

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.

Midwifery unit or birth centre

These are units where birth is viewed as a natural event. These are either 'alongside' a labour ward or delivery suite in a consultant unit, or 'freestanding' in a community setting, usually some distance from an obstetric unit. Both types of midwifery units are run by experienced midwives, who try to make the birthing environment homely and tranquil.



Women who are healthy and not expecting any complications to arise during the birth may choose to have their baby in a midwifery unit or birth centre.

Such units do not offer epidurals but they offer other types of pain relief such as Entonox. The type of pain relief available will vary depending on the unit.



If you are having your baby in a midwifery unit or birth centre and the labour doesn't progress as it should or if you or your baby need extra support, you would be transferred to the consultant unit. This would mean that a doctor and medical equipment would be on hand if needed.