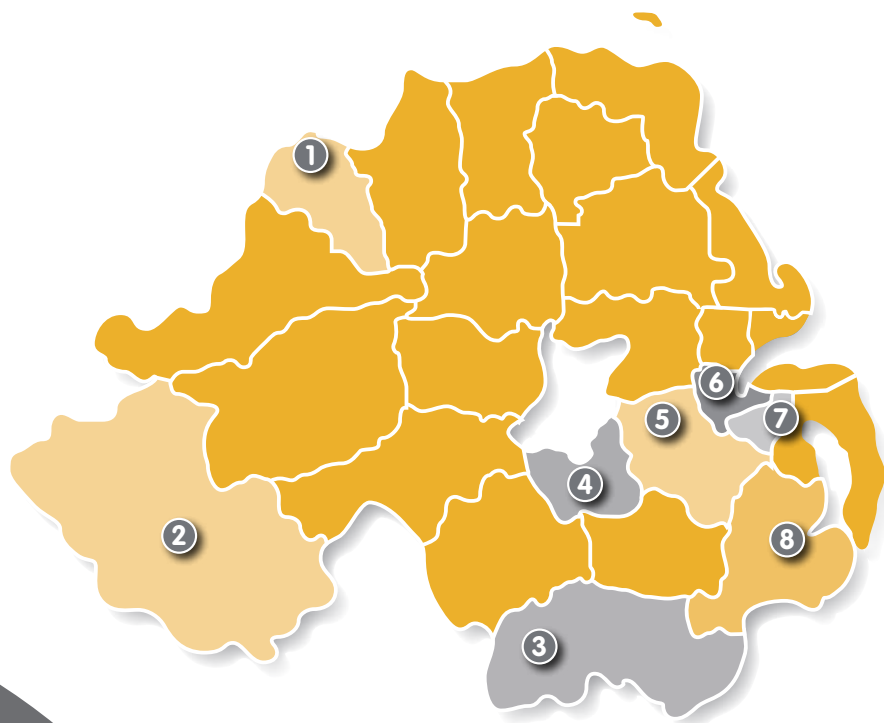


PLANNING TO GIVE BIRTH IN A MIDWIFE-LED UNIT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

GAIN

GUIDELINES AND AUDIT
IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK



1	Altnagelvin AMU
2	South Western Acute Hospital AMU
3	Daisy Hill AMU
4	Craigavon AMU
5	Lagan Valley FMU
6	Mater FMU
7	Ulster AMU
8	Downe FMU

WHAT IS A MIDWIFE-LED UNIT (MLU)?

A MLU is a maternity unit where the midwives are the lead professional. There are currently eight MLU's in Northern Ireland (NI).

- Five Alongside Midwife-led Units (AMUs), which are situated on the same site as a Consultant-Led Unit
- Three Freestanding Midwife-led Units (FMU's)

Evidence from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) highlights that MLUs are particularly suitable for healthy women having a straight forward pregnancy because:

- Birthing in a MLU is just as safe for your baby as a Consultant-Led Unit and
- In an MLU, you are less likely to have a caesarean section, blood transfusion, require ventouse (vacuum) or forceps to assist in the delivery of your baby.



GIVING BIRTH IN AN MLU

MLUs are particularly suitable for healthy women having a straightforward pregnancy with a single baby. Definition of a straightforward pregnancy is one in which:

- You do not have any pre-existing problems which are affecting this pregnancy
- A problem you had in a previous pregnancy or birth is not likely to happen again or
- You do not have a problem in this pregnancy requiring ongoing consultant care



You can plan to give birth in any MLU in NI if you:

- are aged between 16 and 40 years at time of booking appointment
- have a Body Mass Index (BMI) at booking appointment between 18 kg/m^2 and 35 kg/m^2
- have a last recorded blood count (haemoglobin) of at least 100 g/L
- have had no more than 4 previous births
- achieved assisted conception with clomifene (Clomid) or other similar fertility treatment
- had your waters break on their own less than 24hrs ago and you have no sign of infection and are feeling well
- have or had a mental health problem requiring you to seek help from a mental health professional or counsellor
- had a threatened miscarriage, but pregnancy continued normally
- had a threatened early labour which settled
- had a placenta that was previously low lying, but it is now in a better position
- have a health condition that does not affect your pregnancy or your general health
- are receiving support from social services with no impact on on your pregnancy or health
- had a baby with a health condition, but in this pregnancy your baby has no known condition

- your waters have gone and they are slightly green in colour and otherwise you are feeling well
- had a previous third degree tear that healed well and has not given you any ongoing problems
- have a blood test showing 'serum antibodies with no clinical significance' (i.e. this has no effect on you or your baby)
- had previous cervical treatment and have reached 37 weeks with no related problems



In addition, women who do not meet the criteria as outlined in pages 4 and 5 of this leaflet, following assessment and discussion, can plan to give birth in an Alongside Midwife-Led Unit (AMU) if you:

- are aged under 16 or aged over 40 years at booking appointment
- have a BMI at booking appointment of $\geq 35 \text{ kg/m}^2$ & $\leq 40 \text{ kg/m}^2$ and you have good mobility
- have a blood count (haemoglobin) of at least 85g/L when last recorded and this will be rechecked on admission
- have no more than 5 previous births
- received IVF and your pregnancy is at term (excluding egg donation) and you are aged under 40 years
- had your waters break on their own more than 24hrs ago, you are in established labour, and you have no sign of infection
- have or had a mental health problem which has required medication, extra support and help from a mental health professional and or counsellor
- had bleeding after a previous birth, but did not need a blood transfusion or surgery
- have had extensive vaginal, cervical, or third degree perineal trauma during previous childbirth
- are in labour following induction with prostaglandins (pessary/gel, not drip)
- have been told that you have Group B Streptococcus positive (Strep B) in this pregnancy and have no sign of infection

What if I go into labour early or I am overdue?

It is recommended that you birth in a MLU if your pregnancy is between 37 and 42 weeks (up to 15 days past 40 weeks) and you have met the criteria as outlined in this leaflet.

Will the guideline definitely apply in my local MLU?

These guidelines apply in **all** Midwife-Led Units in Northern Ireland and have been developed with the support of the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN), the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and key maternity services stakeholders.

Some women, including older women in their first pregnancy and women more than one week past their due date, have a higher chance of needing to be transferred to a consultant-led unit during or immediately after childbirth.

You should seek advice from your local midwife when planning your place of birth. If you have any queries or difficulties, you can arrange an appointment with a senior midwife or a supervisor of midwives. The local supervisor of midwives contact details are available in your maternity hand held record or ask your midwife.



You can view or print a copy of this leaflet by
logging on to the GAIN website

www.gain-ni.org

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