

“What happens if my baby is born too soon, too small, too sick or needs surgery?”

You have been given this information leaflet because you have booked to have your baby at a maternity unit within the Staffordshire, Shropshire & Black Country Newborn and Maternity Network (SSBCNMN).

This leaflet gives information about what will happen if your baby is born early (prematurely) or becomes ill, or needs surgery soon after birth. The care these babies need after birth is called Neonatal Care, and is provided by specially trained nurses and doctors on a Neonatal Unit. About 1 in every 9 babies born will need Neonatal Care. The Neonatal Units in SSBCNMN work together to provide different levels of care. The Staffordshire, Shropshire & Black Country Newborn and Maternity Network is in the North West Midlands area and includes 5 Neonatal Units. Please see the map and key below identifying the location of each of these units.



	Type of Unit
	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
	Local Neonatal Unit

When you become pregnant, you have a choice about where to have your maternity care and give birth. However Neonatal Care is very specialized and not all Neonatal Units have the facilities and staff to provide the full range of care for the smallest and sickest babies. **Therefore if your baby requires neonatal care you will not have a choice where this care is provided.**

When might I or my baby be transferred to another hospital?

If your midwife or obstetrician considers that your baby will need neonatal care it may be recommended that you are transferred to a hospital that has the necessary facilities for your baby **before you give birth**, this is because studies in England have shown that very premature babies do better if they are born in a hospital with a neonatal intensive care unit on site.

However if transfer before birth is not possible, all hospitals are able to provide the immediate care your baby needs whilst arrangements are made to transfer your baby to the nearest appropriate neonatal unit.

If the hospital where you have given birth does not have the facilities to provide your baby’s ongoing care your baby will be transferred by a team of staff specially trained to transfer babies safely between hospitals.

If your hospital has a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and your baby needs specialised care that is not so intensive your baby may need to be transferred to another unit in the network that is able to provide such care. This may need to happen in order to keep spaces in the intensive care unit for a baby in the network that requires intensive care

Your baby will be transferred to a Neonatal Unit in SSBCNMN as long as there is an appropriate cot available. Very occasionally, your baby may need to be transferred to a hospital in another network. This will be as close to home as possible.

Staying close to your baby

If your baby does require neonatal intensive care and you have been transferred before birth to a unit with neonatal intensive care you will be able to stay with your baby. If your baby has to be transferred to a unit with neonatal intensive care soon after birth you will be able to travel to that unit when you are fit enough. We will always aim to keep you together as much as possible.

Preparation for home

Every day, the nurses and doctors will review and plan your baby’s care. As soon as your baby is well enough to no longer need specialist facilities, your baby will be transferred to a Neonatal Unit, as close to home as possible, which specialises in preparing you and your baby for discharge home.

What are the different types of Neonatal Unit?

Transitional Care (TC)

Is for babies with some needs but most importantly, the mum is able to be the main carer with support from a nursery nurse or other staff on the unit.

Special Care Baby Units (SCBU):

Are for babies who need continuous monitoring of their breathing or heart rate, additional oxygen, tube feeding, phototherapy to treat jaundice and convalescence from other care.

Local Neonatal Units (LNU):

Are for babies needing short-term intensive care with breathing difficulties who require support including receiving continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP). Some babies receiving parenteral nutrition (intravenous feeding) may also need this level of care.

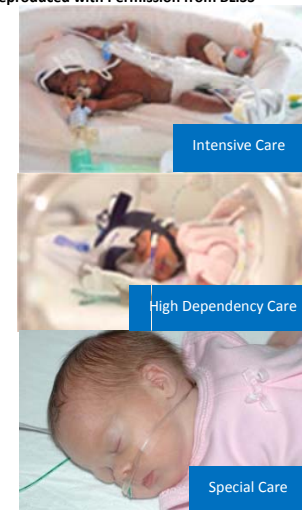
Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU):

Are for babies born at less than 27 - 28 weeks gestation, weighing less than 800g and any baby needing respiratory support (ventilation) for more than 48 hours. Babies who require surgery may also need this level of care too.

Surgical Care:

Babies needing surgery or other specialist care not available in SSBCNMN such as babies with heart problems, will be transferred to the nearest hospital with an available space. Birmingham Children’s Hospital provides care for the majority of our babies whilst, Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, Liverpool, provides care for some babies in the north of our network.

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Further Support and Information

SSBCNMN app:



Feedback is welcomed on this leaflet to improve future editions, please email your comments to: sarah.carnwell@nhs.net

Bliss:

Bliss is the charity that exists to ensure that all babies born too soon, too small or too sick in the UK have the best possible chance of survival and of reaching their full potential.

General support from Bliss:

bliss.org.uk

Help for families:

www.bliss.org.uk/help-for-families/you-and-your-baby/

Author: Ruth Moore, Manager/Lead Nurse, in consultation with Neonatal, Maternity and Parent Representatives in Staffordshire, Shropshire & Black Country Newborn and Maternity Network

Based on Southern West Midlands Maternity and Newborn Network's Leaflet written by Tracey Budding, Sister NICU Birmingham Women's Hospital

Information for Pregnant Women

**WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BABY IS
BORN TOO SOON, TOO SMALL,
TOO SICK OR NEEDS SURGERY?**

