## Midwifery Practice Guidelines
### HSE Home Birth Service

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1. Guideline Statement

1.1. These guidelines shall support and guide midwifery practice for the HSE Home Birth Service based on the Royal College of Midwifery (RCM) Evidence Based Guidelines for Midwifery Led Care in Labour (2008) and the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines for Intrapartum Care of Healthy Women and their Babies during Childbirth (2014).

1.2. NICE 2014 suggest that there is a higher likelihood of a normal birth, with less intervention, among women who plan to give birth at home or in a midwife-led unit. The National Maternity Strategy (DOH 2016), Royal College of Midwives (RCM Position Paper, 2002) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG/RCM 2007) support home birth for women with uncomplicated pregnancies.

1.3. Hanafin and O'Reilly (p.52, 2015) state: “Home birth for multiparous women appears to be safe for mothers and babies, and offers benefits to both, while there is an increased risk (although modest) for primiparous women with planned home birth”, supported by Hollowell et al 2011, The Birthplace National Prospective Cohort Study.

1.4. These guidelines shall not replace clinical judgement and shall be read in conjunction with the regulatory, professional and legislative documents outlined. Midwives are obliged to ensure currency with regard to relevant regulatory, professional and legislative matters.

2. Purpose

These guidelines shall
2.1 Guide midwifery practices within the HSE Home Birth Service and have been adapted from the RCM Evidence Based Guidelines for Midwifery Led Care in Labour (RCM 2008) and the NICE Guidelines for Intrapartum Care of Healthy Women and their Babies during Childbirth.

2.2 Support the Self-Employed Community Midwives (SECMs) to provide evidence-based information to women so that they can make informed choices when considering birthing at home.

3. Scope

These guidelines apply to Self-Employed Community Midwives who have an agreement with the HSE to provide home birth services for eligible women.

4. Legislation, Codes of Practice, Standards and Guidance

4.1 Health Acts, 1947 to 2015 and regulations made thereunder
4.2 Nurses and Midwives Act, 2011
4.3 The Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework (NMBI 2015)
4.4 The Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct (NMBI 2014)
4.5 Practice Standards for Midwives (NMBI 2015)
4.6 Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015)
4.7 Guidance for Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management (ABA 2007)
4.8 NICE Clinical Guideline 190 – Intrapartum Care: Care of Healthy Women and their Babies during Childbirth (NICE 2014)
4.9 Evidence Based Guidelines for Midwifery Care in Labour (RCM 2008)
4.10 The Irish Maternity Early Warning System (IMEWS) NCEC (DOH 2014)
4.11 Communication (Clinical Handover) in Maternity Services NCEC (DOH 2014)
4.12 Sepsis Management NCEC (DOH 2014)
4.15 National Consent Policy (HSE 2013)
4.16 Safety Incident Management Policy (HSE 2014)
4.18 National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026 (DOH 2016)

This list is not exhaustive and reference should be made at all times to the guideline for reference sources and the database of legislation, codes of practice, standards and guidance (Clinical Governance Group for the HSE Home Birth Service 2016).

5. Terms and Definitions

5.1. Supported Care Pathway: This care pathway is intended for normal-risk mothers and babies, with midwives leading and delivering care within a multidisciplinary framework. Responsibility for the coordination of a woman’s care will be assigned to a named clinical midwife manager, and care will be delivered by the community midwifery team, with most antenatal and postnatal care being provided in the community and home settings. The woman can exercise a choice with her healthcare professional with regard to the birth setting, which may be in an alongside birth centre in the hospital, or at home. A woman may need to transfer, either temporarily or permanently, to another model of care because of an emerging risk. She may also choose to transfer to another care pathway, e.g. if she wants an epidural, or if she chooses to be under the care of an obstetrician (DOH 2016). The lead clinical midwife is the Self-Employed Community Midwife (SECM) in this guideline.

5.2. Assisted Care Pathway: The assisted care pathway is intended for mothers and babies considered to be at medium risk, and for normal-risk women who choose an obstetric service. Responsibility for the co-ordination of a woman’s care will be assigned to a named obstetrician, and care will be delivered by obstetricians and midwives as part of a multidisciplinary team. Care will be provided across both the hospital and community, and births will take place within a hospital setting in a specialised birth centre. Postnatal care will start in the hospital and transition to the community on discharge from hospital (DOH 2016).

5.3. Specialised Care Pathway: The specialised care pathway for high-risk mothers and babies will be led by a named obstetrician, and will be delivered by obstetricians and midwives as part of a multidisciplinary team. Care will, in the main, be provided in the hospital, and births will take place in the hospital in a specialised birth centre. An individualised, multidisciplinary, multispecialty approach to care and care planning (for both hospital and woman) should be utilised. Where possible, antenatal care should be provided in the community. Postnatal care will start in the hospital and transition to the community on discharge from hospital (DOH 2016).
5.4. Terms:
SECM: Self-Employed Community Midwife
DMO: Designated Midwifery Officer
NICE: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
RCM: Royal College of Midwives
RCOG: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
HSE: Health Service Executive
SCBU: Special Care Baby Unit
IMEWS: The Irish Maternity Early Warning System

Terms and definitions are also outlined in the Quality and Risk Taxonomy Governance Group Report on Glossary of Quality and Risk Terms and Definitions (HSE, 2009).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. The Director of Primary Care shall ensure:

6.1.1 The provision of appropriate systems and structures to support the SECM to provide midwifery care for women and their families availing of the HSE Home Birth Service.

6.2. The HSE Chief Officer shall:

6.2.1 Implement systems and structures for the SECM to provide midwifery care for women and their families availing of the HSE Home Birth Service.
6.2.2 Communicate with the SECM and the DMO if a case conference or alternate plan of care for the woman is required.
6.2.3 Require the SECM and DMO to report any adverse incidents to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as per HSE Safety Incident Management Policy (2014).

6.3. The Designated Midwifery Officer (DMO) shall:

6.3.1 Ensure that the appropriate systems and structures are in place to implement these guidelines.
6.3.2 Facilitate communication between the maternity hospital healthcare professionals, SECM and the woman as appropriate.
6.3.3 Support and communicate with the SECM regarding the expected clinical midwifery care to be provided for women and babies.
6.3.4 Require the SECM to report any adverse incidents via the DMO to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as per HSE Safety Incident Management Policy 2014.
6.3.5 Ensure that all other key stakeholders are notified if there is a change in care plan for the woman and baby.
6.3.6 Liaise with Ambulance Control as per National Policy for Communication with National Ambulance Service (HSE 2015).
6.3.7 Ensure that the SECM receives these guidelines and records same.
6.3.8 Audit adherence to guidelines and act upon audit results.

6.4. The Self-employed Community Midwife (SECM) shall:

6.4.1 Ensure competence in managing obstetric emergencies through attendance at obstetric emergency skills training.
6.4.2 Maintain and demonstrate ongoing competence in all aspects of maternity care.
6.4.3 Have all equipment required for obstetric emergencies and as stated in the home birth equipment list (Appendix I).
6.4.4 Ensure that the woman and her partner at the booking interview (Appendix II) have read the home birth information letter (Appendix III), the application
and consent form agreeing to transfer for obstetric/medical care, and sign the form at booking with the SECM (Appendix IV).

6.4.5 Ensure that the woman understands the conditions referred to in Tables 1 to 6, the eligibility criteria for the HSE Home Birth Service (Appendix IV).

6.4.6 Ensure that the woman and her partner are prepared during pregnancy for the possibility of transfer of maternity care before, during or after the home birth, by ambulance if necessary.

6.4.7 Communicate with the DMO and ensure that all other key health professionals are notified if there is a change in care plan for the woman and baby.

6.4.8 Report any adverse incidents via the DMO to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as per HSE Safety Incident Management Policy 2014.

6.4.9 Liaise with Ambulance Control as per National Policy for Communication with National Ambulance Service (HSE, 2015).

6.4.10 Ensure adherence with these guidelines and all relevant HSE policies, procedures and guidelines.

6.4.11 Consider their own safety at all times, following the HSE Guidelines for Lone Workers (2012).

6.4.12 Have a second SECM on call for attendance at the home birth.

7. Procedure

7.1. Guide to the Antenatal Booking Interview
The antenatal booking interview is considered to be the most important aspect of midwifery care undertaken. It lays the foundation for the development of the essential relationship between mother and SECM. Refer to Appendix II for guidance on the detailed booking interview.

7.1.1. The SECM should ensure that the following points are discussed, completed and documented at the booking interview. The SECM must refer to the HSE Policy to Support Self-employed Community Midwives to Assess the Eligibility and Suitability of Women for Inclusion/Exclusion for Planned Home Birth (HSE 2016) and McCourt et al (2011) Birthplace Study.

