



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre

Information leaflet



Information on
having your baby in
our birthing centre

Gender inclusive language in OUH Maternity and Perinatal Services:

- This leaflet uses the terms woman or birthing person, women and birthing people and mother throughout. These terms should be taken to include people who do not identify as women and birthing people but who are pregnant. Similarly, where the term parent(s) is used, this should be taken to include anyone who has main responsibility for caring for a baby.
- The term partner refers to the woman or birthing person's chosen supporter. This could be the baby's father, the woman or birthing person's partner, a family member or friend, or anyone who the woman or birthing person feels supported by and wishes to involve in their care.

Choosing to give birth at the Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre

If you are healthy with an uncomplicated pregnancy, planning a birth at a birth centre like Wallingford MLU means you are less likely to experience medical interventions such as an unplanned caesarean birth or an assisted birth (forceps or ventouse cup), than if you plan birth in a hospital setting.

An MLU such as Wallingford Maternity and Birth centre is a safe birth setting for you if:

- Your pregnancy is uncomplicated, and you are anticipating an unassisted vaginal birth.
- Any previous babies have been born vaginally.
- You are having your first to fourth baby (inclusive).
- You are over 16 years and less than 40 years old at booking (or up to 45 years old at booking if you have had a baby before).
- You are between 37 and 42 weeks pregnant when labour starts.
- You are having a single baby.
- You have a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal to or above 18 and less than 35 and are having your first baby.
- You have a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal to or above 18 and less than 40 and you are having your second or subsequent baby and your previous births have been vaginal.
- If your haemoglobin (iron level) is equal to or above 100g/l at the start of your labour.

If you are unsure or would like to discuss any of the above further, please speak to your community midwife or obstetrician (hospital doctor).

“The unit has been awarded the Global UNICEF Baby Friendly Award for the care and support the unit provides to new mothers with breastfeeding.”

What is the Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre?

The Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre is a midwifery-led unit (MLU) with a homely and calm atmosphere. An MLU is a maternity unit that is run by experienced midwives and maternity support workers. They are supported by colleagues from the community midwifery teams, which means you are more likely to be looked after a midwife you have met during your pregnancy.

All care during labour, birth and immediately following birth is led by midwives. There are no obstetricians (maternity hospital doctors), anaesthetists (anaesthetic doctors) or paediatricians (baby doctors) on site at the centre.

We cannot offer induction of labour or care for women and birthing people with medical complications.

“You are more likely to be looked after by a midwife you have got to know during your pregnancy.”



Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre as an option for birth

The decision about where to have your baby can be made at any stage of your pregnancy, even during labour. You will be able to discuss this at length with your midwife who will outline your options and help you to decide the safest place for birth.

“Research shows that women and birthing people who have one-to-one support from midwives during birth and who are in a more homely atmosphere labour better, request less pain relief and are more satisfied with their births.”

Care at the wallingford maternity and birthing centre

The Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre has three birthing rooms – two of the rooms have birthing pools with en-suite shower rooms. The rooms are designed to help you relax and promote the release of your natural pain-relieving hormones. They are equipped with bean bags, birthing balls and other equipment to help you find comfortable positions that aid vaginal birth. There is a lounge which may also be available to you and your birth partner(s) to use during your labour.

You can also listen to your choice of music via the Bluetooth sound system and there is also relaxing mood-lighting available in the pool rooms. We are not able to provide epidurals however gas and air (Entonox), the birthing pool, TENS, massage and aromatherapy are all available.

During your labour we monitor your baby’s heart rate using a handheld device at regular intervals.

The postnatal room has two beds, a shared bathroom and dining area.

Transfer to the John Radcliffe Hospital

If complications develop or if continuous monitoring of your baby's heart rate is recommended or if you request an epidural, you will be transferred to the John Radcliffe Delivery Suite by ambulance.

Transfers from an MLU are more common for women and birthing people having their first baby. Approximately 45 in every 100 women and birthing people having their first baby in an MLU will need to be transferred into a hospital Obstetric Unit (OU) for medical help during childbirth.

