

Dear Parents,

### **Congratulations on the birth of your new baby/babies!**

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.

As a maternity service it has been against our natural instincts to restrict partners from the birthing journey and we understand how this will have affected your transition to parenthood. However we are still in the midst of the pandemic and whilst we are working towards having birth partners with our new mothers more of the time, this is not something which is easy to implement. Whatever the current arrangements, we realise they are not ideal and we 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.

### **During your in-patient stay**

**Here to help!** - Our Midwives and support workers are here to support and your baby. Please do not hesitate to press your buzzer if you need help or are worried about something.

We may be busy but please don't let this stop you from asking for help. You and your baby are the reason we are all here and there is always someone who can help.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your care at any time, please ask to speak to the Ward Manager as soon as possible, as we would prefer to address your concerns immediately. You can also ask to speak to the Ward Manager if you would like to pass on any positive comments about your care or make suggestions.

**Your bed space & bathroom** - To reduce footfall around the ward we ask you to remain in your own space and maintain 2m distance from other patients and staff as much as possible. Please keep your belongings tidy and inside your locker where possible to assist with cleaning. If and when you are walking around the ward for any reason you must wear a blue surgical face mask.

Whilst you are on the ward it is ok to leave your baby for a short time to go to the toilet or take a bath or shower. If you need assistance with bathing, please ask a member of staff.

If you are in a 4 bed bay, please use the shared bathrooms at either side of the Midwives station. Please let us know when you have finished so that the bathroom can be cleaned for the next patient. If you are in a single room, you will have your own en-suite bathroom.

**Your Midwife** - You will be allocated a named midwife at the beginning of each shift who will introduce herself to you. Your midwife will be responsible for most of your care however you can ask any of the Midwives or support workers if you need help with something.

Chair: Philip Lewer

Chief Executive: Dr Owen Williams OBE

**Meal times** - To reduce footfall around the ward, meals will be served to you at your bedside, Your menu and dietary choices will be explained by staff at each meal time.

Breakfast time: 8-8.30am      Lunch time: 12–12.30pm      Tea time 5–5.30pm

**Pain medication** - It is normal to experience some discomfort which will vary depending on the type of birth you have had. Our aim is to keep you feeling comfortable so please ask if you require pain relief, or if the medication you have had is not helping. Any medicines you bring into hospital with you must be kept locked away.

**Birth Debrief** - If you experienced unexpected events during your birth, it is helpful for your recovery for you to understand what happened. Please ask if you would like to speak to someone about your birth experience whilst you are an in-patient. For women affected by birth trauma it may help you to ask for follow up counselling through community services.

**Visiting** - During the pandemic we have encouraged virtual visiting which has worked well for many new mothers as they have felt able to control their visitors around feeding their baby and sleeping. You can check the latest visiting information on our website (link below) or ask the ward staff. Any current restrictions are in place for the safety of you and your baby.

When we are allowed visitors this must be pre-arranged through the ward staff to ensure we keep within the maximum numbers for people on the ward at any one time. If you or your partner are required to self-isolate, have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, visiting will not be allowed. We kindly thank any visitors for remaining by the mothers' bedside and wearing a face mask at all times. Visitors must not use the toilet facilities on the ward, and if they leave the ward for any reason they cannot be allowed back in.

**Feeding your baby** - Please ask for support with feeding your baby as you need it. As a Unicef Baby Friendly hospital, all our staff are trained and happy to support you with breastfeeding, but if you are having specific difficulties you can ask for support from one of our Infant Feeding Advisers who will be happy to help.

**Bounty Packs** - To try and keep as few people on the wards as possible we do not currently have a Bounty service. We are however working very closely with Bounty and still receive all the packs and forms you need which will be given to you by a staff member if you would like one.

**Your discharge home** - We don't want to keep you in hospital any longer than you need to be here, however there will be a number of health checks to complete which are personalised to you and your baby. On the day of discharge please liaise with your midwife around the discharge process.

We will discharge you to the care of your Community Midwife and GP. You are welcome to phone the ward at any time after discharge if you have any problems outside of community midwifery hours.

**Where to find out more information** – Please see our website for more information and links to community support services.

[www.Cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/maternity-services](http://www.Cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/maternity-services)