7.1.2.1. The home birth information leaflet (Appendix III) is given and explained to the woman.

7.1.2.2. Discuss and explain the application/consent form, Appendix IV, which includes a risk assessment as per the HSE Home Birth Service Agreement.

7.1.2.3. The application/consent form for the HSE Home Birth Service is signed by the woman and SECM and forwarded to the DMO.

7.1.2.4. The National Ambulance Service form is completed for place of birth (if place of birth confirmed at booking) and forwarded to the DMO.

7.1.2.5. Inform the woman of the mandatory requirement for the attendance of a second SECM at the home birth.

7.1.2.6. Inform the woman that it is essential she is booked into a maternity unit/hospital and is advised to register with a general practitioner (GP) who provides combined/shared maternity care to women planning a home birth.

7.1.2.7. Inform the woman of the schedule of visits as per the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme (Appendix V). Shared antenatal care may be carried out by the Self-Employed Community Midwives and GP (if he/she is agreeable), with referrals to the maternity unit/hospital as appropriate.

7.1.2.8. It is desirable that an appropriate clinician undertakes the newborn examination within the first days of life. It may be
necessary to transfer the baby into hospital for the newborn examination.

7.1.2.9. The woman should be aware that Entonox is the only pain relief medication available at a home birth, but the midwife and woman can discuss other pain-relieving strategies as the antenatal period progresses.

7.1.2.10. Wherever possible, the SECM should include the woman’s birth partner in the care provided and she/he should provide the partner with information to support the woman’s decision to birth at home. The midwife should ensure that the woman has adequate support from her birth partner/s.

7.1.2.11. At the initial assessment, the woman must be informed of the possibility of transfer to the maternity unit/hospital before, during or after the birth. She must also be informed of the possible indications for transfer in the first, second and third stages of labour and must agree with the plan to transfer if clinically indicated. Transfer in labour may or may not involve the woman continuing to receive midwifery care from the SECM, depending on the agreement in place in the maternity unit/hospital involved in the transfer.

7.1.2.12. It is desirable that all home birth women would carry their hand-held hospital notes.

7.1.2.13. Women who are particularly vulnerable or who lack social support need careful consideration when choosing a place of birth.

7.1.2.14. Develop a plan of care with the woman and her partner based on the booking interview and the risk assessment. Refer as appropriate to the following:
   a. Obstetrician
   b. Physicians
   c. Social worker
   d. Dietician
   e. Physiotherapist
   f. Counsellor/mental health liaison team
   g. Smoking cessation officer or appropriate person
   h. Ultrasonographer
   i. GP
   j. Other healthcare providers as appropriate

7.1.2.15. Psychological, social and physical assessment are undertaken at the booking visit and at each subsequent antenatal appointment, taking note of the:
   a. History of pregnancy since last visit
   b. Concerns and worries discussed and addressed at each visit
   c. Emotional wellbeing discussed.

7.1.3. Suitability for planning a home birth can be, at times, undetermined at the initial interview.

7.1.3.1. Women may be deemed suitable for a home birth pending individual assessment by a consultant obstetrician.

7.1.3.2. Women may require assessment throughout pregnancy, receiving combined care from the Self-Employed Community Midwife and hospital obstetrician in the antenatal period. The final decision of place of birth may have to be deferred towards the end of the pregnancy.

7.1.4 The SECM informs the woman and her partner that risk assessment continues throughout pregnancy, labour and following the birth.

7.1.5 Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and the HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).
7.1.6. **Auditable Standards:**

- **7.1.6.1.** Is there documented evidence of an information leaflet given to the woman?
- **7.1.6.2.** Is there evidence of discussion regarding HSE eligibility criteria for home births with the woman?
- **7.1.6.3.** Is there evidence of referral, where appropriate, to the liaison obstetrician or other relevant healthcare professionals?

**7.2. Guide to Antenatal Risk Assessment**

- **7.2.1.** The SECM has a clinical responsibility to recognise potential risk and to refer the woman appropriately. Midwives have a professional responsibility to adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) standards and guidelines.
- **7.2.2.** Risk assessment must be an ongoing process. All eligibility criteria tables for risk assessment will be available to the woman (Appendix III) and all personnel involved in the woman’s care. The important feature of risk assessment is the identification of the problem, recording of information, and the identified risk must be referred to the correct healthcare professional in a timely manner so that the problem may be dealt with appropriately and effectively.

- **7.2.2.1.** Tables 1 & 2 identify areas of **high risk**. If a woman presents with any of the conditions/factors within Tables 1 and 2 she is deemed ineligible for home birth. This list is not exhaustive but should give the midwife an objective dimension.

- **7.2.2.2.** Tables 3 and 4 identify women who may be considered **medium-risk** and therefore need to have a review by a consultant obstetrician before a decision is taken, i.e. where it may be deemed that the woman is eligible (or not) based on the clinical opinion of that consultant. This list is not exhaustive but should give the midwife an objective dimension.

- **7.2.2.3.** Women who do not relate to the conditions in Tables 1-4 are deemed eligible based on an assessment of **low risk**. The tables are not exhaustive; if the SECM has any other concerns or the woman has any other condition not listed on the tables then obstetric opinion should be sought.

- **7.2.3.** **Procedure for initial risk assessment:**

- **7.2.3.1.** Individualised risk assessment must be carried out for each pregnant woman.

- **7.2.3.2.** The midwife and the woman sign and complete the risk assessment tables within the application/consent form for home births and send to the DMO.

- **7.2.3.3.** The DMO should copy the completed application form, return a copy to the woman and accompany this with a phone call to go through the assessment, explain the purpose of it (i.e. the safety of the woman and her baby) and to have the woman verify the information in it.

- **7.2.3.4.** If there are no risk factors identified, the woman can be offered a **supported care pathway** and can be provided with an initial confirmation of eligibility for the service based on continual risk assessment.

- **7.2.3.5.** If conditions on Tables 1 and 2 were identified, then the HSE cannot offer the woman the HSE Home Birth Service and an alternative pathway of maternity care is proposed: either an **assisted care pathway or specialised care pathway**.
7.2.3.6. If conditions or factors are identified on Tables 3 and 4 the woman can be given a ‘pending approval status’ and advised that she will need to have obstetric review. In conducting such a review, the obstetrician needs to be aware of the criteria against which he/she is reviewing the approval and approve eligibility (or not) based on this assessment. Obstetric review must be documented and provided to the DMO who can then, on the basis of that assessment, provide initial confirmation to proceed on a supported care pathway (or not) on the understanding that this will be revisited later in her pregnancy and may change, depending on her medical condition, to an assisted care pathway or specialised care pathway.

7.2.3.7. The SECM provides ongoing risk assessment through the observation and monitoring of the mother and baby at each antenatal appointment, during labour and birth, and in the postnatal period up to and including day 14.

7.2.3.8. Risk factors may change and therefore a woman deemed originally to be low-risk may, during the course of her pregnancy, develop a condition on one of the tables that may either deem her high risk and therefore ineligible, or medium risk requiring review by an obstetrician.

7.2.3.9. Ongoing communication between mother, SECM, DMO and any other healthcare personnel involved is paramount.

7.2.3.10. Any risks identified must be explained to the woman with available supporting written literature.

7.2.3.11. The woman must consent to transfer to hospital maternity care if the SECM identifies the need to do so during the antenatal, intranatal and postnatal periods.

7.2.3.12. The SECM shall refer and/or transfer the care of the woman and/or baby using the Policy to Support Self-Employed Community Midwives to Assess the Eligibility and Suitability of Women for Inclusion/Exclusion for Planned Home Birth with the HSE Home Birth Service and the Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service.

7.2.3.13. The SECM is required to document evidence in the midwifery notes of the risk assessments carried out at each antenatal appointment and if pregnancy is prolonged at 40 weeks +10 days.

7.2.3.14. If the SECM and/or DMO identify any change in relation to the risk status of the woman then the eligibility may be reconsidered; e.g. if the woman moves from low to medium risk a consultant review may be requested and the eligibility status changed to ‘pending’ until a consultant assessment is received. The woman may require an assisted care pathway or specialised care pathway.

7.2.3.15. If the woman’s status moves from medium or low risk to high risk the eligibility can be withdrawn and the woman referred immediately to an obstetric unit and offered an alternative pathway of maternity care; either assisted care pathway or specialised care pathway.

