CHOOSING A MATERNITY UNIT QUESTIONS TO ASK

Type of care

- What type of unit is this? Labour ward or birth centre?
- **Can I get continuity of care?** Will I be able to see the same midwife during pregnancy, birth and after I've gone home?



How many midwives am I likely to see during pregnancy and birth?

Antenatal classes

- **Can I do birth preparation classes** at this maternity unit?
- **Who teaches the classes?** Midwives or antenatal teachers?
- Are the classes provided free of charge and when do I need to book?



Pain relief & equipment

- Will I be able to use self-help methods? For example aromatherapy, hypnotherapy or TENS?
- Which pain relief drug does this unit offer? Pethidine, diamorphine or meptid?
- Are epidurals available 24 hours a day and does this unit have a dedicated anaesthetist?
- What non-medical equipment is available? For example birth ball, bean bags, cushions or floor mats?



Birth pools

- How many birth pools are there? Is there a birth pool in every delivery room?
- How often are all birth pools occupied?
- **Are all midwives in the unit trained** to attend to women labouring or giving birth in water?



Support in labour

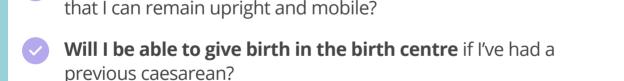
- **Are all midwives trained** so that I can give birth in an upright position, or will I be encouraged to lie or sit on the bed?
- How many birth partners can I have with me?

Are female doctors always available?



Vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC)

- **Does this unit encourage women to have a VBAC** or will I automatically be offered another caesarean? Is there a policy of continuous monitoring during VBAC and
- will I be supported if I would like intermittent monitoring instead? **If I agree to be continuously monitored,** can it be arranged so





Accessibility

wards?

who would prefer to speak their own language? **Is there easy wheelchair access** to the delivery suite and the

Does the hospital provide an interpreting service for women

Does the hospital provide equipment to help disabled women in labour?



there are no problems?

- After the birth **How long will I stay in the unit after the birth**, assuming
- Will I be moved to a postnatal ward? If so, how many women will be in the ward?



What are the visiting hours for my partner, family members and friends?

Can my partner stay overnight?

- Will community midwives come for home visits after I've
- come home, or will I have to go to a clinic?

Breastfeeding

- Is this unit Baby Friendly accredited?
- Does his maternity unit employ a breastfeeding counsellor who can help me if I'm having problems breastfeeding?

