

Frequently asked questions (updated 31st March 2020)

- Q. What happens if I book care but then I have a miscarriage?
A. *We are mindful that this is a sad time for you and we will do all we can to communicate with you in a sensitive way. We will refund your money for any care that you have not received.*
- Q. Can I change my package?
A. *Yes, you can normally change your package at any time by calling Head Office.*
- Q. Are your midwives regulated, insured and properly trained?
A. *All of our midwives are very experienced. They are all trained to a high standard and regulated by the appropriate professional body. This is the NMC in the UK, and the NMBI in The Republic of Ireland. UK Birth Centres is regulated by the Care Quality Commission. We have full appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance.*
- Q. Where will my antenatal care be provided?
A. *Normally, antenatal visits are in your own home. However during the current coronavirus pandemic, some of your care may be via skype or telephone. Typically, our packages of care have twice as many face to face appointments than the number nationally recommended. This is so we can get to know you. However, with current advice to minimise non-essential face to face contact, these additional visits may take place remotely. All of your essential clinical face to face appointments will still take place.*
- Q. Can I have visits in the evenings and at weekends?
A. *Yes, visits are arranged at a time to suit you. Evening and weekend visits often mean that your partner can be more involved and we welcome this.*
- Q. What happens if I go into labour early?
A. *Your midwife is on call from 37 weeks of pregnancy. If labour starts before this she may still be able to accompany to hospital but this cannot be guaranteed. If your own midwife is not available, we will try to identify another. If we cannot accompany you, we will refund this element of your care package.*
- Q. What happens if my pregnancy is prolonged?
A. *Technically, you are not "over-due" until after 42 weeks of pregnancy. At about 41 weeks your midwife will talk to you about options and choices. We will give you information to make your own choices. We will not pressurise you to do anything you are uncomfortable with. We will still continue your antenatal care until your baby arrives, there is no additional charge.*
- Q. What if I have booked a homebirth but need to be induced?
A. *If you have booked a homebirth and need to be induced before 36 weeks of pregnancy for a medical reason, your midwife may be able to accompany you and support you in hospital. Or, if you prefer, we will refund the birth element of your package. From 37 weeks onwards, your midwife is on call and her time is reserved for you. Your midwife will still be available to support you in hospital if you wish, but no refund is available.*
- Q. I have a medical condition, can I still have a homebirth?
A. *Please talk to us about your specific circumstances. We would be pleased to share our clinical guidelines with you. We will aim to support all your birth choices if we can.*

- Q. I have had a previous Caesarean, can I have a homebirth this time?
A. *Normally, yes. We ask that your notes are reviewed and explained to you so that you have all of the available information to make an informed choice. In some cases, you can send your previous notes to us and our Obstetrician can review them for you and give you explanations and advice based on what happened last time.*
- Q. What happens if my midwife is sick or on holiday?
A. *Wherever possible, we will allocate a midwife to you who can guarantee being available with you throughout. If she is unavailable, another midwife will attend you. During the current coronavirus pandemic, all of our midwives are monitoring their temperature daily to detect very early signs of illness. We ask you to check your temperature before any visits too.*
- Q. I am struggling to make my payments, what should I do?
A. *Please contact us straight away to talk about this. We have a number of payment options for you and we will work with you to find a solution you are happy with.*
- Q. Can I spread the cost of my care over a longer time?
A. *Yes. We offer three payment plans:*
 - 1. Pay in full.*
 - 2. Spread the cost up to 12 months. This is interest free.**The terms we offer will depend on the package you choose and typically you need to pay within 3 months of birth. So, if you book very early in pregnancy you can pay over 12 months. If you book very late in pregnancy it may be just 2-3 months.*
- Q. How do I make payments?
A. *You can pay by bank transfer; the details are in your booking contract. Please set up a standing order to pay us. If you are paying monthly, this should be on the same day each month. If this is not convenient for you, you can pay on your credit card.*
- Q. What if I plan a homebirth but there is a problem and I need to go to hospital, can I have a refund?
A. *If your plans change before 37 weeks of pregnancy, and you do not want your midwife with you during birth, we can refund the birth part of your package. After 37 weeks your midwife has commenced on call for you. She will be available to support you during labour and birth and so no refund is due.*
- Q. When will my birth pool and gas arrive?
A. *If you are planning a homebirth and have requested a birthing pool and gas, we will call you when you are about 34 weeks pregnant to arrange for these to be delivered to your home. A new pool is delivered to you and you keep it afterwards. We advise that you have a "trial run" and inflate the pool and fill it with water so that you are aware of how long this takes and the best position for the pool. Please keep the pool liner for when labour starts.*
- Q. I do not want the midwife in the room with me when I am in labour at home, I would like her to be outside away from me and only attend me if I call. Is this acceptable?
A. *If you are booking midwifery care with us, we are responsible for providing you with care. Wherever possible, we will accommodate your needs and wishes. Our midwives are skilled in facilitating a positive birth environment and not interrupting you. We keep interventions to a minimum and the midwife can sit quietly in the room and not disturb you, other than to undertake some observations of you and your baby. The midwife being outside the room and only entering if called is not something we can support. If this is your choice, we would advise a Doula may be more appropriate for you.*
- Q. What if I don't like my midwife?
A. *The relationship with your midwife is personal, intimate and unique. It is vital that you feel comfortable and confident. If for any reason you wish to change your midwife, please contact Head Office and we will help you.*
- Q. What happens if I develop a complication and my baby needs to be born prematurely?
A. *We will do all we can to support you during this time. It may be that you want to change your package of care. Please contact us and we can arrange this for you. You will only be charged for the care you have had and any surplus will be refunded to you.*