7.2.3.16. The SECM shall transfer the woman to obstetric care if any of the conditions listed in Tables 1 and 2 are identified antenatally. The SECM shall refer the woman to obstetric care if any of the conditions listed in Tables 3 and 4 are identified antenatally. These tables are not exhaustive and if the SECM has any other concerns or the woman has developed any other condition not listed on the tables then obstetric opinion should be sought. When and if the identified problem is corrected it may be possible to transfer the woman back to the SECM, who will continue care.
7.2.3.17. The SECM should reconfirm to the DMO by 36 weeks that the woman is eligible for a home birth; the name/s of the second midwife and a birth pack can be organised for the expectant woman. The SECM must reconfirm, at this stage, the woman's contact details, address, and send the directions to the place of birth to the DMO as per ambulance control protocol.

7.2.4. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.2.5. **Auditable Standards**

7.2.5.1. Is there documented evidence of continuous risk assessment throughout the pregnancy, labour and postnatal period?

7.2.5.2. Has the DMO been informed that all women at 36 weeks’ gestation are eligible for homebirth?

7.2.5.3. Is there evidence of referral, where appropriate, to the liaison obstetrician or other relevant healthcare professionals?

7.2.5.4. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.3. **Guideline to Stretch and Sweep Cervical Membranes**

NICE (2008) report evidence to suggest that at 40 weeks of gestation only 58% of women had delivered their babies. This increased to 74% by 41 weeks and to 82% by 42 weeks. NICE (2008) state that in women who are healthy and have otherwise uncomplicated pregnancies, perinatal mortality and morbidity are increased in pregnancies of longer duration than 42 weeks. Sweeping the membranes as a general policy from 38 to 40 weeks onwards decreased the frequency of prolonged pregnancy. Membrane-sweeping reduced the frequency of using other methods to induce labour.

7.3.1. Sweeping the membranes increased the likelihood of both:
   a. Spontaneous labour within 48 hours (63% vs. 83%)
   b. Birth within one week (48% vs. 66%) (RCOG 2001).

7.3.2. At 40 and 41 weeks gestation nulliparous women should be offered a sweeping of the membranes at the antenatal appointment (see procedure Appendix VI).

7.3.3. At 41 weeks’ gestation, parous women shall be offered a sweeping of the membranes at the antenatal appointment.

7.3.4. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.3.5. **Auditable Standards**

7.3.5.1. Is there documented discussion with the woman of a plan of care for post-maturity?

7.3.5.2. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.4. **Guideline for Referral to Maternity Unit/Hospital for Prolonged Pregnancy**

Prolonged pregnancy is defined as continuing past 41 weeks from the first day of the last menstrual period (NICE 2008). The SECM will discuss the reasons for referral, the various methods of induction of labour that may be used, and the potential risks and benefits for accepting or declining induction, based on the current evidence.

7.4.1. This will enable the couple to make informed choices in regard to induction of labour.

7.4.2. The woman, her partner and the SECM will then decide on a plan of care.
7.4.3. The SECM should adhere to the local maternity unit’s guideline on induction of labour.

7.4.4. At 40 weeks’ gestation: nulliparous women shall be offered a sweeping of the membranes.

7.4.5. At 41 weeks, multiparous women shall be offered a membrane sweep.

7.4.6. The woman will be referred to the maternity unit for assessment at **40 weeks +10 days/according to local policy**, where a plan of care will be established with the woman, the obstetrician and the SECM.

7.4.7. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.4.8. **Auditable Standards**

7.4.8.1. Is there a documented plan of care for the management of post-maturity with the woman in this pregnancy?

7.4.8.2. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.5. **Guideline for the Care of Women with Pre-labour Rupture of Membranes at Term (After 37 Weeks of Gestation)**

7.5.1 To ensure an accurate diagnosis of ruptured membranes the SECM should:

7.5.1.1. Carry out a timely home visit based on professional clinical judgement or refer immediately to hospital if there is a problem (individual assessment) – advise woman to wear a sanitary pad.

7.5.1.2. Obtain a full and accurate history.

7.5.1.3. Record TPR/BP, noting any signs of maternal pyrexia or tachycardia.

7.5.1.4. Perform an abdominal palpation noting lie, presentation and degree of engagement of the baby’s head (if non-fixed, transfer to hospital).

7.5.1.5. Auscultate foetal heart rate and note foetal movements.

7.5.1.6. Inspect to assess the amount, colour and odour of liquor draining.

7.5.1.7. Where there is ambiguity about the possibility of actual SROM the woman should be referred to her local maternity unit for a full assessment.

7.5.1.8. Document findings.

7.5.2 It is recommended that in the absence of contractions no vaginal examinations should be conducted. If there is doubt as to whether the membranes are ruptured the woman should be referred to hospital for a speculum examination + an ultrasound scan.

7.5.3 Women presenting with pre-labour rupture of membranes (ROM) at term should be advised that:

7.5.3.1. The serious risk of neonatal infection is 1% rather than 0.5% for women with intact membranes.

7.5.3.2. Intravenous antibiotics are advised after 18 hours post ROM.

7.5.3.3. 90% of all women with pre-labour rupture of membranes will go into labour within 24 hours.

7.5.3.4. Induction of labour is appropriate approximately 24 hours after a rupture of membranes (RCOG, 2012).

7.5.4 In the absence of complications the woman should be offered the choice to stay at home provided she is able to:

7.5.4.1. Monitor her temperature four-hourly to exclude pyrexia.

7.5.4.2. Observe PV loss, foetal movements and the onset of contractions.

7.5.4.3. The woman is advised to inform the SECM if there is any evidence of onset of labour, pyrexia, feeling unwell, tachycardia, blood-
stained or meconium-stained liquor or reduction of foetal movements occurs.

7.5.4.4. Following the initial assessment at home the SECM should discuss a plan of care with the woman.

7.5.4.5. If labour has not started 18 hours after rupture of the membranes, advise the woman to give birth in the hospital where she has booked and if labour has not started within 24 hours to stay in hospital for at least 12 hours after the birth (NICE 2014).

7.5.4.6. If there are no contractions after 12 hours the SECM should contact the maternity unit to which the woman is registered and liaise with senior midwives/obstetricians regarding plan of care.

7.5.4.7. If there are no contractions after 18 hours post-SROM refer the woman to the local maternity unit.

7.5.5 Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.5.6 Auditable Standards

7.5.6.1. Is there evidence of a documented discussion with the woman being informed of possible risks of infection in the presence of SROM?

7.5.6.2. Is there evidence of appropriate referral in the records?

7.5.6.3. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.6. Guide for Care in the First Stage of Labour at Planned Home Birth

7.6.1. Definition of established labour is confirmed by:

7.6.1.1. Latent first stage of labour – a period of time, not necessarily continuous, when there are painful contractions and there is some cervical change, including cervical effacement and dilatation up to 4 cm.

7.6.1.2. Established first stage of labour – when there are regular painful contractions and there is progressive cervical dilatation from 4 cm (NICE, 2014).

7.6.2. It is usual practice to carry out a number of maternal and foetal observations during the first stage of labour to detect changes in maternal or foetal health. These provide an important overview of how the woman is progressing during her labour and what her needs are over time. These observations can be recorded in the woman’s records or on a pre-designed chart (NICE, 2014).

7.6.3. Women usually determine the onset of labour themselves and contact the SECM.

7.6.4. On arrival at the woman’s house the SECM should determine the onset of labour based on the following assessments:

7.6.4.1. Taking a detailed history, identifying risk factors, ascertaining concerns and worries.

7.6.4.2. Perform an abdominal palpation to determine length, strength, frequency and duration of the contractions/lie, presentation, position, engagement of the foetus in between contractions.

7.6.4.3. If contracting, offer a vaginal examination and, with the woman’s consent, confirm the onset of labour and to establish a baseline for further progress/assessments.

7.6.4.4. If breech presentation or any malpresentation is diagnosed following assessment, then the SECM should call an ambulance and transfer the woman to the nearest maternity unit/hospital ASAP. (Refer to Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service, HSE 2016. All SECMS, in the case of an imminent birth, will have
undertaken drills and skills training in the management of undiagnosed breech in labour through obstetric emergency training.)

7.6.4.5. Record the following observations during the first stage of labour:
   a. Half-hourly documentation of frequency of contractions.
   b. Auscultate the foetal heart rate for one full minute using a sonicaid or pinnard after contraction, every 15 minutes.
   c. Any foetal movements felt should be noted and recorded.
   d. Hourly pulse or more frequently if indicated.
   e. Four-hourly temperature and blood pressure or more frequently if indicated.
   f. Frequency of emptying the bladder.
   g. Offer a vaginal examination four-hourly or if there is concern about progress or in response to the woman's wishes (after abdominal palpation and assessment of vaginal loss).

7.6.5. Following the assessment of the woman and if she is in labour:
   7.6.5.1. The SECM should contact the second on-call SECM and inform her/him of impending birth, if not already contacted.
   7.6.5.2. Ambulance Control must be informed as per HSE Procedure for the Notification of Home Births to the National Ambulance Service (2015).

