



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board

## **Frequently Asked Questions July 2024**

### **Q. Why are the maternity and neonatal units at Princess of Wales (POW) Hospital closing and when is it happening?**

A. From Monday 2 September this year, the units are temporarily closing for 12 weeks, to enable us to bring our air handling systems and electrical supply up to required standards. This is a £1m investment in maternity and neonatal services at the site – we are investing to ensure we can continue to deliver safe care for our families.

### **Q. What other maternity and neonatal facilities are available during the temporary closure at POW?**

A. Throughout the period of time that POW is unable to offer admission, the Health Board will continue to offer neonatal services as well as midwife and obstetric led maternity services at Prince Charles Hospital (PCH). This includes antenatal ward, induction of labour, labour ward, obstetric theatres, Tair Afon (Alongside Midwifery Unit), postnatal wards and neonatal services. Tirion Birth Centre, our free-standing midwifery unit at Royal Glamorgan Hospital is also available.

## **Maternity**

### **Q. Will I still be able to have community antenatal care/postnatal care with my community midwife/team?**

A. There will be no change to the current arrangements for antenatal and postnatal care provided by your community midwife/team.

### **Q. Where will I go for my pregnancy related scans?**

A. All routine and scheduled pregnancy related scans will continue as normal via antenatal clinic on the POW site, this includes dating scans, anomaly scan (20 weeks) and growth scans later on in pregnancy.

### **Q. How can I discuss my individual needs/issues related to my birth plan?**

A. All women and pregnant people are offered routine antenatal care and birth planning discussions around 36 weeks with their named community midwife. Your community midwife can offer individual and personalised

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support and information about your individual circumstances. We would encourage you to ask for this birth plan discussion to make sure your midwife can provide advice and explanations to any questions or queries you have, and to alleviate any concerns.

**Q. What if I am advised to give birth within an obstetric led unit, do I have a choice of where to go?**

A. All women and pregnant people will be able to make a choice, which is right for them. In addition to offering Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil, our neighbouring Health Boards (Singleton Hospital at Swansea Bay and University Hospital of Wales (UHW) at Cardiff & Vale) are aware of the change to services at POW during this period of time and have offered support. We will try our utmost to accommodate your choice of birth location subject to capacity.

We encourage you to discuss your options for place of birth and organise a birth plan discussion with your named community midwife. Your community midwife can offer individual and personalised support and information about your individual circumstances, and make arrangements with neighbouring health boards, if this is what you would prefer.

**Q. What happens if my closest obstetric unit is outside of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's geographical area and that is where I'd prefer to go to have my baby?**

A. All women and pregnant people will be able to make a choice which is right for them, and our neighbouring health boards (Swansea Bay and Cardiff & Vale) are aware of the change to services at POW during this period.

If you are receiving care in a neighbouring health board, your community midwife will arrange for your information to be registered at your chosen place of birth by 36 weeks gestation. This is to ensure that the health board where you have chosen to give birth has registered you with your most up to date clinical information and choices. If you are receiving obstetric led antenatal care, this will continue at Princess of Wales Antenatal Clinic. There is no requirement for you to attend an antenatal appointment outside of Cwm Taf Morgannwg (e.g. Swansea or Cardiff) unless clinically indicated.

**Q. Can my birth partner(s) accompany me during the birth?**

A. Yes, your birth partner can accompany you during the birth regardless of place of birth. We will continue to support birth partners and wider family visiting across other Health Board sites in accordance with our current arrangements (this can be found on our website).

**Q. What if my baby comes earlier than 37 weeks, or is unexpectedly poorly?**

A. We will continue to offer neonatal care at Prince Charles Hospital. There are established pathways and guidelines for babies who are born before 32 weeks. For those planning birth at University Hospital of Wales and Singleton Hospital, there are neonatal units available at both hospitals.

**Q. How will I access antenatal courses?**

A. There are a number of antenatal classes and tours available at Tirion Free Standing Midwifery Unit at Royal Glamorgan Hospital and Tair Afon Alongside Midwifery Unit at Prince Charles Hospital, which are available to all women across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

**Q. Where will I have my planned Caesarean birth?**

A. Planned caesarean sections will take place at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil. If you are recommended to have, or are planning a caesarean birth, we will support you with an individual discussion about your plans and facilitate a tour of the unit beforehand. There will be no caesarean births at Princess of Wales Hospital during this time.

**Q. Where will I receive my recommended induction of labour?**

A. If you are recommended to have, or are planning an induction of labour, this will most likely happen at Prince Charles Hospital.

We will be unable to offer induction of labour at Princess of Wales Hospital during the period of time that this work is being undertaken.

