

The Day Assessment Unit

This leaflet explains the aims and purpose of the Day Assessment Unit.

Women come to the Day Assessment Unit (DAU) to be assessed and monitored if they have developed complications that may place them or their baby at risk. This means that appropriate treatment can be given to improve the outcomes for both women and babies.

In the unit we:

- Monitor women with high-risk conditions.
- Assess any women not yet in labour whose medical/obstetric condition requires assessment by the hospital within the next 24 hours.
- Prepare women booked for planned (known as 'elective') Caesarean sections.
- Care for pregnant women who need procedures that can be completed safely on the DAU within a day.
- Review post-natal women when the case cannot be managed by their General Practitioner (GP).

When are women referred to the Unit?

Women should be over 16 weeks pregnant, the only exceptions to this is in cases of hyperemesis (severe nausea resulting in weight loss that left untreated may lead to more serious problems), or women with long-standing diabetes that are unwell in early pregnancy when they will be seen prior to 16 weeks. Postnatal women must be assessed by their GP before they can be referred to the Unit.

Referrals can be made by:

- Consultants and hospital medical staff.
- Community midwives.
- Maternity triage line.
- GPs.
- Self-referrals – the women themselves. Women can ring 0118 322 8741 and speak to one of the Unit midwives, who will give advice over the telephone and may arrange an appointment at the DAU or the Antenatal Clinic.

Urgent and self-referrals

Following a telephone discussion, some women will be asked to attend the DAU the same day.

The most common reasons for these referrals are:

- Raised blood pressure.
- Decreased fetal movements.
- Vaginal bleeding.
- Acute abdominal pain.

This is not a comprehensive list of reasons for urgent referral and the decision to admit would be taken following the telephone conversation. Women will often be asked to see their GP as the first point of call, their GP can then refer to the DAU if they feel further investigation or treatment is required.

Where is the Unit?

The Unit is situated on Level 3 in the Maternity Block and is open Monday to Friday 7.00am to 7.30pm and Saturday 7.00am to 1.00pm.

Our facilities

There are two examination chairs in curtained bays in the main assessment area and two examination couches.

There are three single rooms with examination couches.

There is one ultrasound scan room, which can also be used to examine women not requiring a scan.

There is a toilet exclusively for patient use.

Our staff

Our team includes midwives, doctors and maternity care assistants.

The External Cephalic Version (ECV) Clinic is run on the DAU by specialist trained midwives and doctors. This is a procedure carried out for women with babies in a breech presentation; to externally turn the baby around so that it is in the correct position (head down) for delivery.

Fixed appointment times

Some procedures have been allocated pre-arranged times within the working day of the Unit. This improves efficiency and provides the best care to women. We aim to run on time as much as possible but unfortunately, due to the nature and urgency of individual situations, this is not always possible. There are fixed appointment times for:

- Pre-op clerking – this is for women that have been booked for a planned Caesarean section. The classes are held by one of the DAU midwives on Mondays and Fridays, the women will need to attend before the planned delivery date, at 1.30pm in the Parentcraft Room, Level 2 Maternity Block.

- Booked Caesarean sections – these women will be asked to attend at 7.30am on the morning of their surgery. They will be prepared for theatre by the theatre midwife and transferred directly to theatre from the DAU.
- External Cephalic Version (ECV) – women will be given an appointment time on a day where the personnel are available to perform the procedure; this is usually a Tuesday or Thursday. The senior midwife or consultant obstetrician will perform the ECV in the Unit and the women will be monitored following the procedure.
- Ferinject Infusion (iron therapy) – these appointments are usually booked via the antenatal clinic. Following the infusion, women will be allowed home and will usually be discharged back to their GP/community midwife for follow up.
- Monitoring of women with blood pressure problems – most women will be able to have their blood pressure monitored by their GP or midwife. However if someone's blood pressure is very high or requires medication, you may be given an appointment on the DAU. These appointments are Monday to Friday and may take a few hours if blood tests and a review by the doctor is required.

Following admission to the DAU, women will have their observations checked by a maternity care assistant or midwife; they will then be assessed by the midwife and seen by the obstetric doctors, if necessary. There is sometimes a delay in women being seen by the doctors if there is an emergency elsewhere requiring their immediate attention. A plan of care will be discussed and women will be advised about follow-up appointments, if required.

Some women may be admitted to the antenatal Ward or to the Delivery Suite directly from the DAU if further monitoring or observation is required.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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