7.6.6. Delay in progress of first-stage labour is defined as cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours for first labours, and cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours or a slowing in the progress of labour for second or subsequent labours.

7.6.6.1. To define delay in established first stage, take the following into account:
   a. parity
   b. cervical dilatation and rate of change
   c. uterine contractions
   d. station and position of presenting part
   e. the woman’s emotional state
   f. Referral to the appropriate healthcare professional and length of time this may take.

7.6.6.2. If delay in the established first stage is suspected, assess all aspects of progress in labour when diagnosing delay, including:
   a. cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours for first labours
   b. cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours or a slowing in the progress of labour for second or subsequent labours
   c. descent and rotation of the baby's head
   d. Changes in the strength, duration and frequency of uterine contractions.

7.6.6.3. If delay is diagnosed, transfer the woman to obstetric care.

7.6.7. In the event of slow progress in the first stage of labour

7.6.7.1. Perform an abdominal palpation to assess descent of the baby’s head and note the strength, frequency and duration of the uterine contractions and how the woman is coping.

7.6.7.2. Perform a vaginal examination to assess progress, noting cervical dilatation, descent of the head in relation to the ischial spines, the position of the foetus, and the presence of caput or moulding. If membranes are ruptured note the colour and the amount of liquor draining.

7.6.7.3. Decisions regarding the need to perform an amniotomy should be made using professional clinical judgement. The reason for doing so must be documented. Amniotomy is an intervention in normal
labour. The woman is labouring in the ideal environment and therefore caution should be exercised.

7.6.8 Transfer to hospital: The SECM shall refer to Tables 5 & 6 (Appendix IV) or the Policy to Support Self-Employed Community Midwives to assess the eligibility and suitability of women for Inclusion/Exclusion for Planned Home Birth for indications for transfer to hospital and to the Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).

7.6.9 Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.6.10 **Auditable Standards:**

7.6.10.1. Is there documented evidence of appropriate evidence-based care in the first stage of labour?

7.6.10.2. Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?

7.6.10.3. Is there accurate diagnosis of delay in the first stage of labour and evidence of appropriate transfer?

7.6.10.4. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.7. **Guideline for Pain Relief Methods for Labour at Home**

7.7.1. Most women will choose to use some kind of pain-relieving strategies during labour, and many will use several different ones. What is important is that as far as possible the women feel in control and confident. It is important to remember that relatively simple things can make a difference. Women appreciate having someone whom they know and trust with them in labour. Women should be able to choose to play music of their own choice and drink and eat a light diet if they want to during labour.

7.7.2. Women can choose to walk, move around, find comfortable positions, sit, stand up, or lie down on their sides. However, if they lie on their backs they are likely to feel the pain more intensely.

7.7.3. Entonox has the advantage that it acts very quickly and rapidly passes out of the system without affecting the baby, and it can be used anywhere – even in the bath.

7.7.4. Women who choose to use breathing and relaxation techniques or massage by their birth partner should be supported.

7.7.5. Women who choose to use acupuncture or hypnosis should be able to, although this may not be provided by the midwives. The little evidence available shows that they may reduce the pain of labour and do not appear to adversely affect either maternal or neonatal outcomes (NICE, 2014).

7.7.6. Immersion in water provides effective pain relief, so encouraging women to get into a warm bath or birthing pool will help reduce the pain of the first stage of labour, and mean they are less likely to need transfer to hospital for pain relief. When using water in labour refer to the HSE Home Birth Service Water Birth Guideline (HSE 2016).

7.7.7. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.7.8. **Auditable Standard:**

7.7.8.1. Is there evidence of adequate discussion regarding pain relief in labour?

7.7.8.2. If water was used in labour, was the pool temperature measured and documented hourly?
7.7.8.3. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.8. Guide to Care in the Second Stage of Labour at a Planned Home Birth

7.8.1 Definition of second stage of labour
7.8.1.1. Passive second stage of labour: the finding of full dilatation of the cervix before or in the absence of involuntary expulsive contractions.
7.8.1.2. Onset of the active second stage of labour:
   a. the baby is visible
   b. expulsive contractions with a finding of full dilatation of the cervix or other signs of full dilatation of the cervix
   c. active maternal effort following confirmation of full dilatation of the cervix in the absence of expulsive contractions (NICE, 2014).

7.8.2 Monitoring progress in the second stage of labour
7.8.2.1. Hourly blood pressure and 15 minutes’ maternal pulse are assessed for the duration of labour and documented.
7.8.2.2. The length, strength, frequency and duration of the contractions are observed.
7.8.2.3. Foetal heart rate is recorded at five-minute intervals along with maternal pulse or, after each contraction, for one full minute.
7.8.2.4. Any evidence of amniotic fluid draining is observed, noting colour and amount.
7.8.2.5. Note general condition and hydration; bladder should be empty.
7.8.2.6. The woman should be encouraged to adopt a position that is most comfortable and effective for her (provided that the maternal and foetal position are satisfactory and there is progressive descent of the presenting part with each contraction.).
7.8.2.7. Non-directive pushing should be encouraged, enabling the woman to be directed by her own body.
7.8.2.8. NICE 2014 states that indications for performing episiotomies should be restricted to foetal indications only, i.e. foetal compromise – however, the midwife’s clinical judgement should also prevail here.
7.8.2.9. Vaginal examination should be offered after one hour if there is no progress in the active second stage.

7.8.3. Delay of progress on the second stage of labour
7.8.3.1. Nulliparous woman:
   a. birth would be expected to take place within three hours of the start of the active second stage in most women.
   b. diagnose delay in the active second stage when it has lasted two hours and refer the woman to a healthcare professional trained to undertake an operative vaginal birth if birth is not imminent (NICE, 2014).
   c. SECMs must take into account the transfer time to the local maternity unit, knowing that birth would be expected to take place within three hours maximum from the start of the active second stage.
   d. In nulliparous women, if after one hour of the active second stage progress is inadequate, delay is suspected. Following vaginal examination, amniotomy should be offered if the membranes are intact.

7.8.3.2. Multiparous woman:
a. Birth would be expected to take place within two hours of the start of the active second stage in most women.

b. When the active second stage has lasted one hour or more, delay should be diagnosed and refer the woman to a healthcare professional trained to undertake an operative vaginal birth if birth is not imminent (NICE 2014).

c. Midwives will need to take into account the transfer time to the local maternity unit, knowing that birth would be expected to take place within two hours maximum from the start of the active second stage.

d. For a multiparous woman, suspect delay if progress (in terms of rotation and/or descent of the presenting part) is inadequate after 30 minutes of active second stage. Offer vaginal examination and then offer amniotomy if the membranes are intact (NICE 2014).

7.8.4 Transfer to hospital: The SECM shall refer to Tables 5 & 6 (Appendix IV) or the Policy to Support Self-employed Community Midwives to Assess the Eligibility and Suitability of Women for Inclusion/Exclusion for Planned Home Birth for indications for transfer to hospital and to the Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).

7.8.5 Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.8.6 Auditable Standards:

7.8.6.1. Is there documented evidence of appropriate evidence-based care in the second stage of labour?

7.8.6.2. Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?

7.8.6.3. Is there accurate diagnosis of delay in the second stage of labour and evidence of appropriate transfer?

7.8.6.4. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.9. Guideline for Care in the Third Stage of Labour at a Home Birth

7.9.1. Definition of the third stage of labour

7.9.1.1. The third stage of labour is the time from the birth of the baby to the expulsion of the placenta and membranes and achievement of haemostasis.

7.9.2. Modified active management of the third stage involves a package of care comprising the following components:

7.9.2.1. routine use of uterotonic drugs

7.9.2.2. deferred clamping and cutting of the cord

7.9.2.3. controlled cord traction after signs of separation of the placenta.

7.9.3. Physiological management of the third stage involves a package of care comprising the following components:

7.9.3.1. no routine use of uterotonic drugs

7.9.3.2. no clamping of the cord until pulsation has stopped

7.9.3.3. delivery of the placenta by maternal effort (NICE2014).

7.9.4. Take cord blood and blood for Kleihauer, if mother is rhesus-negative

7.9.5. Provided the woman is haemodynamically stable and requests physiological management of the third stage, no cord clamping until pulsation has ceased, allowing the placenta to deliver spontaneously aided by gravity, nipple stimulation, breastfeeding and skin-to-skin. Ensure that the woman has an empty bladder.
7.9.6. If the placenta is undelivered after one hour of physiological management, consider active management.

7.9.7. The placenta should deliver within a maximum period of one hour and 15 minutes. If not delivered, refer to Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service and transfer to a maternity unit via ambulance.

