

## MATERNITY PROVISION IN FARINGDON

Midwives are based at Wantage. They are guided by midwifery unit at John Radcliffe Hospital. They follow NICE guidelines, but the service is commissioned and paid for as a primary care service by the Oxfordshire PCT. All midwives throughout Oxfordshire follow the same service guidelines.

Midwives run 2 ante-natal clinics in Faringdon on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. First time mothers are seen for 15 minutes, but second and subsequent babies are checked less frequently.

<b>Place of birth:</b>	John Radcliffe Hospital	75
	Great Western Hospital	25
	Home Births	5 – 10 (few in Faringdon)
	Wantage Hospital	?? 130 (possible annual total for Wantage)

<b>Post Natal Care:</b>	First day post discharge
	Fifth day post discharge + birth demo
	Final visit around day 10

Extra visits are provided if needed and requested. Mothers having second or subsequent babies receive a reduced service. Often mothers are asked to visit Wantage Hospital for assistance.

**Breast feeding:** Support is provided by the midwife on a 24 hour basis + Wantage drop-in clinic and the Tuesday/Thursday clinic at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Midwives feel that they provide “enough breastfeeding support”. They used to run a local breast feeding support group in Faringdon but this stopped due to lack of maternal support. La Leche provides some support at the Faringdon Family Centre. There is NOW NO charge for attendance at the two hour Breast Feeding Class held either on Monday in Wantage or Tuesday in Abingdon – done by Maternity Care Assistants.

### **Ante-Natal Preparation for mothers expecting their first baby** (not subsequent babies)

These are held in Abingdon once a month on a Saturday at the Family Centre in Northcourt Road; the classes last 3 hours. A maximum of 12 couples attend. **There is no public transport to Abingdon.** (Mothers are referred on to National Childbirth Trust classes by midwives if requested. Mothers can receive some assistance with NCT fees from NCT if they ask.)

**Content of Class: 1** Pregnancy and signs of labour starting + quiz

**2** How to cope with labour – natural labour, breathing, massage, positions, movement. and essential oils information. Hand-outs provided on breathing, positions and optimal foetal positioning.

**3** Discussion by partners as to their role / discussion by mothers as to role of partners – Together

**4** What happens if things do not go according to plan – ie forceps and caesarean section - hand-out

*The midwife said that the mothers are disappointed that there is no discussion about coping with the baby after birth during the 3 hour session. Time is very limited.*

*Quote from a midwife “ Those mothers who need to attend won't attend. Those who do attend, want to meet other expectant mothers. These mothers can read about birth or research it on the web.”*

The midwife said that mothers are treated equally regardless of the place of birth, but the midwife taking the Abingdon class focusses on the JRH: she is not familiar with GWH, but will provide phone numbers if asked. At present mothers attending GWH who live in Faringdon receive **NO preparation for birth due to the Swine flu epidemic** but mothers who live in Shrivenham receive ONE to ONE preparation. Maternity unit tours have stopped due to security issues as well as swine flu worries; they have been replaced by a DVD. The antenatal teacher/midwife said that **she** would be unable to run a class in Faringdon – but previously it was NOT well-supported. NO funds are available for running an ante natal class in Faringdon although it would be possible to use the health

centre education room. All mothers are sent a letter, and subsequently given a leaflet with information including internet sites. Antenatal class bookings are made through Wantage. Midwives are really not really aware of the planned growth in Faringdon; they say that they will not be given additional support as the service is definitely restricted by financial constraints.

## **HEALTH VISITOR INPUT**

The health visitor service is guided by government policies. The health visitor stated that there are between 5 and 20 births each month in Faringdon.

There are 3 health visitors: 1 full time health visitor and 2 part time health visitors. They cover both medical practices as well as providing a monthly clinic at both Stanford in the Vale and Southmoor. They cover children from 0 to 5 years, but also work with families where the children may have a disability, behaviour difficulties, bed-wetting problems or eczema.

All expectant mothers are offered **one ante-natal class** which lasts 1 and a half to 2 hours every 6 to 8 weeks. The dates of the class are arranged according to need for first time mothers.

**Content:** introduction of the role of the health visitors

life with the baby post-discharge

+ attendance of 2 new mothers; one of whom will talk about her labour, the second will breastfeed. - hopefully! Health visitor will also talk about essential purchases for the baby. Most new mothers do attend this class; some partners also attend.

## **Post natal class programme**

These are organised on a 4 week cycle with the attendance varying from 5 to 6 mothers but may increase to as much as 9. It is limited to first time mothers.

**Content of class:** unwell babies  
sleep  
baby massage  
weaning

The class provides the possibility of weighing the baby as well as the opportunity of networking. Tea and biscuits are supplied.

**Baby clinics** are held every Tuesday afternoon from 1.30 to 3.30pm. The babies can be weighed and receive inoculations. Between 40 and 50 mothers attend each week.

Mothers with second or subsequent babies attend the Tuesday clinics as well as the Family Centre which is also supported by the full time health visitor. Health Visitors use the Education Room at the Health Centre. They also refer mothers or families to the Home Start programme. Health visitors feel that they provide a good service.

## **Summary of Maternity Care**

- The service is limited by financial restraints and constraints of the maternity unit at the JRH
- If the population increases as is planned, the quality of service will deteriorate.
- With the reduction of visits to second and subsequent babies the risk to mothers increases.
- Antenatal preparation is only available to parents with transport.

## **CONCLUSION**

Expectant mothers attending Great Western Hospital are currently being neglected. With a variable number of mothers expecting babies it would be hard to justify holding ante-natal classes in Faringdon unless the classes could be combined with Shrivenham mothers. Mothers without transport are penalised. Ante-natal preparation is seen as relatively unimportant while maternity care has been drastically reduced over the years. With new parents often living far from their families, support is often minimal. New mothers and those new to the area can feel very isolated.

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*8<sup>th</sup> December 2009*

