested prior to agreement.</p>	<p>accompany a woman throughout her labour and birth and remain with her until she is transferred to the Postnatal Ward.</p> <p>If second birth partner requested negative lateral flow test is requested prior to agreement.</p>	<p>accompany a woman throughout her labour and birth and remain with her until she goes home or to the Postnatal Ward.</p>	<p>visit between 1pm and 7pm but may not leave and re-enter. Partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; refreshments will be provided.</p> <p>Individual cases assessed if risks identified to facilitate partner staying.</p>	<p>access, one at a time only.</p> <p>Both parents together by appointment only in the evening and may not leave and return to the unit in the same day. No extended family admitted.</p>
<p><b>Gateshead maternity department encourage lateral flow testing for all women and partners prior to attending the units for appointments, scans, antenatal and postnatal attendance.</b></p>							
<p><b>South Tees &amp; The Friarage</b></p> <p>24h Maternity Advice Line <b>01609 763093</b></p>	<p>All scans opened to women and partners from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April.</p>	<p>All appointments opened to women and partners from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April.</p>	<p>One birth partner may join a woman at the beginning of the induction process and stay until the end of visiting at 8pm.</p>	<p>Two birth partners may accompany a woman at any stage of an admission to delivery suite, and until the woman and baby move to</p>	<p>Full provision of waterbirth and midwife-led care.</p>	<p>One birth partner may visit between 10am and 8pm but may not leave and re-enter. Partners are advised to come prepared with snacks;</p>	<p>Both parents allowed 24hr access, one at a time only.</p> <p>Both parents together by appointment only in the evening may</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
			<p>Individual cases assessed to facilitate partners staying out of visiting hours. This is to enable safe social distancing as women may be cared for in a small 6 bedded area until they transfer to a delivery room.</p> <p>PCR testing offered on admission.</p>	<p>the postnatal ward.</p> <p>The partners are asked to remain on the unit for the duration of labour to reduce footfall within the Trust. One partner is welcome to attend for elective caesarean section.</p> <p>Partners are advised to come prepared with snacks; refreshments will be provided.</p>		<p>refreshments will be provided.</p> <p>Individual cases assessed if risks identified to facilitate partner staying.</p> <p>Family hour for siblings of baby on postnatal/antenatal ward 4-5pm.</p> <p>Visiting on postnatal and antenatal ward for second visitor 7-8pm.</p>	<p>not leave and return to the unit in the same day. No extended family admitted.</p>
<p><b>West, North &amp; East Cumbria</b></p> <p>Cumberland Infirmary <b>01228 814269</b></p>	<p>All scans are open to all women attending with one partner. All women and</p>	<p>All antenatal appointments are open to all women attending with one partner. All</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman throughout her induction of</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman throughout her labour and</p>	<p>One birth partner may accompany a woman throughout her labour and</p>	<p>One birth partner and another visitor with allocated time slots may visit twice daily</p>	<p>Both parents may visit at any time. PCR and lateral flow testing applies.</p>



Trust	Scanning Appointment	Antenatal appointment	Induction of labour	Labour	Waterbirth and MLU provision	Postnatal Inpatient	Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU)
West Cumberland <b>01946 523242</b>  Penrith Birthing Centre <b>01768 245558</b>	partners are encouraged to provide a result of a recent lateral flow test (National Guidance April 2021)	women and partners are encouraged to provide a result of a recent lateral flow test (National Guidance April 2021)	labour (IOL) if accommodated in a single room (not always possible). PCR and lateral flow testing applies.	birth and remain with her until she goes home or to the Postnatal Ward. All women PCR tested on admission and at intervals if in for a lengthened stay. Partners encouraged to provide lateral flow testing results.	birth and remain with her until she goes home or to the Postnatal Ward. All women PCR tested on admission and at intervals if in for a lengthened stay. Partners encouraged to provide lateral flow testing results.	by appointment on the postnatal ward at both sites. Lateral flow test results requested.	



North East and North Cumbria  
Local Maternity System

A photograph of a smiling Black woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a yellow top and a green shawl. She is standing in a hospital hallway. The NHS logo is in the top right corner of the image. The text 'Pregnant and worried? Contact your midwife or maternity team.' is overlaid on the left. Below it is a smaller text block and a 'HELP US HELP YOU AND YOUR BABY' badge. At the bottom right is a URL.

**NHS**

**Pregnant  
and worried?  
Contact your  
midwife or  
maternity team.**

If you are worried about your health or the health of your unborn baby, please contact your midwife or maternity team.

**HELP US  
HELP YOU**  
AND YOUR BABY

Help us help you and your baby.

[nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus)