



BIRTHWAYS NEWSLETTER

October 2021



Brooke Roper
receives her Covid
vaccination from
Alexis Greenwood

COVID vaccination clinics now available in Kidderminster Maternity Hub

NEW COVID vaccination clinics running alongside antenatal services in Worcestershire are making it even easier for pregnant women and their partners to have both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to protect themselves and their unborn baby.

The weekly drop-in clinics - which will run from 9am to 1pm every Tuesday in Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre's Maternity Hub - are in addition to the walk-in clinics already available across Herefordshire and Worcestershire which anyone can use. It is hoped the convenience of being able to have the vaccine while at an existing antenatal clinic will further improve uptake.

Vaccinations are available to pregnant women, women who have recently given birth, breastfeeding women and partners, and if the vaccination clinic is successful further clinics will be arranged across the county.

Karen Chapman, Team Leader for Kidderminster Maternity Hub, said: "COVID-19 is still circulating and can be serious for pregnant women. It is so important to have both doses of the vaccine and we are hoping the new vaccination hubs will further encourage pregnant women and those who have recently given birth to get their jabs"

Reminders to ask their midwife about the vaccine are also being sent to pregnant women who have downloaded the BadgerNet maternity app.

For further information on the drop-in clinics, or to book an appointment, call the Maternity Hub on 01562 512376, visit the Kidderminster Maternity Hub page on Facebook or: [worcsacute.nhs.uk/maternity-services](https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/maternity-services)

The vaccine has been proven in clinical studies to be safe for pregnant women and their baby and is recommended by NHS England, the National Childbirth Trust and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

For more information on COVID vaccination in pregnancy visit: [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/)

To find details of all COVID vaccination walk-in clinics in Herefordshire or Worcestershire visit: www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine





Continuous glucose monitoring now available through pregnancy for Type 1 diabetics

Pregnant women with Type 1 diabetes across Herefordshire and Worcestershire can now benefit from a free monitor from the NHS to enable them to measure their glucose levels continually.

A Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) consists of a small device that sticks to the skin, which measures glucose levels continuously throughout the day and night. It is connected by Bluetooth to a reading device and shows trends in glucose levels over time.

Using CGM throughout pregnancy helps women to achieve their best glucose levels and reduces the chances of having a big baby or the baby going in to intensive care after it is born.

Cathy Garlick, Director of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System, said:

"We're really pleased to have rolled out free CGMs for all pregnant women with Type 1 diabetes across the two counties.

"High and low glucose levels can affect pregnant women and their babies in pregnancy and importantly the CGM will raise an alert if levels go outside the target ranges agreed with womens' diabetes and pregnancy team. The information collected by the CGM can also be uploaded and shared with diabetes and pregnancy care teams so that mums-to-be can be supported to review and optimise their treatment appropriately. It will also mean that the information can be shared easily during virtual appointments, which is particularly helpful during the COVID19 pandemic."

Local mum Faye Wiggins, who has had Type 1 diabetes since she was 19 years old, benefited

from CGM in her second pregnancy.

She said: *"Being a type 1 diabetic is no walk in the park but when you throw pregnancy and motherhood in the mix that's when things get really complicated. I have had two children and my first pregnancy was managed with the Flash Glucose Monitoring and my second with Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM).*

"I truly believe that the CGM is a must have for all Type 1 pregnant women and I really welcome the latest national guidance. This new technology gave me more confidence to be in control and self-manage my blood glucose levels better throughout pregnancy and when breastfeeding.

"The CGM devices can be instantly scanned and alert you when your blood sugars are on the move. This means I could act

and adjust my insulin and carbohydrate intake before I had a hypoglycaemia or a hyperglycaemic episode. This reduces the likelihood of 'roller-coaster' glucose levels which isn't great especially in pregnancy and can make you feel unwell and out of control. The alerts enabled me to steer the action needed to try and keep my blood sugar within a range which is much better for both my baby and my health in pregnancy."

The NHS is offering a free CGM to all pregnant women with Type 1 diabetes.

For more information, pregnant women should speak to their specialist diabetes and pregnancy care team about CGM at their next appointment.

For further information about CGM visit www.abcd.care/dtn/CGM

Work gets underway to develop pelvic health services for mums-to-be

Work is underway to ensure mums-to-be across Herefordshire and Worcestershire benefit from additional, specialist information, advice, and support to maintain or improve their pelvic health.

The Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) had been successful in securing £337,000 from NHS England and Improvement to become an early implementer system and improve access to postnatal physiotherapy services.

The aim is to improve the quality of care in the antenatal period before and during pregnancy by providing additional specialist staff, extra training, and providing mums-to-be with more resources to enable them to take active steps to maintain or improve their pelvic floor function and ultimately reduce the number of women living with pelvic floor dysfunction (urinary and faecal incontinence) postnatally and later in life.

Cathy Garlick, LMNS Director, said: "I am really pleased that the recruitment of a Perinatal Pelvic Health Midwife and Physiotherapist is already underway as both roles will be instrumental in leading on the rollout of the project from now until March 2024.

"Work is also underway on the introduction of a 'Squeezy app' that will offer women guided pelvic health exercises to improve pelvic muscle function. Specific referral pathways will be developed that will enable access to pelvic health clinics and personalised treatment plans."

"And early next year a public health campaign will be launched that will raise awareness and empower women to use their voice and seek treatment rather than suffering in silence with incontinence or pelvic floor dysfunction after having a baby."

"The Maternity Voices Partnerships in both Herefordshire and

Worcestershire are also actively involved in helping to shape the Perinatal Pelvic Health Service across the LMNS and deliver a service that truly embraces the needs of the local population."



Extra support for new parents on Hereford County Hospital's maternity ward

A trained team of volunteers are providing additional support to parents on Hereford County Hospital's maternity ward as they transition into parenthood.

The team of five volunteer 'peer supporters' have first-hand experience of motherhood and provide help and non-clinical

advice on caring for and bonding with your baby, breastfeeding, responsive bottle feeding and enabling close and loving relationships between a parent and their baby.

New mum, Charlotte Prothero, said: *"The peer volunteers are a really positive form of support and they offer reassurance and advice in the early days*

of becoming parents and are happy to help for as long as it is needed"

Arwen Nixon, Public Health Midwife at Wye Valley NHS Trust, said: *"Our Baby Friendly Peer Supporters help to empower new parents and act as a good source of information, including giving advice on breast/infant feeding and bonding, and this service*

has been introduced following feedback from parents.

To have peer supporters with first-hand experience on our maternity ward is invaluable and helps to give extra reassurance to new parents, and is a great addition to the care provided by our maternity team."

From mental health service user to mental health peer support worker



Kelly Jordan with her children Harry and Martha

When Kelly Jordan started experiencing intrusive thoughts about harming her young son, little did she know that just a few years later she would be working in the mental health team that helped and supported her through her terrifying ordeal.

Kelly is a perinatal mental health peer support worker – a role which sees her create and deliver safe, nurturing and inclusive support to women and families affected by mental health problems during pregnancy or the postnatal period, alongside the trained perinatal mental health team at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust.

But back in 2016 when Kelly first started experiencing mental health problems, she was unaware that perinatal mental health support even existed.

"My son Harry was 14 months old when I first started having intrusive thoughts about harming him," Kelly said.

"I was in a crisis situation, terrified of even being left alone with him, to the point I had to have someone looking after me while I was looking after him – it was absolutely terrifying. I sought immediate help from my GP in the first instance and was advised to self-refer to Worcestershire Healthy Minds (WHM)."

After an initial telephone assessment with WHM Kelly first started to attend group therapy sessions,

before starting one-to-one Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions around seven months later.

"By this point I was suffering extreme anxiety and felt like I was permanently standing on a cliff edge, and I was also suffering from physical ill health as my immune system was completely run down," she explained.

But the one-to-one sessions, as well as some self-help thanks to the book 'Dropping The Baby and Other Scary Thoughts' which addresses the nature of intrusive, negative and unwanted thoughts, gradually helped Kelly to understand what had happened to her and develop the skills to manage her mental health.

By 2018, and with the support of her husband and family, Kelly felt strong enough to try for another baby. This time, she was referred straight to the Perinatal Mental Health team. She remained under their care for the rest of her pregnancy and for a full 12 months after her daughter, Martha, was born in February 2019.

"When I got pregnant I was terrified that I would start having similar thoughts, as I had previously had, towards my unborn baby," Kelly said. "This was realised to some extent, but I started the CBT sessions straight away and with the support of the amazing perinatal mental health team I learned to manage it."

She was discharged from the team in February 2020 and, having made such

great progress, when a vacancy for a peer support worker came up, the perinatal mental health team highlighted it to her in case she wanted to apply. Just eight months later, in October 2020, Kelly was successful in her application and made the huge decision to take a career break from her job in the prison service.

Now, 12 months on, she is proud of the support she has been able to offer to other pregnant women and new mums who are managing their own mental health issues. This includes helping to develop sessions for new mothers on employment rights through maternity leave, and setting up a weekly walking group for service users.

Kelly added: *"My advice, is if you think that something doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to access help. Speak to your midwife, GP, health visitor or other healthcare professional who can refer you to the team who are all highly trained and specialise in perinatal adult and infant mental health."*

"I see myself as a bridge between the team and the service users and can offer that lived experience which is so valuable – especially to those who might be experiencing mental health issues for the first time. I feel very passionate about making a difference and don't want anyone to suffer like I did. I feel incredibly lucky to be in this position."

Follow the teams on Twitter at [@HWHCT_perinatal](https://twitter.com/HWHCT_perinatal) or visit www.hacw.nhs.uk and search for 'perinatal mental health'.

Did you know...

50-80% of women experience baby blues at around 3-10 days after delivery and this comes and goes very quickly.

Some women experience significant mental health difficulties during pregnancy or after birth, even if they have never experience mental health difficulties before

About 10% of women go on to develop post-natal depression, which often starts around 3 months after they have given birth. A more serious condition called post-natal psychosis may develop which often (in 1-2 women in every 1000 deliveries) requires a hospital admission. This is a serious illness.

Our Perinatal Mental Health teams are community-based - this means that the team see people in their home and in clinics across the two counties.

The teams are made up of nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health social workers, psychotherapists, occupational therapists, nursery nurses, care coordinators and administrative staff.

Seven-day-a-week home support for babies born early

Babies born early in Herefordshire and surrounding counties will be able to receive specialist support in their own home seven days a week before the end of the year.

The Neonatal Outreach Team at Wye Valley NHS Trust currently support babies who are born before 35 weeks and six days, and who weigh less than 2kg at discharge, five days a week.

But following the success of the service, the team will expand to offer daily support from November. Support is given to babies requiring

ongoing naso-gastric tube feeds, home oxygen, weight monitoring and feeding support. With the expansion of the service to 7 days, home phototherapy will also be offered to well babies with mild jaundice, along with prolonged jaundice screening to those babies who are eligible.

Elaine Evans, Ward Manager for Wye Valley NHS Trust Special Care Baby Unit and Neonatal Outreach Team, said: "We know that getting babies home with their families is really important as it leads to a reduction in stress for the family. The feedback

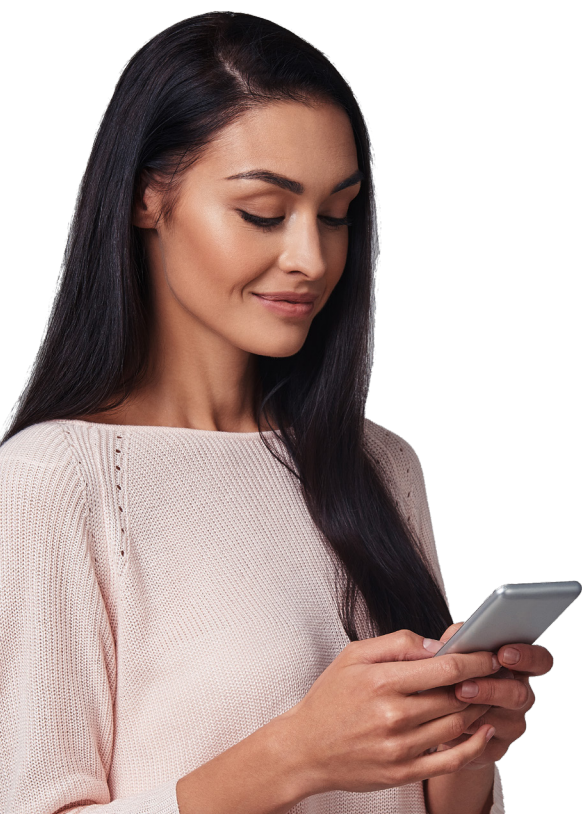
from families has been very positive – they have told us they welcome the service as it is reassuring to know that there is the additional support available in the community once they have been discharged home. We are delighted that we are going to be expanding the service from next month."