7.9.8. Diagnose a prolonged third stage of labour if it is not completed within 30 minutes of the birth with modified active management or within 60 minutes of the birth with physiological management (NICE 2014).

7.9.9. After the placenta has delivered, examine it for completeness and health.

7.9.10. Estimate blood loss (as per PPH guideline for HSE Home Birth Service) and record in maternity record.

7.9.11. **Transfer to Maternity Unit/Hospital:** The SECM shall refer to Tables 5 and 6 (Appendix IV) or the Policy to Support Self-Employed Community Midwives to Assess the Eligibility and Suitability of Women for Inclusion/Exclusion for Planned Home Birth for indications for transfer to hospital and to the Transfer Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).

7.9.12. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.9.13. **Auditable Standards:**

- **7.9.13.1.** Is there documented evidence of appropriate evidence-based care in the third stage of labour?
- **7.9.13.2.** Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?
- **7.9.13.3.** Is there accurate diagnosis of delay in the third stage of labour and evidence of appropriate transfer?
- **7.9.13.4.** Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.10. **Guide for Immediate Care of Newborn**

7.10.1. In the first minutes after birth:

- **7.10.1.1.** Evaluate the condition of the baby – specifically respiration, heart rate and tone – in order to determine whether resuscitation is required. Kleihauer resuscitation is required both SECMs in attendance at the birth who are trained and skilled in neonatal resuscitation shall:
  - **a.** Ensure there is a designated area prepared and equipment is set up for resuscitation prior to the birth.
  - **b.** Resuscitate the baby as per neonatal resuscitation programme (Appendix XI).
  - **c.** If necessary, call 999 or 112 emergency services.
  - **d.** Throughout the emergency situation in which the baby needs resuscitation, support and communicate with the mother and her birth companions.
  - **e.** The SECM should contact the midwifery manager in the receiving maternity unit/hospital and transfer the newborn as per the HSE Home Birth Service transfer policy.
  - **f.** Minimise separation of the baby and mother, where clinically appropriate.

- **7.10.1.2.** Record the time of birth to the onset of regular respirations (NICE 2014).

- **7.10.1.3.** Record the Apgar score routinely at one and five minutes.

7.10.2. In most instances only subdued lighting is necessary. If bright lights are required, the baby should be shielded from their full impact. Excessive noise
should be avoided. Gentle handling and minimal activity around a new baby are required.

7.10.3. Routine practices such as mucous extraction following birth should be avoided unless clinically indicated.

7.10.4. Mothers and partners should name the sex of the baby themselves.

7.10.5. Babies should be kept warm post-delivery as loss of body heat is a threat to foetal well-being. Drying the newborn is essential and the baby can be nursed in contact with mother’s skin (naked baby inside mother’s nightgown). The birth room should be kept warm.

7.10.6. All babies should be offered the opportunity of skin-to-skin contact post-birth and encouraged to breastfeed within the first hour, ideally. Post-delivery routines should not take precedence over the establishment of feeding. The SECM should remain with the woman until the first feed is completed.

7.10.7. Ensure that a second clamp is available to allow double-clamping of the cord in all birth settings.

7.10.8. Encourage the parents to cut the cord if they want to.

7.10.9. Parents must be allowed some time after birth to be alone with their baby; this should be unhurried and not compromised because of routines.

7.10.10. Babies should be dressed, where appropriate, by their parents, in order to maintain normal body temperature.

7.10.11. A detailed documented head-to-toe examination of the newborn baby is carried out by the SECM in view of the parents to out rule any major physical abnormalities and to identify any problems that require referral. The examination should include:

7.10.11.1. A review of family, maternal and antenatal history.

7.10.11.2. Birth weight, head circumference and body temperature are recorded.

7.10.11.3. Observation of the baby’s general condition including colour, breathing, behaviour, activity and posture.

7.10.11.4. Examination of the exposed parts of the baby first: scalp, head (including fontanelles), face, nose, mouth including palate, ears, neck and general symmetry of head and facial features.

7.10.11.5. Examination of the baby’s eyes (size, position, absence of discharge).

7.10.11.6. Examination of the baby’s neck and clavicles, limbs, hands, feet and digits, assessing proportions and symmetry. Unwrap baby to complete the exam.

7.10.11.7. Assessment of the baby’s cardiovascular system – colour, heart rate, rhythm, oxygen saturation.

7.10.11.8. Respiratory effort and rate.

7.10.11.9. Observation of the baby’s abdomen – colour, shape and examination of the condition of the umbilical cord.

7.10.11.10. Observation of the baby’s genitalia and anus, to check completeness and patency.

7.10.11.11. Inspection of the bony structures and skin of the baby’s spine, with the baby prone.

7.10.11.12. Noting the colour and texture of the skin as well as any birthmarks or rashes.

7.10.11.13. Observation of the tone, behaviour, movements and posture to complete the assessment of the central nervous system (CNS).

7.10.11.14. If concerned, undertake more detailed neurological examination, e.g. eliciting newborn reflexes.

7.10.11.15. To provisionally assess newborn’s hips, check symmetry of the limbs and skin folds. The hips require further examination during the examination of the newborn.

7.10.11.16. Noting sound of baby’s cry.
7.10.12. The baby will require a full examination, recommended within 72 hours, by an appropriate practitioner who holds the relevant skills/qualifications or has been approved to undertake this by the HSE.

7.10.13. Ensure that parents know how to assess their baby’s general condition and to contact an SECM, doctor or emergency services if required.

7.10.14. Information on the screening test is given:

7.10.14.1. A referral for a newborn hearing screen shall be requested as per Newborn Hearing Screening Policy for the HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).

7.10.14.2. Newborn bloodspot screening shall be carried out by the SECM on day four to seven as per Newborn Bloodspot Screening Policy, HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).


7.10.15. Information shall be provided to the mother:

7.10.15.1. How to access BCG vaccination (a waiting list may be in operation).

7.10.15.2. Vitamin D supplementation.

7.10.15.3. Vitamin K prophylaxis.

7.10.16. Vitamin K is administered with informed consent and administration or non-administration documented as per Administration of Vitamin K Prophylaxis Policy (HSE 2016).

7.10.17. Ensure that documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.10.18. Auditable Standards

7.10.18.1. Is there evidence of examination of the newborn?

7.10.18.2. Is there evidence that advice and information regarding screening tests for newborn was given?

7.10.18.3. Is there evidence of written consent for Vitamin K prophylaxis administration/non administration?

7.10.18.4. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.10.18.5. Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?

7.11. Guide for postnatal care of the mother

7.11.1. Immediate postnatal care following delivery

7.11.1.1. Observe uterine involution and lochia.

7.11.1.2. Carry out maternal observations (temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure) and document on the IMEWS chart (Appendix VII).

a. IMEWS should be used to record the vital signs of women who are up to 42 days post-delivery.

b. All triggers should be added up and documented at the bottom of the IMEWS each time observations are recorded.

c. If the woman triggers any yellows, observations should be repeated after 30 minutes and not later than 60 minutes.

d. If the woman continues to trigger any further yellow and/or pink scores her care should be referred to an obstetrician.

7.11.1.3. If the SECM is concerned about a woman, escalate care to an obstetrician regardless of triggers.

7.11.2. Inspect perineum to assess trauma, inform mother of extent of trauma and carry out suturing with consent as per Guideline on Perineal Repair, HSE Home Birth Service (HSE 2016).

7.11.3. Ensure mother has passed urine before SECM’s departure.
7.11.4. Assess maternal emotional/psychological condition in response to labour and birth.

7.11.5. The SECM should stay with the mother and baby for a minimum of two hours following completion of the third stage and she is confident of their safety and wellbeing.

7.11.6. When the SECM leaves she must ensure that the family has appropriate contact telephone numbers.

7.11.7. Ensure that equipment and all other items are disposed of correctly.

7.11.8. Arrange for anti-D as required.

7.11.9. The SECM must visit the mother and baby the next day or sooner as appropriate.

7.11.10. Good practice suggests that if the baby is born in the morning, then a postnatal visit should be carried out later the same day. If the baby is born at night, then aim for a morning visit the next day. The midwife should use her clinical judgement regarding these timelines.

7.11.11. Advise the parents on the physical examination of the newborn, recommended to be undertaken within 72 hours of birth.

7.11.12. Arrange for the collection of any remaining equipment and/or medical gases as soon as possible.

7.11.13. Inform the Designated Midwifery Officer of the birth.


7.11.15. Complete local birth notification to DPHN/CHO e.g. (Appendix IX).

7.11.16. Ensure that all clinical midwifery documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and the HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).

7.11.17. **Auditable Standard:**

7.11.17.1. Is there evidence of maternal observations recorded on the IMEWS chart?

7.11.17.2. Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?