**Q. I am planning or considering a homebirth, how might this temporary change affect me?**

A. The homebirth service will remain open and available through this period of time, with community midwife rotas supporting 24/7 cover for women birthing at home. In the event that you require transfer (for additional monitoring, pain relief or review by a doctor), this will be organised to the next nearest obstetric unit (Prince Charles Hospital, Singleton Hospital, University Hospital of Wales) as Princess of Wales Hospital will not be able to accept any admissions during the period of time that the work is being undertaken. Most transfers will be supported by the Welsh Ambulance Service, following our usual pathways and guidelines, unless it is clinically safe to recommend transfer in your own personal transport.

**Q. What do I do if I am in labour and I don't think I can make it to the hospital?**

A. We understand that in a small number of occasions, birth can be unpredictable. Throughout the period that the work is being undertaken, as with any other time, community midwife on call rotas support 24/7 cover for unexpected births within the community.

In the event that you require transfer (for additional monitoring, pain relief or review by a doctor), this will be organised to the next nearest obstetric unit (Prince Charles Hospital, Singleton Hospital, University Hospital of Wales) as Princess of Wales Hospital will not be able to accept any admissions during the period of time that the work is being undertaken. Most transfers will be supported by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust following our usual pathways and guidelines, unless it is clinically safe to recommend transfer in your own personal transport.

**\*\*DURING THIS CLOSURE THERE WILL BE NO MATERNITY OR NEONATAL SPECIALIST TEAMS BASED AT THE PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL SITE.**

**IF YOU SUSPECT YOU ARE IN LABOUR, PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ACCESS OUR ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AS THE SPECIALIST MEDICAL AND MIDWIFERY TEAMS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE.\*\***

**Q. I'm planning to have my baby at Tirion Free Standing Midwifery Unit (FMU) at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital (RGH). Will this be affected?**

A. Services at Tirion freestanding midwife led unit will remain open throughout this time, and women who are experiencing an uncomplicated pregnancy are encouraged to consider this option for their labour and birth. There is more information about Tirion FMU available through your community midwife and on our website. We offer a virtual tour, in person tours of the unit and antenatal classes if you would like to explore this as an option for place of birth.

In the event that you require transfer (for additional monitoring, pain relief or review by a doctor), this will be organised to the obstetric unit at Prince Charles Hospital, as Princess of Wales Hospital will not be able to accept any admissions during the period of time that the work is being undertaken. Most transfers will be supported by the Welsh Ambulance Service, following our usual pathways and guidelines, unless it is clinically safe to recommend transfer in your own personal transport.

**Q. What if home birth or the Tirion Freestanding Midwifery Unit are not recommended for me, but that is where I would like to plan my birth?**

A. Home birth and freestanding midwifery unit (FMU) settings are clinically recommended for women who are experiencing an uncomplicated pregnancy (who are usually receiving midwife led care). We understand that for many different reasons, women who would not ordinarily be recommended to birth at home or in a midwife-led setting may choose to plan birth at home or in a FMU setting. If this is the case, you will be fully supported with information and advice including the care that we are able and unable to provide in a midwife led setting. You will be supported by your community midwife (and sometimes by a consultant midwife/consultant obstetrician) where our aim will be to support you to make an informed decision and put an individualised plan of care in to place to suit your needs and preferences.

**Q. I would like to have a water birth. Where can I access those facilities?**

A. There are water birth facilities available for those planning homebirth, at Tirion FMU, and at both Tair Afon AMU (PCH) and labour ward PCH to facilitate the use of water for labour and birth.

**Q. Where will I be able to have access to an epidural for pain relief during labour?**

A. Epidural pain relief is not available in a midwife led setting as this is administered by a specialist doctor (anaesthetist). There will be access to epidural pain relief within the obstetric unit at Prince Charles Hospital, Singleton Hospital or University Hospital of Wales.

**Q. How will I access an early pregnancy unit for unexpected early pregnancy issues/will there still be an Early Pregnancy Unit at POW?**

A. There will be no change to early pregnancy unit services at Princess of Wales during this temporary closure.

**Q. Will I still be able to attend scheduled antenatal clinic appointments with my obstetrician at POW?**

A. All routine antenatal clinic appointments with an obstetrician will continue to be as normal via antenatal clinic on the POW site. However, you will need an appointment with your chosen health board for giving birth, by 36 weeks so ensure that your records and choices are registered.

**Q. Will I still go to POW for blood tests?**

A. Yes you will still go to POW for all routine blood tests. For example, those taken for antenatal screening, and glucose tolerance tests (if indicated) will continue to be offered as normal via antenatal clinic/pathology on the POW site. Once you're your care has been

transferred to your chosen health board, you may need additional blood tests.

**Q. What if I need an urgent/unplanned review with a doctor or midwife for issues such as high blood pressure, abdominal pain, bleeding or a change in my baby's movements?**

A. If you are over 16 weeks gestation, and have an urgent/unexpected concern or suspected pregnancy complication, we would encourage you to contact your planned place of birth/closest obstetric unit for advice and if necessary, to make arrangements to be assessed by a midwife/obstetrician. Your community midwife will be able to provide you with contact telephone numbers for your planned place of birth.

