

20th December 2021

Dear Women and Birthing People booked for maternity care at Lewisham and Greenwich Trust.

Re: Maintaining a safe maternity service during current COVID pressures

Currently the maternity services provided by Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust are facing significant staffing challenges, as are all other maternity services across the country. This is due to the impact of Covid-19 on our workforce where increased numbers of staff are required to self-isolate, combined with high levels of maternity leave and a nationally recognised shortages of midwives.

In order to ensure the safety of all women/birthing people and families that access our service, and in particular, to be able to provide appropriate support in labour, we have had to make the difficult decision to temporarily suspend our homebirth service, in addition to our continuity teams.

Those booked under these teams will continue to receive care during pregnancy and at home following the birth of their baby from the midwives in your community team. Care during labour will be provided by the hospital based team. The community teams strive to achieve continuity in the antenatal and postnatal period and this will be discussed with you at your midwife appointments.

Unfortunately on occasions we have needed to temporarily close our Birth Centre's to ensure the Labour Wards and Maternity Wards are safety staffed.

We ask that all women/birthing people and families support us by performing Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) twice a week during pregnancy and within the preceding 24 hours of any appointment.

In addition to this it is recommended that women/birthing people who have not received their Covid-19 vaccination prior to pregnancy are vaccinated during pregnancy.

The service will now be encouraging a LFT on all maternity patients and their support person on admission to ensure a result is immediately available to support your management and care. A PCR will also be taken on admission as this is a more accurate test to identify Covid-19. When a support person is not happy to undertake a LFT unfortunately they will not be able to remain in the Maternity Unit.

In addition to these measures, we have had to reduce the number of visitors on the maternity unit from 2 persons to 1 named birthing person. We kindly ask that during your stay only one named birthing person visits you and that visiting is kept to a minimum where possible. We would request that a mask is worn at all times whilst in the hospital by all visitors, when exempt please ensure you have documented evidence of this.

The maternity service is here to support you during your pregnancy, labour and after the birth of your baby and any changes to our services is made to ensure the safety of all of our patients and staff.

Thank you for your support in helping the maternity service to continue to offer safe care to all our mums and babies. Please discuss any concerns or questions with your midwife.

Yours sincerely



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Director of Midwifery
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

Marieke Bolten
Clinical Director for Maternity Services
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust



High quality care for every patient
every day



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