

We are aware it may also feel worrying and demanding to have to prepare for a move with your baby, to leave the unit you have come to know and to get to know a new hospital and staff. It is normal to feel anxious at the prospect of your baby moving to a new hospital. You may have questions you want to ask to help you understand the reasons for the move, and what to expect at the new hospital. Some parents find it helpful for staff to arrange a visit to the local unit to meet well ahead of their baby being transferred. The team at the new hospital will receive information on how your baby has been during his/her admission both verbally and in a written letter.

Sometimes the transfer of your baby may occur very suddenly or may be cancelled at short notice. This is because the local unit may have an emergency admission or the transport team may be called to care for a sick baby.

### **Why can't my baby stay for the rest of his/ her care?**

Some families express that they would like their baby to stay at the referral hospital for the rest of his / her hospital care rather than being transferred back to the local hospital. Unfortunately this is not possible because just as you and your baby needed specialist care there are other families who are waiting to be transferred for specialist care.

You can be reassured that your baby will only be transferred to a unit providing the appropriate level of care for him / her once this level of specialist care is no longer required.

It is hoped that this leaflet has helped you to understand more about why babies are transferred and how the **North West London Neonatal Operational Delivery Network**

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**Please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff if you require any more information, or wish to discuss any of this information in more detail.**

## **HOSPITAL TRANSFER FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY**



### **Introduction**

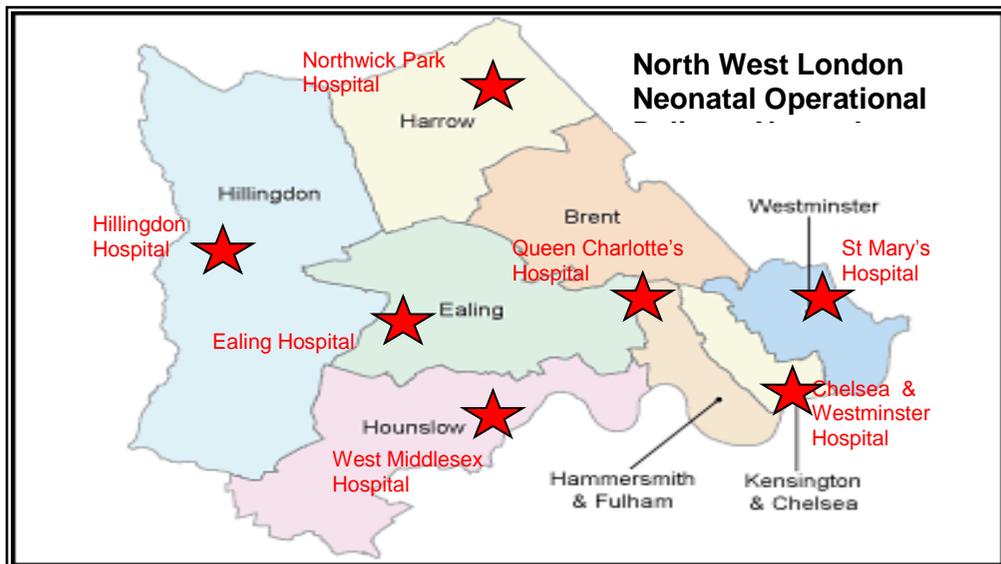
Most parents expect to have an uncomplicated pregnancy, deliver their baby and return home from the hospital where they booked after a few days. This is true for most parents but occasionally either the mother or the baby may need to be transferred to another hospital. This leaflet aims to give you some information to help you understand why these transfers are necessary, what to expect and what you can do to ensure a smooth transition.

### **The North West London Perinatal Network**

Early in your pregnancy you booked into a hospital for your maternity care. This is likely to be your local hospital which is also part of a network of 7 hospitals (NWLNODN) which offers care to babies after they are born. These hospitals work together to ensure that both mothers and their babies receive the care they need as close to home as possible. All of these neonatal/special care units can provide emergency care for babies who are born prematurely or who are unexpectedly sick. Within the network hospitals offer different levels of care which is dependent on the severity of your babies condition. Tertiary (level 3) units care for the most premature and poorly babies, Local Neonatal unit (level 2) units care for babies when they are a little older and less sick, special care units (level 1) when they are eldest or least sick.

The doctors' stabilised your baby as soon as they were delivered and organised a transfer to a hospital which was able to provide the specialist care needed dependent on your baby's age and health at delivery. Your baby may stay in this hospital for days or weeks however when babies no longer require specialist care they will be transferred back to your local unit for continuing care before discharge. In very rare circumstances you or your baby may need to be transferred further away to a hospital outside the Network if no cots inside the network are available.

### Network Units



**Special Care units Ealing and West Middlesex Hospitals** These units specialise in high dependency and special care. They provide care for all babies delivered in their hospital except those who are born very early or who require intensive care for prolonged periods of time.

### Local Neonatal Units Northwick Park, Hillingdon Hospitals and St Mary's Hospital

These units routinely provide intensive/high dependency care to the majority of babies born in their hospital. Some bigger babies born to mothers booked elsewhere may be transferred to these units for specialist care.

### Tertiary Units: Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital

These are large referral units which provide intensive care to very premature and small babies and some bigger babies who are sick. They also specialise in certain areas, e.g. fetal medicine, neonatal surgery, and brain problems.

### Transferring Mother before the birth

If the maternity team want to transfer baby's Mother to another hospital this will always be to ensure that Mother and baby receive appropriate care. This may be because your baby is likely to be born early or because Mother or your baby will require more specialist care than can be provided in your booking hospital. Occasionally it will be because the baby unit in your hospital is full. Mother will be transferred back to the care of a more local hospital if the condition of Mother and your baby stabilises and delivery of your baby is not necessary. This will be discussed with you.

### Transferring your baby after birth

If your baby needs to be transferred after birth because of an unexpected medical problem or premature birth your baby will be transferred by ambulance by a specialist team in a special transport incubator. The Neonatal Transport Service is a team of nurses and doctors who are trained to give babies intensive care during the transfer. We aim that you see your baby and meet the transport team before transfer. The baby's mother will be transferred as soon as the Obstetrician thinks she is well enough and there is a bed available on the midwifery unit where the baby has been transferred. Fathers or a support person will be welcome at the new unit soon after transfer. It is at the discretion of the transfer team whether or not a family member can travel with the baby. Quite often there is simply not room however do feel able to ask.

### Transferring back for continuing care

When your baby gets older and recovers and the requirement for specialist medical and nursing care is becoming less your baby will be able to move to another Network hospital near to home. Such transfer is a sign of the progress your baby has made and means you will be nearer to home at the stage when you are becoming increasingly involved in your baby's care. You will also become familiar with local services that will provide any continuing care after discharge home should your child require it.