7.11.17.3. Is there evidence of the completed BNF01 form and birth notification to the DPHN/CHO?

7.11.17.4. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

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**7.12. Guideline for Postnatal Examination of the Mother and Baby**

7.12.1. The aim of postnatal care is to enable the SECM to assess, monitor and promote the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of mother and baby and to provide parents with an opportunity to discuss the birth experience.

7.12.2. A comprehensive holistic postnatal care examination is completed at each visit by the SECM, and will provide the plan for the continuous postnatal care required throughout the next 24 hours.

7.12.3. Selective postnatal visiting is recommended up to a period of 14 days. The SECM should exercise her/his professional judgement in determining the number of visits and any additional visits required in the postnatal period. The range of postnatal care, including timing of visits, should be discussed and planned by the SECM with the mother.

7.12.4. Develop a plan of postnatal care with the woman and her partner, to involve:

7.12.4.1. The number and timing of postnatal visits required.

7.12.4.2. The SECM’s contact number and a number for advice and consultation in case that the SECM may be otherwise engaged at another birth.
7.12.4.3. The baby should have a full examination, recommended within the first 72 hours, by a paediatrician or a practitioner who holds the relevant skills/qualifications and has been approved to undertake this by the HSE.

7.12.4.4. Inform the local public health nurse of the birth and liaise as necessary.

7.12.4.5. The plan of care may change as the postnatal period progresses.

7.12.4.6. Document all findings in the postnatal care plan.

7.12.4.7. The SECM shall be aware of her responsibilities in relation to child protection and welfare (Children First Guideline, HSE 2011).

7.12.5. Physiological assessment and care shall be based on:

7.12.5.1. Baseline observations, temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure and breast assessment if necessary.

7.12.5.2. Note previous family, maternal and obstetric history i.e. PPH, wound infection, depression, other infection.

7.12.5.3. Lochia observed for amount, colour and odour. Intra-uterine infection should be considered in all women with postpartum pyrexia.

7.12.6. Abnormal Bleeding – the woman is asked to inform the SECM if bleeding becomes:


7.12.6.2. Bright red after the first week of delivery.

7.12.6.3. If a larger clot is passed on more than one occasion.

7.12.6.4. Offensive.

7.12.6.5. Ask mother the length of time the heavier loss is experienced. Exclude other factors such as (e.g.) breastfeeding, rising up from lying and sitting position.

7.12.6.6. Ask the mother to describe pad, is loss offensive now or has been or flu like symptoms or tenderness. Describe and record current pad, size of clots passed, examine for placental tissues or membranes.

7.12.6.7. Record temperature and palpate uterus.


7.12.6.9. Ask woman if colour is different from previously.

7.12.7. Other Physiological Care

7.12.7.1. Personal hygiene – bath or shower and bidet if available.

7.12.7.2. Perineum observed – advised to keep clean and dry. Examine perineum to detect signs of infection, oedema, haematoma, haemorrhoids or inadequate repair.

7.12.7.3. Obtain mid-stream sample of urine (MSU) if mother complains of dysuria. Obtain history of urinary symptoms – frequency, incontinence, voiding difficulties; dipstick fresh urine sample and send MSU, refer to doctor.

7.12.7.4. Stress urinary incontinence – exclude causes e.g. UTI, retention of urine, and give instruction on pelvic floor exercises to perform daily; refer to physiotherapist and to obstetrician.

7.12.7.5. Bowel care – enquire if bowel opened since delivery. Ask about specific difficulties, constipation, haemorrhoids and loss of bowel control including soiling, faecal urgency and flatus incontinence. Check delivery history, ascertain history of bowel problem i.e. irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, bowel habit during pregnancy. Provide dietary advice if constipated.
7.12.7.6. Constipation is associated with anal fissure so be alert for this, particularly if the woman reports severe pain or blood loss on defecation.

7.12.7.7. Haemorrhoids – assess perineal area, avoid constipation – advice given on diet, and if treatment required i.e. creams/suppositories refer to doctor.

7.12.7.8. Varicose veins – advice given to wear support stockings and keep legs elevated, and record measurements in chart.

7.12.7.9. Pain – appropriate analgesia shall be prescribed and taken by mother if required. Examine perineum to detect sign of infection, oedema, haematoma or inadequate repair.

7.12.7.10. Advise regarding importance of a balanced diet.

7.12.7.11. Haemoglobin (Hb) – check if indicated or mother is symptomatic e.g. dyspnoeic, tachycardia, pale and tired. Check intrapartum blood loss and pregnancy Hb.

7.12.7.12. Rhesus-negative women – check if anti-D immunoglobulin (cord blood results) is necessary and administer following prescription as appropriate. Anti-D to be given as required and per HSE National Guideline. Administration to be recorded in notes. Information leaflet given to mum prior to procedure.

7.12.7.13. Explain the importance of a balanced lifestyle. Advise short daily walks followed by short periods of rest. Check dietary intake and stress the need to eat regularly. Refer to physiotherapist if there are any concerns.

7.12.7.14. Dietary and cultural preferences to be taken into account and facilitated where necessary.

7.12.7.15. Appropriate advice given on maintenance of lactation such as skin-to-skin, frequent feeding.

7.12.7.16. If necessary provide advice on the suppression of lactation such as wearing a supportive bra, regular analgesia, and avoidance of expression of breast milk.

7.12.7.17. Discharge planning begins on the day of birth and is reviewed daily.

7.12.7.18. Enquire that the mother feels confident about care of the baby.

7.12.7.19. Discuss and explain screening tests as they occur (newborn hearing, newborn bloodspot screening).

7.12.7.20. Discuss any investigations to be carried out, i.e. rubella vaccine, full blood count.

7.12.7.21. Provide written information where possible and oral information on:
   a. Postnatal and breastfeeding support groups
   b. Postnatal depression
   c. Family planning
   d. Registration of the baby’s birth at local level
   e. If a smoker, quit smoking information
   f. Sudden infant death syndrome
   g. Vaccinations
   h. Health promotion
   i. Cord care
   j. Postnatal exercises
   k. Contact numbers

7.12.8. Psychological/emotional assessment and care

7.12.8.1. Assess the woman on how well she feels.

7.12.8.2. Assess the woman on how she is sleeping.

7.12.8.3. The SECM should listen to the woman’s concerns.

7.12.8.4. Enquire if the woman feels that she has adequate support.
7.12.8.5. The woman should have the opportunity to discuss her delivery with appropriate staff; the SECM should offer a debriefing session.

7.12.8.6. Enquire if the woman is happy with her responses to her baby.

7.12.8.7. The SECM should be especially aware if there is a history of psychiatric illness: if the woman is upset or ‘baby blues’ do not resolve, then refer to appropriate healthcare personnel.

7.12.8.8. Referral to support group if appropriate.

7.12.8.9. Information and reassurances should be offered on the normal patterns of emotional changes in the postnatal period and the woman should be made aware that these usually resolve within 10-14 days of giving birth. This information should be offered by the third day (Nice 2006).

7.12.8.10. Refer to social worker if appropriate – note the woman’s history.

7.12.9. **Physiological assessment and care of the newborn baby**

7.12.9.1. A more thorough physical examination of the newborn, recommended within 72 hours after delivery by a paediatrician or a practitioner who holds the relevant skills/qualifications and has been approved to undertake this by the HSE, is accepted as good practice (NCCPC 2006).

7.12.9.2. An examination of the newborn by the SECM should review the following:

a. Baseline observations e.g. temperature, respirations, heart rate.

b. General observation of the baby’s overall appearance and behaviour, movements and posture.

c. Check eyes – opacities.

d. Note appearance – colour, tone and movements, level of jaundice. A baby who develops jaundice within the first 24 hours after birth should be investigated.

e. Skin – note the colour and texture of the skin as well as any birthmarks or rashes.

f. Genitalia and anus – completeness and patency.

g. Discuss with mother and record urine output and bowel activity, and urine stream in a boy. Check for hypospadias.

h. Observe cord.

i. Cry – note sound of baby’s cry.

j. Enquire regarding feeding routine/assess actual feeding technique and mum’s competencies.

k. Observe for feeding problems, e.g. vomiting excessive, explosive, projectile, and refer as appropriate.

7.12.10 Emotional assessment and care

7.12.10.1. Observe baby/mother interaction.

7.12.10.2. Give time to mother to ask questions regarding baby and help build confidence and competence in caring for baby.

7.12.11. Ensure that both parents have received information and demonstration on the following:

a. Daily routine newborn care (top and tail).

b. Cord care.

c. Bathing baby.

d. Hand expression demo.

e. Bottle-feeding demo and information if required.

