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# Tair Afon Birth Centre Prince Charles Hospital



This booklet is to help you understand your labour at Tair Afon Birth Centre and what you can expect during the process at Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.



# Alongside midwifery-led units or “birth centres”

Tair Afon is a birth centre which is based at Prince Charles Hospital. The centre is situated opposite the labour ward and obstetric-led unit.

As an alongside birth centre, the care you receive here will be given by midwives and maternity care support workers.

The role of a midwife is as an expert in providing care to women who are experiencing a straight forward pregnancy and birth.

A midwife is also trained to recognise and respond to changes and deviations from normal.

The midwife caring for you will act as your advocate and will support you to have a positive birth experience, facilitating your choices and preferences throughout this process.

## Reasons to give birth in Tair Afon Birth Centre

From looking at research in to birth settings, we know that having a baby is generally very safe (Birthplace study 2011).

For women having their first baby who are healthy and experiencing an uncomplicated pregnancy, planning birth in an alongside midwifery unit, such as Tair Afon Birth Centre offers benefits for the mum and appears to be as safe for the baby as planning birth in an obstetric unit/hospital.

Women having a second or subsequent baby who are healthy and experiencing an uncomplicated pregnancy are advised to give birth in an alongside midwife led unit, such as Tair Afon. This setting is equally as safe as planning birth in an obstetric unit/hospital, and we know rates of intervention (such as an assisted birth, episiotomy, epidural) are reduced.

# What do we offer?

In Tair Afon, we offer a beautiful home from home environment, which is calm, quiet and relaxed (all the things we know support physiological labour and birth).

We offer dimly lit rooms which help to create an atmosphere which is relaxing and tranquil (again, things we know help your labour hormones to work well).

We have three bedrooms which are spacious and comfortable, and facilitate mobilisation and staying active during your labour; and which allow you to rest and relax after giving birth. These rooms offer en-suite toilet and shower facilities.

We have 2 beautiful birth pools with mood lighting (which you can change to provide an ambience that you find most relaxing). The pools are large and spacious, and assists you to get in to a comfortable position which allows you to be mobile, and the warm water offers buoyancy and relief. We also have flotation aids which again help you with your position. A significant amount of the women who have chosen Tair Afon to date, have used the birth pool during labour and gone on to have a waterbirth, and we really encourage and support this here.



We have equipment such as birthing balls, 'peanut' balls (which help your position during labour / birth), beanbags and support mats with open areas in the centre for you to mobilise around. These items have been carefully chosen to ensure you have access to things you need to assist you into comfortable positions which maximise physiological labour.

# For those of you who -

- Are healthy and have been well throughout your pregnancy, with no medical conditions which affect you or your baby
- Are having your first baby, or have had a vaginal birth (which includes women who have had an assisted birth e.g. forceps / ventouse)
- Go in to labour by yourself between 37 and 42 weeks of pregnancy.
- Are carrying one baby, who is growing well and is in a cephalic (head down) position.

Tair Afon would be the ideal birth setting for you.

For those of you who like the idea of using Tair Afon birth centre, but feel you may not fall in to above, we would always encourage you to discuss your individual circumstances with your community midwife.

Tair Afon staff are also available 24/7 to discuss additional information and answer any questions you may have about using the centre and your individual needs and preferences.



For some women and/or babies, the recommendation may be for birth to take place in an Obstetric Unit, however we recognise you may want to explore how using Tair Afon would look in your particular circumstances.

We always respect your choices and preferences, and if after discussing your circumstances with the Consultant midwife, you decided that the care we can provide at Tair Afon would be right for you, we would support you with an individualised plan of care.

# Managing with your labour

In Tair Afon, the environment is so important to supporting you through your labour journey. Helping to create an atmosphere which enables you to birth with minimal analgesia (pain relief).

The majority of women who come to Tair Afon use water to support them during labour. Our birth pool offers comfort, relaxation, buoyancy, mobilisation and warmth, all of which are perfect to support the discomfort of labour. Being in an upright position such as a squat, or on all fours (which are far easier to manage in the large water pool) are likely to be beneficial in keeping you mobile and active during your labour, and we know that these things are important to help your labour to progress.

We have midwives who are trained to support you to use hypnobirthing techniques, and we support you to use relaxation, breathing, visualisation and positive birth affirmations.

Massage can be particularly helpful, and a way your birth partner can be involved in your experience.

We would welcome you to hire a TENS machine to bring with you to use during labour, which you may find helpful.

We offer Entonox (gas and air), which a significant volume of women find of benefit during labour and birth. This can be used at the same time as being in the birth pool.

We offer pethidine (an injection in your thigh). We would recommend that you remain out of the birth pool for a period of time after administration of pethidine as you can become drowsy after using this.



As we are an alongside midwife-led centre, if you wanted to have an epidural during labour, this wouldn't be offered here (because it needs to be put in by an anaesthetist (a specially trained doctor). If you felt that during your labour, this is something you required, Tair Afon staff would facilitate safely moving you across to the labour ward to have this.

# Transfer

The purpose of the care and monitoring that we provide pregnant women during labour is to ensure that things are progressing as we'd expect them to.

We would use our skills and monitoring to recognise at an early stage any deviations. In this case, it may highlight a need to offer transfer to the labour ward for additional care or monitoring that we are unable to provide at Tair Afon.

The labour ward is across the corridor within Prince Charles Hospital, we would usually transfer you via wheelchair or if you feel well enough to walk, you can.

It is important to reassure you that the majority of transfers during labour or immediately following birth are due to reasons such as a longer labour or a delay in labour and are not due to emergency or life-threatening situations (which

make up a very small proportion of transfers). The midwives caring for you all receive appropriate skills training to support caring for you during transfer and even during emergency scenarios.

We know that transfer from Tair Afon would be more likely if you are having your first baby. National statistics show the rates of transfer during labour or shortly after birth for women having their first baby at an alongside midwife led unit is around 40% (40 in 100 women). For women having a second or subsequent baby who are planning birth at an alongside midwife led unit, the rates of transfer are lower at around 13% (13 in 100 women).

## Quotes

*'I had that birth that I wanted, you made me feel so safe  
an confident, supporting and reassuring me'*

*'Thank you so much to staff at Tair Afon Birth Centre,  
you kept me calm and i felt so well supported'*

*'Amazing experience'*

*'Midwives were fantastic, we were in our own little bubble'*

## Useful information:

Tair Afon Birth Centre:

07795 641 401

Open 24hrs a day

Contact Number:

Prince Charles Hospital labour ward:

01685 721721 ext 28870