We would encourage you to discuss your options for place of birth and organise a birth plan discussion with your named community midwife. Your community midwife can offer individualised and personalised support and information about your individual circumstances, and make arrangements with neighbouring Health Boards if this is what you would prefer.

**Q. What if I have issues around access to a car/travel/expenses?**

A. If you are concerned about travel to your intended place of birth please speak to your community midwife.

**Q: Who do I contact if I have urgent concerns about me or my baby?**

All women receiving their antenatal care at Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB who have any urgent pregnancy concerns should contact the Maternity Priority Unit (MPU) at Prince Charles Hospital on 01685 728633.

Our MPU is available 24/7.

You should call this number even if you have chosen to have your baby at another hospital. For instance if you have booked to give birth at the University Hospital Wales, Cardiff or Singleton Hospital, Swansea, you should still contact our MPU on 01685 728633.

**Q. Who will I need to contact if I am/think I am in labour or my waters have broken?**

A. If your waters have broken, or you think you are in labour, as usual, we would encourage you to contact your planned place of birth to make arrangements to be assessed by a midwife.

- If this is Tirion Freestanding Birth Centre : **01443 443524**
- If this is PCH (MPU): **07442 865989** / Labour Ward – **01685 728890**

- If this is Singleton Hospital: **01792 530862**
- If this is University Hospital of Wales: Obstetric Assessment Unit - **02920 744658** / Labour Ward – **02920 748565** / **02920 742679** / **02920 742686**

**Q. Where can I get more information/discuss my individual needs further.**

A. We would encourage you to contact your named community midwife/team in the first instance who will be able to provide information, explanations and signpost you to additional information if you need it. They can also offer individual and personalised support and information tailored to your individual circumstances. Your community midwife will also be supported by the senior team if there are more complicated circumstances that we need to provide additional individualised support.

## **Neonatal care**

**Q. Can I chose the unit to which my baby will be transferred?**

A. We will try our best to consider parent’s personal preferences and circumstances, however where your baby is cared for is determined by the level of care that your baby requires. Some babies may need a higher level of care because they are very unwell and therefore will need to be transferred to a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit whilst other babies may require special care or high dependency care and can be safely cared for on a local neonatal unit. This is also subject to cot availability within Wales.

**Q. Will I still be allowed to stay with my baby while they are on the neonatal unit?**

A. You will still be able to spend as much time as you want to with your baby, in Prince Charles, Singleton and UHW.

**Q. Will my immediate family and friends be able to visit the baby?**

A. Families and siblings are able to visit the neonatal units in all hospitals. At Prince Charles Hospital this is

Open visiting for parents.

11am – 1pm & 3pm – 6.30 pm for families (2 family members per cot)

Cardiff and Vale & Swansea Bay’s Neonatal Visiting Times are available via their website

**Q. Will I be able to stay with my baby overnight?**

A. If your baby stays within Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, we have two parent bedrooms to accommodate two set of parents at any given time. In addition, where these bedrooms are not available we offer

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bedside sleeping and provide fold-down beds or recliner chairs.

**Q. There is a children's ward at POW, why can't my baby go there?**

A. Neonatal units are specially equipped to care for sick term babies and premature babies. Within the neonatal period the neonatal unit is the most appropriate place to offer specialised care to your baby. However, as your baby grows older if he or she meets the criteria for a children's ward this is when the transfer would be considered.

**Q. Will I be provided with a meal whilst my baby is on the unit?**

A. If your baby stays within Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, we provide one meal per day for the parents. Units in other health boards may have different provision.

**Q. Will I still be able to receive breast feeding support?**

A. If your baby stays within Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board we have infant feeding leads who are specially trained to support parents with their choice of feeding. Nursing staff across all health boards are trained to support infant feeding.

**Q. What will happen if my baby is still an inpatient when POW reopens? Will my baby be transferred back to POW?**

A. We will aim to transfer your baby back to your base hospital at the earliest convenience.

**Q. Will my baby be assigned to a new consultant?**

A. Your baby will have follow up by a local consultant in POW and this consultant will be involved in discharge planning if your baby has complex needs on discharge. There would be an opportunity to meet the consultant who will be responsible for your baby's care in a discharge planning meeting before you take your baby home.

**Q. Will my baby get the correct care in the unit he/she is transferred to?**

A. All units in Wales are equipped with skilled medical, nursing and allied health professionals to deliver appropriate levels of care.

**Q. Where will I take my baby for follow-up appointments?**

A. Follow-up appointments will still be accessible via outpatients at POW. All neonatal outreach services will still remain local.

**Q. Where can I get more information if needed?**

A. You can get more information from the nurse caring for your baby. Our senior nursing management team is also available to talk with you. Ask the nurse caring for your baby to arrange for you to talk with a senior manager.