The Worcestershire Neonatal Outreach Service expanded to offer seven day outreach in 2020.

What families say:

"As first time parents we always wonder are we doing things right and when talking to outreach about how things are going we were reassured we are doing great. That's a great boost for us and gives us the confidence to continue what we are doing."

"I truly was grateful for the support and it was a great help and comfort knowing that they were there if I needed any help or if I was worried about anything after my girls were able to leave hospital."



Direct access to maternity services now up and running in Herefordshire

Pregnant women in Herefordshire can now refer themselves straight into the county's maternity services rather than going through their GP first.

Women who are newly pregnant can now enter their details on a secure website that will send a referral straight to Wye Valley NHS Trust's community midwifery team, who will then inform the GP.

The best time to fill in the online form is at 6 to 7 weeks pregnant. Women will then receive a phone call to arrange a first appointment with a midwife, which usually takes place when at 8 to 10 weeks pregnant.

Women who have any urgent concerns about their health during early pregnancy should still contact their GP for advice.

The self-referral website can be found at: www.badgernotes.net/SelfReferral/CareLocation/hereford

For help filling in the form, call the community midwifery office on 01432 372965.

Work is underway to enable women to self-refer directly into Worcestershire's maternity services.

Neonatal Units commit to Baby Friendly Initiative

Parents of babies who need neonatal care in Worcestershire are set to benefit after the Neonatal Unit at Worcestershire Royal Hospital was awarded a Certificate of Commitment from the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI).

The certificate recognises that the Neonatal Unit has committed to providing parents with the best information on how to feed their babies in ways which will support health and development as well as advice on how to build close relationships with their new babies.

Matron for Worcestershire Royal Hospital's Neonatal and Transitional Care Unit, Lara Greenway said:

"We decided to join forces with the Baby Friendly Initiative to increase breastfeeding rates and to improve care for all Worcestershire mothers.

"We know that breastfeeding reduces the mother's risk of some cancers – although mums might be more interested in hearing that it's easier, cheaper and simply less hassle than bottle feeding. We also set out to ensure that all mums and babies are supported to form a strong loving relationship – whatever their choice of

feeding method – as this is the best start for every baby."

Wye Valley NHS Trust's Neonatal Unit has also registered its intent to work toward the Certificate of Commitment and have developed a robust education programme to ensure that all staff meet the required standards to deliver BFI standards on the unit.

Elaine Evans, Ward Manager for Wye Valley NHS Trust Special Care Baby Unit and Neonatal Outreach Team, said:

"We are committed to ensuring that all families are supported to achieve

successful feeding for their babies whatever their chosen method of feeding is. We are also committed to ensuring that all parents are able to form a strong loving relationship with their babies and actively encourage parents to participate in skin to skin care throughout the day."

The BFI Certificate of Commitment recognises that a health care facility is dedicated to implementing recognised best practice standards and is a step towards gaining international accreditation from the Baby Friendly Initiative.

Free smoking cessation support for all mums-to-be



As part of Stoptober – the Public Health campaign to encourage the nation's smokers to make a quit attempt for the month of October and beyond – mums-to-be and their families across Herefordshire and Worcestershire are being reminded that free help and support is available to help them quit.

Simply speak to your midwife who can give you the information and advice you need to quit smoking.

Did you know?

Stopping smoking will help both you and your baby immediately. Harmful gases, such as carbon monoxide, and other damaging chemicals will clear from your body.

When you stop smoking:

- you will reduce the risk of complications in pregnancy and birth
- you are more likely to have a healthier pregnancy and a healthier baby
- you will reduce the risk of stillbirth
- your baby is less likely to be born too early and have to face the breathing, feeding and health problems that often go with being premature
- you will reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) also known as "cot death".