7.12.12. Ensure that all clinical midwifery documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).
7.12.13. **Auditable Standards:**
- 7.12.13.1. Is there evidence of mother and baby postnatal care observations recorded?
- 7.12.13.2. Is there evidence of transfer to a hospital for medical care as per eligibility criteria and where appropriate?
- 7.12.13.3. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

7.13. **Guideline for Postnatal Discharge of Women and Babies from the Home Birth Service**

- 7.13.1. Each woman has a postnatal check on the day of discharge by the SECM. If a risk factor is identified, appropriate referral is made.
- 7.13.2. Discharge planning is based on care given during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal period. Follow-up depends on the requirements of this care. Check and organise follow-up as appropriate. This may need direct contact with GP/PHN.
- 7.13.3. Check that follow-up appointments for baby are arranged as necessary (paed/ortho/x-ray/orthodontist),
- 7.13.4. Confirm and document that newborn screening tests have been completed.
- 7.13.5. Information on follow-up Vitamin K, if given orally.
- 7.13.6. Each mother receives information on the following (written if available and verbally):
  - 7.13.6.1. Family planning.
  - 7.13.6.2. Feeding baby and expressing breast milk.
  - 7.13.6.4. Postnatal smear, and advised to attend GP for same.
  - 7.13.6.5. Postnatal GP check for mother and baby at six weeks postnatal.
  - 7.13.6.6. Postnatal exercise, rest and diet.
  - 7.13.6.7. Vaccinations.
  - 7.13.6.9. Sudden infant death syndrome.
  - 7.13.6.10. Registration of birth of baby and how to obtain a birth certificate.
  - 7.13.6.11. Entitlements and car safety (refer to appropriate website).
  - 7.13.6.12. Contact number as appropriate for
    a. Local maternity hospital.
    b. Local breastfeeding support group.
    c. Local La Leche League.
    d. Local postnatal depression support group.
    e. Public health nurse number.
    f. Domestic violence support.
    g. Social worker (if necessary).
    h. Local community services for mother and baby.
  - 7.13.6.14. SECM discharge summary report to be completed and sent to GP/PHN/hospital (Appendix X).
  - 7.13.6.15. Arrange for hospital hand-held notes to be returned to appropriate hospital.
  - 7.13.6.16. Send midwifery record to DMO with payment claim form within one month of discharge to facilitate database entry.
- 7.13.7. Ensure that all clinical midwifery documentation is completed in accordance with Recording Clinical Practice (NMBI 2015) and HSE Home Birth Service Guidelines on Record Keeping (HSE 2016).
7.13.8. **Auditable Standards**

7.13.8.1. Is there evidence of a discharge summary to the GP/PHN/hospital?

7.13.8.2. Is there documented evidence regarding this guideline in the midwifery record?

8. **Monitoring and Audit**

8.1. Monitoring of compliance with these guidelines shall be undertaken by the DMO or other appropriate healthcare personnel.

8.2. Audit of compliance with these guidelines shall be undertaken by the SECM, DMO or other appointed HSE healthcare professionals.

9. **Training**

The SECM shall ensure that she/he has sourced appropriate education and training to support the compliance with and implementation of these guidelines.

10. **Implementation Plan**

The Clinical Governance Group for the HSE Home Birth Service developed this document, which has been approved for implementation by the National Implementation Steering Group for the HSE Home Birth Service. This document will be piloted for a year from the approval date. It will be disseminated by the Designated Midwifery Officers to relevant healthcare personnel and to all Self-Employed Community Midwives who provide home birth services on behalf of the HSE.

11. **References**


Hanafin and O’Reilly (2015) National and international review of literature on models of care across selected jurisdictions to inform the development of a National Maternity Strategy for Maternity Services in Ireland. DOH


HSE & Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Clinical Practice Guideline (2012) Antenatal routine enquiry regarding violence in the home

HSE & Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Clinical Practice Guideline (2012) Intrapartum Foetal Heart Rate Monitoring National Clinical Programmes
HSE & Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Clinical Practice Guideline (2012) The Use of Anti-D Immunoglobulin for the prevention of RHD Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn

HSE & Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Clinical Practice Guideline (2010) Guideline for the management of pre-gestational and gestational diabetes mellitus from pre-conception to the postnatal period


NICE (2014) Intrapartum Care: Care of Healthy Women and their Babies During Childbirth Clinical Guideline, NICE, London


NICE (2006) Post Natal Care up to 8 Weeks after Birth, NICE, London

RCOG (2012) Bacterial Sepsis following Pregnancy. Green-top Guideline No 64b


12. List of Appendices
   Appendix 1 Equipment Checklist
   Appendix 2 Booking Interview Guide
   Appendix 3 Information Leaflet for the HSE Home Birth Service
   Appendix 4 Application Form/Risk Assessment Criteria/Eligibility Criteria
   Appendix 5 Schedule of Appointments
   Appendix 6 Sweeping of the Membrane
   Appendix 7 I-MEWS Chart
   Appendix 8 BNF01 Form
   Appendix 9 Notification of Birth to DPHN/CHO
   Appendix 10 Discharge summary
   Appendix 11 NRP Algorithm
   Appendix 12 BLS Algorithm
   Appendix 13 Maternal Resuscitation Algorithm
### Appendix I: SECM Equipment list (provided by the CMA)

#### Antenatal/Postnatal Bag contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sphygmomanometer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stethoscope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urine testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinard stethoscope/sonicaid and aquagel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venepuncture equipment/forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swabs for microbiology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSU universal container</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable gloves – latex – non sterile and sterile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable syringes, needles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable speculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermometer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torch/good light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newborn screening equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cord clamp and clamp remover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharps bin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KY Jelly – sterile sachets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable tape measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol hand cleaner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby weighing scales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spare batteries for sonicaid/torch/weighing scales</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic delivery pack; includes sterile bowls, drapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sterile large swabs – Raytec</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inco pads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanitary towels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sterile gloves – correct size for midwife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-sterile gloves – correct size for midwife.</td>
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<td>Yellow clinical waste bags</td>
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<td>Yellow clinical waste placenta bags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation:</td>
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<td>IMEWS chart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluid balance chart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth notification BN10 form</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local hospital birth notification form (if required)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other listed equipment below or SECM to bring that may not be required</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESUS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neonatal bulb suction</td>
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PPPG Code: HB004  PPPG Title: Midwifery Practice Guidelines  HSE Home Birth Service  Revision No: 1  Approval Date: December 2016  27
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<td>O2 cylinder</td>
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<tr>
<td>O2 tubing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entonox cylinder and connector</td>
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<td>Disposable mouthpiece</td>
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<td>Adult self-inflating resuscitation ‘ambu’ bag with facemask</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episiotomy scissors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amni hook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goggles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suture repair kit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicryl Rapide/Serapid sutures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-use in/out urinary catheter size 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-retaining urinary catheter size 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urine collection bag</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ml sterile water and syringe</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IV equipment**

| Cannula size 20 g                   | 2 |
| Cannula size 18 g                   | 2 |
| Cannula size 16 g                   | 2 |
| Selection of syringes, needles and vacutainers | 2 |
| IV dressings                        | 2 |
| Tourniquet                          | 1 |
| Plasters                            | 1 |
| Alcohol swabs                       | 1 |
| Mepore tape                         | 2 |
| IVI giving set                      | 2 |
| IVI Gelofusin 500ml                 | 2 |
| IVI Hartmann’s solution 1 litre     | 2 |
| IVI NaCl 500mls                     | 2 |
| Drug additive labels                | 1 |
| Blood bottles and forms             | 1 |

**Drugs**

| Syntometrine                        | 5iu/ml x 2 |
| Ergometrine                         | 500mcg x 2 |
| Syntocinon                          | 10 iu Box of 5 |
| Lignocaine 1% 10 ml                 | 2 |
| Vitamin K including oral syringes   | 2 |
Appendix II: Guidance for Booking Interview Based on the Clinical Judgement

Demographic Details

LMP Details
- Cycle details: An early scan is indicated if the client is unsure of her dates or if pregnancy symptoms are reduced.
- Last cervical smear test.