- Q. I have booked a hospital birth but may decide to stay at home. Is that acceptable?
A. *Yes of course. Please tell us as soon as you can if you think this is an option, so we can ensure your midwife has the necessary equipment with her for a home birth.*
- Q. If I have booked a hospital birth but the hospital won't let my midwife be with me, do I get a refund?
A. *Your midwife is available for you 24/7 from 37 weeks of pregnancy. During the current coronavirus pandemic we are mindful that hospitals change their restrictions on a day by day basis depending on the clinical challenges they are facing. If your midwife cannot accompany you due to hospital restrictions, you will only have to pay for the on-call element of your birth care. However, if your midwife is with you at home to support you in early labour before you go to hospital some time later, the full amount needs to be paid.*
- Q. I would like to have private blood tests and scans, can you arrange this?
A. *Yes we can. Please contact Head Office and we can advise you.*
- Q. I have private health insurance. Can you claim directly from them?
A. *Normally, we ask that you pay us and claim back the money yourself. We will help you with receipts for your claim. In unusual circumstances, we may be able to claim direct from your insurer. This would require a pre-authorisation code and additional admin fees may apply.*
- Q. I am an international client and do not have insurance. What is the best option for me?
A. *We strongly advise you to have one of our all-inclusive home birth packages, or our all-inclusive hospital packages. Many NHS hospitals will not accept you for care, particularly in London and Birmingham. Most of our clients in your position travel to one of our partner hospitals in the North West. Please contact us to discuss your individual circumstances.*
- Q. If labour starts at 37 weeks, can I have a refund on the antenatal care I have not had?
A. *Your midwife is available for you from 37 weeks until the baby is born. This may not be until 44 weeks. The same price applies. We do not charge extra for prolonged pregnancy. We do not refund if the baby arrives at 37 weeks. However, we may be able to offer you an additional postnatal visit free of charge. Please contact us.*
- Q. Is parent education included in my antenatal care?
A. *Yes. Your midwife will talk about labour preparation, options, choices and make a birth plan with you if you wish.*
- Q. What do your home-makers do?
A. *Our home makers service is provided by our Midwifery Support Workers. They will care for baby whilst you have a rest, undertake light household duties, assist with feeding and baby care.*
- Q. I want to breastfeed but found it difficult last time due to lack of support. What is the best postnatal package for me?
A. *We would advise our intensive breast feeding support week, giving one visit for approx.. 2 hours each day for 7 days. During this time the midwife will sit with you and observe a full feed, helping the baby latch and feed well. She will also provide care to mum during these visits. Additional weeks care can be purchased to follow on from this. Our breastfeeding success rate is 98%.*
- Q. Can I have a copy of my notes?
A. *Yes of course. We charge £15 or €15 for copying and postage.*
- Q. What is the difference between a midwife and a doula?
A. *A midwife is a trained health professional who can be involved in providing care to you. They are able to recognise if things are not going well and take appropriate action. Midwifery has a protected function, making it a criminal offence for any person other than a registered midwife, or a registered medical practitioner, to attend on a woman in childbirth (except in emergencies). Doulas offer support to women. They are not trained to provide any clinical care to you. They do not advise, but can support a woman to find balanced information to make informed decisions about her maternity care.*

- Q. I have heard that home birth is not safe at the moment as there are no ambulances, is this correct?
- A. *Homebirth with an experienced midwife is very safe. Our transfer rate is about 12%. There are very few instances when an ambulance is really needed and in most cases transfer can be by car. Your midwife will discuss contingency plans with you.*
- Q. Is the neonatal examination, hearing test and blood test included?
- A. *Your midwife will complete the neonatal blood test. She will ensure arrangements are made for a hearing test. If she (or her colleague) are trained in the NIPE neonatal examination (the paediatric exam) then the midwife will do this for you. However, this is not guaranteed as only a small number of midwives are trained. If we cannot do this your midwife will make alternative arrangements for you. This may be with the NHS.*
- Q. Is it OK to use a hired birthing pool?
- A. *We never recommend this and in the current pandemic this is even more important. We can supply a new pool to you. Please do not share birthing equipment in this way. It puts you and your baby at risk.*
- Q. What should I do if I feel unwell and have a temperature?
- A. *Please inform your midwife at once. She can advise you over the phone. She will not visit you face to face. If you are unwell with coronavirus, the national recommendation is to birth in hospital.*