

Maternity Services

Different types of services for the birth of a baby

There are a number of different types of service for women to think about when they are making decisions about where to give birth.

Freestanding midwifery unit (FMU)

These are where the care is led by midwives, like the Helme Chase Maternity Unit at Westmorland General Hospital, Kendal, or on a smaller scale, like the birthing centre at Penrith Community Hospital. These units usually have a more relaxed and home from home atmosphere, with an emphasis on a natural birth. They can be on a community or general hospital site where there is no consultant unit, or sometimes in a purpose-built facility in the community.



Alongside midwifery unit (AMU)

These are where the care is led by midwives and are next to or on the same hospital site as a consultant unit. These units usually have a more relaxed and home from home atmosphere, with an emphasis on a natural birth.



Neither West Cumberland Hospital nor Cumberland Infirmary currently have AMUs but the preferred option of the independent review team includes the development of AMUs next to the consultant units at both hospitals.