

# What choices do I have?

Requesting and receiving care  
in the NHS

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

---

## **This leaflet explains your choices in requesting and receiving care from our Maternity and Gynaecology services.**

---

### **For all women using Maternity or Gynaecological Services**

We offer appointments that are face to face, by video link and by telephone. We have teams in Bracknell, Wokingham, Henley and Newbury as well as in Reading. Our midwifery clinics are usually held at a site close to your home address.

When we decide what treatment to give you, we do not discriminate against you because of any of your 'protected characteristics'. These are race, sex, disability, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or gender reassignment. For women undergoing elective gynaecological treatment and care you have the right to choose which consultant team you want, as long as your GP agrees with your choice is suitable for meeting your health care concerns.

You can choose to have your first outpatient appointment at the hospital where the consultant works, but the actual consultant may not see you. You may instead see one of the consultant's team.

While you have the legal right to choose your consultant team, please remember that they only offer clinics on certain days of the week.

### **For women receiving maternity care**

You should be able to choose your midwifery service from a range of options:

- Go directly to the midwifery service you want: you can use the NHS website to find out more about the services available, and then refer yourself.
- Go to your GP and ask him to refer you to the midwifery service you want: your GP should give you information about the different services available.

- While you are pregnant, you should be able to choose to receive antenatal care from:
  - a midwife;
  - a team of maternity healthcare professionals, including midwives and obstetricians. We will tell you if we think this is the better option for you and your baby.
- You should be able to choose where you give birth:
  - at home, with the support of a midwife;
  - in a midwife-led facility (for example, the local midwife-led unit in the hospital building), with the support of a midwife;
  - in hospital with the support of a maternity team. We will tell you if we think this is the best option for you and your baby;
- After going home, you should be able to choose where to have your postnatal care:
  - at home;
  - in the community, such as at a Sure Start Children's Centre.

These are not legal rights, but are national recommendations for 'best practice'. Your options will depend on your Care Commissioning Group. This is the Berkshire West CCG for most women using the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

### **Can I decline to be treated by some members of staff?**

Staff cannot refuse you treatment due to any 'protected characteristics' (listed earlier in the leaflet), for example gender. In the same way, you cannot ask specific people to treat you or not treat you based on their gender etc. We will try to fit in with your preferences but we cannot guarantee this, particularly in urgent clinic appointments, or when you are giving birth.

If you refuse treatment from someone who does have the necessary training and skills to look after you, we may have to reschedule or delay your appointments, or ask your GP to refer you to a different hospital.

## When can staff refuse to treat me?

This is possible if:

- There is, or there is fear of, physical violence.
- There is discriminatory behaviour from the patient.
- There are health and safety hazards e.g. lack of appropriate equipment.
- The care required is outside the competence or training of that doctor, midwife or nurse.

This information sheet includes information from:

- The national 'Your choices in the NHS' website
- The Royal College of Nursing
- Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The links are below, all accessed 30 April 2021

1. [https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/refusal-to-treat#Patients who refuse your care](https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/refusal-to-treat#Patients%20who%20refuse%20your%20care)
2. <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/your-choices-in-the-nhs/>
3. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/nhs-healthcare/nhs-patients-rights/>
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-choice-framework/the-nhs-choice-framework-what-choices-are-available-to-me-in-the-nhs#section-6>

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

J Siddall, Clinical Director Women & Children's Services, May 2021  
Next review due: May 2023