

Dear Parents,

As you take your baby(ies) home from hospital, this letter is to explain what to expect in the next few weeks. We fully appreciate that for new parents and especially first time parents, the pandemic has caused a huge amount of worry and anxiety and has left some people feeling lost, lonely and unsure what to do. Bringing new life into the world during a global pandemic and trying to keep everyone safe from COVID-19 has been a difficult and challenging time for everyone involved and we are all in this together. We are sorry that you may not have had the full 'normal' experience that you would have enjoyed before this pandemic. We realise that it is not ideal and thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.

Hopefully the information provided below will help you to understand how our service is operating during the pandemic and how you can access further support and information when you need it.

### Going home with baby – what to expect

- **Day 1 or 2** The Community Midwife will contact you on the day after you are discharged from hospital to see how you are and to assess whether you need a home visit or can attend the post-natal clinic.
- **Day 3** If you are breastfeeding we will offer to do a breastfeeding assessment
- **Day 5** We will offer to weigh your baby and ask for your consent to perform the Newborn Bloodspot Test. This is a screening test and you can find out more information about the test and the conditions screened for on our website [www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/maternity-services](http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/maternity-services)
- Additional Midwife appointments may be arranged depending on your personal circumstances.
- **Day 10-14** Your Health Visitor should get in touch and arrange a birth visit around this time.
- **Day 14** If mother and baby are well you will be discharged to the care of your Health Visitor and GP.

**Post-natal appointments:** Many mothers prefer to attend a post-natal clinic with a set appointment time. Home visits can also be arranged according to need, for example after a C section, however appointment times may be given as a 2 hour 'window'. We try to stick to appointment times however the nature of maternity care is somewhat unpredictable and therefore sometimes your visit or appointment may take place later than planned.

**Have we missed you?** If you are expecting a call or a visit and you are worried the Community Midwives have missed you, please contact either the ward you were discharged from or the Maternity Advice Line: MAL Calderdale: 01422 261364 Huddersfield: 01484 355743 Mon - Fri 8.30-12.30 & 1.00–4.00.

**Service updates and Information:** Visit our website (link above) or the Better Births at Calderdale and Huddersfield Facebook page for the latest updates to our services and for links to useful contact numbers, support services and helpful information.

**Support with breastfeeding:** Your Community Midwife, Maternity Support Worker or Health Visitor can offer support in your home or post-natal clinic. They may also refer you to the Infant Feeding Advisers.

You may also contact our Infant Feeding Advisers directly on 01484 344345: Please be ready to leave a message clearly stating your name, contact number and a very brief description of your problem. The line operates Mon to Fri 9-5 and calls are returned as soon as possible.

Chair: Philip Lewer

Chief Executive: Dr Owen Williams OBE

**Your Health Visitor:** We will inform them of the birth of your baby and they will get in touch in a few days' time to arrange a visit. Health visitors are there to support new parents with feeding and monitoring the health of your new baby. They will also offer support with your own wellbeing and transition to parenthood. If you wish to contact your Health Visiting service:

- For Calderdale single point of contact: 0300 3045076
- For Kirklees single point of contact: 0300 304 5555

**Mental Health:** It's normal to feel emotional a few days after the birth of a baby. Some new mothers may develop post-natal depression and very rarely some develop post-natal psychosis. We will ask you about your emotional wellbeing, but if you find yourself struggling, or if your partner is concerned, please speak to your midwife or contact your local services directly.

If you are registered with a GP in Calderdale, Kirklees or Wakefield, you can access a free 24 hour helpline for advice or immediate support: 0800 183 0558. If you live in Bradford and need urgent help call the 24 hour First Response helpline: 01274 221181.

**Coping With Crying:** With sleep deprivation, a global pandemic and a new baby, it's not unusual for new parents to feel stressed when their baby cries. We want to reassure you that it is okay to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is upsetting you too much. After a few minutes when you are feeling calm, go back and check on the baby. Speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor if you are struggling. Call the ward you were discharged from if you are really struggling during the night.

- **I** – Infant crying is normal
- **C** – Comforting methods can help
- **O** – It's OK to walk away
- **N** – Never, ever shake a baby

**COVID-19 and your baby:** We follow the advice from Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists (RCOG) who also publish advice and guidance for new parents, some of which is in video form and can be found on their website [www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)

**Staying Safe:** It is important that you attend your post-natal appointments to monitor you and your baby's wellbeing. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or are self-isolating, please phone for advice before the appointment. If at any time you are worried about yourself or your baby, please get in touch promptly. Remember we are here to support you. Out of hours you can phone NHS 111. Remember to follow national, local and hospital guidance to keep yourself and your baby safe from COVID-19 including:

- Good and frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand gel after touching anything outside your home
- Use tissues to catch coughs & sneezes (Catch it, bin it, kill it)
- Distance yourself 2metres away from others
- Wear a clean face mask each time

**Staying Healthy:** to help your natural immune system aim to eat a healthy well balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables. If you are breastfeeding you should continue to take Vitamin D 10mcg and make sure you are drinking enough fluids.

Best wishes,

*Karen Spencer*