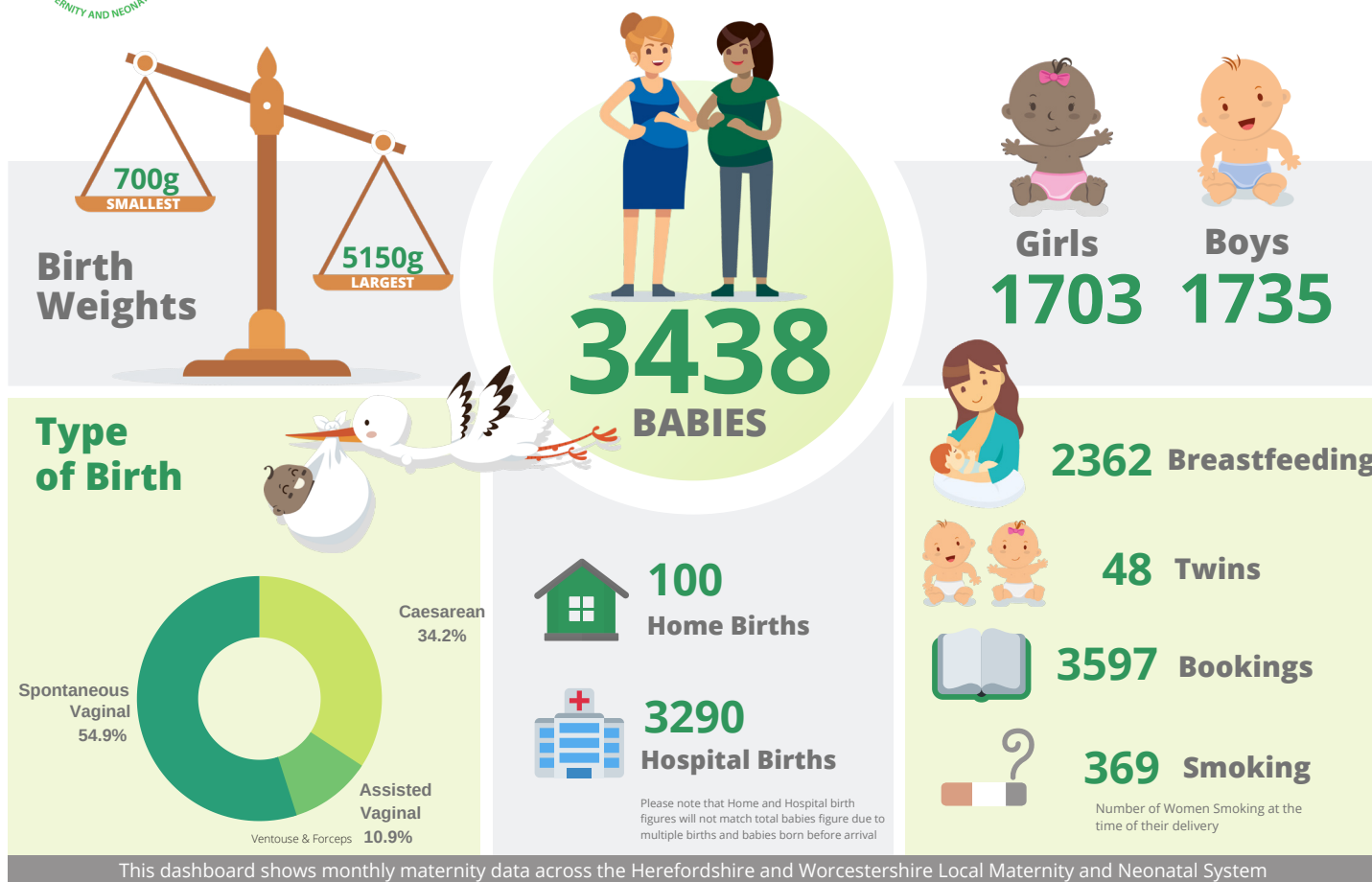
The sooner you stop smoking, the better. But even if you stop in the last few weeks of your pregnancy this will benefit you and your baby.



Maternity and Neonatal Insight



MARCH - AUGUST 2021



This dashboard shows monthly maternity data across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Local Maternity and Neonatal System



We would love to hear your experiences of maternity care before, during and after birth.

What went well?
What didn't?
What changes would you like to see?

HAVE YOUR SAY

Herefordshire

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