10 in every 100 women and birthing people having their second or subsequent baby in an MLU will need to be transferred to a hospital OU for medical help during childbirth.

The average response time from when an ambulance is called is 16 minutes and the average transfer time from the Wallingford Birth Centre to the John Radcliffe Hospital is approximately 33 minutes.

Frequently asked questions

It's my first baby – can I give birth at the Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre?

Yes – you are very welcome as a first-time mother. The home-like atmosphere and one-to-one support from experienced midwives can be very reassuring to women and birthing people in labour for the first time.

I don't live in Wallingford – can I still come to the unit?

Yes – many of our women and birthing people come from around the county and further afield. Please discuss before 16 weeks of pregnancy with your local community midwife if you are from outside our catchment area.

Can I have a look around?

Yes – we strongly recommend you come and look around the unit. The visiting times are on Sunday afternoons at 4.00pm.

Please phone the unit on 01491 826 037 or use the email below to book a place on a tour:

Email: wallingfordcommunitymidwives@ouh.nhs.uk

Because we value women and birthing people's privacy during birth, we may have to change tour times or dates if someone is in labour.

I'm already booked somewhere else – can this be changed?

Yes, please give us a call to discuss. Bookings from outside our catchment area need to be done by 16 weeks of pregnancy.

Further information

The Birthplace cohort study:

Key findings | NPEU > Birthplace ([ox.ac.uk](https://www.ox.ac.uk))

Wallingford Maternity and Birthing Centre

Wormald Road

Wallingford

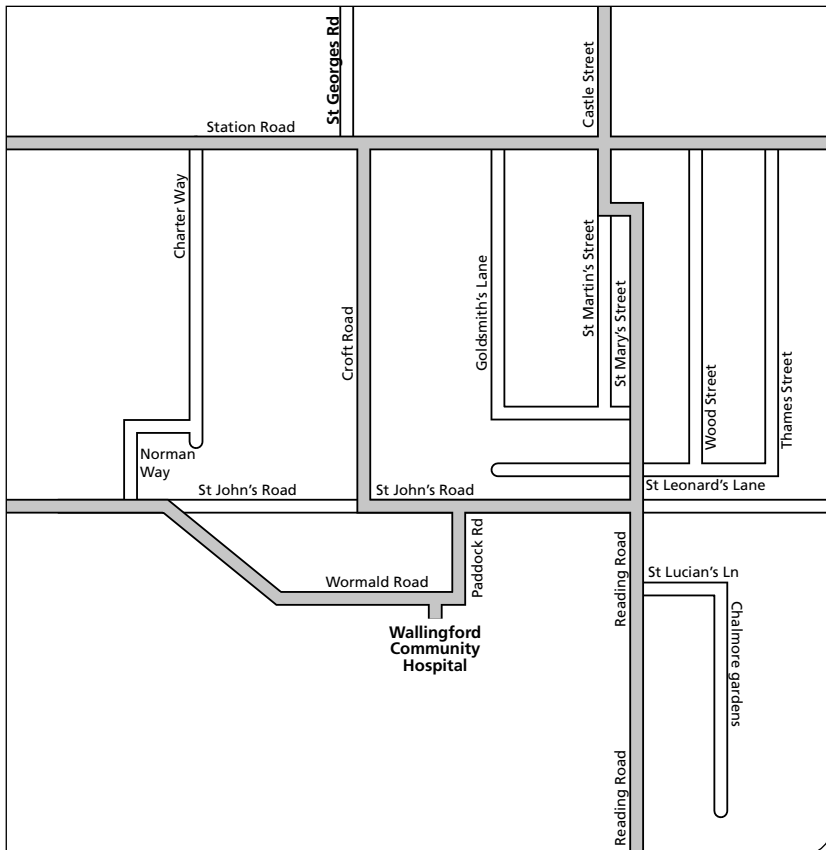
Oxfordshire

OX10 9BD

Telephone: **01491 826 037**

Email: wallingfordcommunitymidwives@ouh.nhs.uk

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/wmu



We would like to thank the Oxfordshire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership for their contribution in the development of this leaflet

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



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