Medical History

1. Hypertension
   - Pre-existing
   - Pregnancy-induced
   - Pre-eclampsia
2. Cardiac Disease
   - Ischemic heart disease
   - Valve disease
   - Previous heart surgery
   - Other
3. Respiratory
   - Asthma
   - Other
4. Gastro-intestinal
   - Liver disease
   - Inflammatory bowel
5. Renal
   - Recurrent UTIs
   - Chronic renal failure
   - Transplant
   - Other
6. Haematological
   - Anaemia
   - Haemoglobinopathies (please specify)
   - Platelet disorders
   - Thrombophilia
   - Deep venous thrombosis
   - Pulmonary emboli
   - Previous blood transfusion
   - Blood transfusion reactions
   - Blood transfusion acceptable to woman (if not acceptable refer to consultant obstetrician)
   - Other
7. Metabolic Disorders e.g. PKU
8. Endocrine
   - Diabetes
   - Thyroid disease
   - Other
9. Mental Health
   - Puerperal psychosis/depression
   - Depression
   - Schizophrenia – effective disorder
   - Other
10. Substance Misuse
    - Alcohol (include quantity)
    - Cigarettes (include quantity)
11. Neurological
- Epilepsy
- Migraine
- Multiple sclerosis
- Stroke history
- Other

12. Infection History
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV
- Group B streptococcus
- Sexually transmitted infections
- TORCH/MRSA
- Other

13. Connective Tissue Disorder
- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Anti-phospholipid syndrome
- Other

14. Musculoskeletal
- Developmental dysplasia of hips
- Scoliosis
- Spinal/pelvic/hip dysfunctions
- Other

16. Anaesthetic Risk
- Airway problem
- Adverse drug reaction
- Other

17. Allergies
- Medication and foodstuff
- Other (e.g. latex, plasters)

18. Gynaecological History
- Last smear (date)
- Previous abnormal smears
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Other, e.g. fibroids

19. Would you accept a blood transfusion in the case of emergency?

20. Previous surgery: specify

Partner History/Family History

Are any of the following present in partner history or family history?

Adopted: Self □ Partner □
- Hypertension
- Pre-eclampsia
- Heart disease
- Mental illness
- Thromboembolism
- Sickle cell disease/thalassaemia
- Infectious diseases
- Developmental dysplasia of hips
- Congenital Abnormalities
- Down’s syndrome
• Spina bifida
• Other abnormalities
• **Genetic Disorder**
• Cystic fibrosis
• Muscular dystrophy
• **Metabolic disorders**
• Cerebral palsy
• Learning difficulties
• Multiple pregnancies
• Partner – a blood relative (i.e. cousin)
• Self/partner – member of the Travelling Community (Beutler test)

**Obstetric History**
- Note complications in any pregnancy
- Present pregnancy
- EDD: If women are unsure of gestational age, scans should ideally be performed between 10 and 13 weeks’ gestation to get crown/rump measurement, which will determine gestational age. After 14 weeks’ gestation, head circumference or biparietal diameter should be used.
- Bleeding
- Heartburn ± antacid use
- Lifestyle
- Diet (note any restricted diet e.g. vegetarian)
- Medication
- Other symptoms are noted

**Criteria for Oral Glucose Tolerance Test.**
As per HSE (2010) Guidelines for the Management of Pre-Gestational and Gestational Diabetes from the Pre-conception to the Postnatal Period.

**Health Education & Advice**
Women are given information with an opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions. Verbal information is supported by written information. This is an opportunity for the SECM to identify women who need additional care.
- **Antenatal classes**: Types (yoga, hospital, privately run), availability and how to access.
- **Smoking**: referral to smoking cessation officer or appropriate person.
- **Supplementation in pregnancy**: 400 micrograms of folic acid supplementation daily up to 12 weeks’ gestation. Vitamin D for the infant. All up-to-date dietary advice given.
- **Vaccinations in pregnancy**: i.e. pertussis and influenza.
- **BMI**: Ongoing risk assessment to maintain BMI at 35kg/m² or less.
- **Vomiting and Heartburn**
- **Constipation**
- **Haemorrhoids**
- **Varicose veins**
- **Exercises in pregnancy**
- **Infant feeding** to include benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale** or other means of assessment if a mental health risk factor has been identified.
- **Promotion of continence in pregnancy and postnatal**
- **Perineal care**: Massage of the perineum in pregnancy may reduce perineal trauma.
- **Domestic violence**: an opportunity for women to disclose it in an environment in which they feel secure. Refer to **Clinical Care Guideline, Antenatal Routine Enquiry Regarding Violence in the Home (HSE 2012)**.
• **Explain and gain verbal consent where necessary on following:**
  - Pregnant women should be advised of their maternity rights and benefits.
  - Ensure that blood tests have been taken and results available on blood group, antibodies and rhesus factor, FBC, rubella, VDRL, HIV, hepatitis B and varicella.
  - Antenatal schedule as outlined in the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme and booking maternity unit/hospital.
  - Purpose of ultrasound scan if necessary.
  - Written information leaflets as appropriate, i.e. optimal foetal positioning.
  - Social worker as appropriate.

**Investigations**
1. Urinalysis check and MSU taken if appropriate
2. Antenatal screening e.g. blood tests
3. Check B/P
4. Abdominal palpation (if appropriate)
5. Foetal heart auscultation and foetal movements (if appropriate)

**Medical examination by doctor for all women**
This may have been carried out by the GP/obstetrician

**Risk Factor Documented Checklist on Application form** – as per HSE Home Birth Service Eligibility Criteria, Tables 1-6.
Appendix III: Information Leaflet, HSE Home Birth Service

Home Birth Service Address

Date:

Important information about Home Birth Service:
Please keep this letter

Dear

Deciding where you will have your baby is an important decision for you and your partner. I hope that this letter and the attached document Information for Expectant Mothers Choosing a Home Birth will help you decide if you are suitable for a home birth. The HSE provides this Home Birth Service free of charge. The HSE has agreements in place with several Self-Employed Community Midwives across Ireland to provide planned home birth services to women who wish to have their baby at home. The service includes care during your pregnancy, during labour and birth, and for up to 14 days after your baby is born.

Your choice
When deciding where to give birth, remember that:

- You are choosing the place of birth and you are choosing who will be with you and the type of care that you and your baby will receive.

- You should give birth somewhere you feel safe, comfortable and relaxed, as long as it is safe to do so.

- You don’t have to decide on the place of birth now – and even after you have decided, you can change your mind at any time during your pregnancy.

- If you are advised not to give birth at home, ask the midwife or doctor to explain why.
How to find out more about having your baby at home
To find out more about having your baby at home, please:
- read the attached document, and
- make contact with a midwife to see who is available to provide you with the Home Birth Service (list of local midwives attached).

Visit with your midwife
Your chosen midwife will arrange to meet you. At this meeting, she or he will take a detailed history from you and decide if a home birth is a safe option for you and your baby. Depending on your history, your midwife will organise a further assessment at the hospital if needed. If you and your midwife decide to go ahead with your plans for a home birth, your midwife will send your application form to the HSE Designated Midwifery Officer (DMO) in your area. This application form includes a consent form signed by you.

Giving your consent
Before signing the consent form, it is important that you carefully read the information provided with the application form. Discuss any concerns or questions with your midwife or doctor or, when you book at a hospital, with your consultant obstetrician.

Signing the consent form means that your midwife and/or doctor has explained to you that if there are any unexpected complications, you may be referred to the hospital doctor for assessment.

Choosing to have your baby at home against medical advice may put your baby and yourself at risk.

Signing the form also means that if there are complications during your pregnancy, labour or after your baby is born, you agree to go hospital to be cared for by the doctors and midwives there. The midwife will advise you of this decision.

Who approves your application for the HSE Home Birth Service?
The Designated Midwifery Officer (DMO) will approve your application for the HSE Home Birth Service based on the information that you and your midwife have provided. The DMO will contact you to confirm that they have or have not accepted your application. Your eligibility for a home birth is continuously assessed right up until your baby is born. If you are not eligible to have your baby at home, or during your pregnancy you become ineligible to have your baby at home, then your midwife and the DMO can help you find a suitable maternity unit/hospital to birth your baby.
What to do if you are eligible
We advise you to book in for care at a maternity hospital of your choice. If you do this, you
will get the chance to meet the hospital staff and to make an informed choice about your
place of birth. We also advise you to attend a GP if you have not already done so. Your GP
will advise if he or she can provide care for you during your pregnancy and after the birth of
your baby. The midwife would like to share your antenatal care with your GP and she/he will
always consult with your GP or your hospital consultant if you are experiencing any
problems during your pregnancy.

Birth plan
During your pregnancy, your midwife will discuss with you and your partner any particular
wishes you may have in managing your labour and delivery. She or he will visit your home
before the birth to complete your birth plan and finalise all the preparations for this exciting
event. You and your baby will need certain items for the birth – your midwife will discuss
these with you. At this time there will be lots of questions about the birth and we hope you
will find the service offered by the Self-Employed Community Midwives professional and
tailored to your meet your needs.

HSE Designated Midwifery Officer visit
If you decide to have your baby at home the DMO will supply you with a home birth pack
about a month before you give birth. She or he will visit you in your own home to discuss
any issues that you or your partner may have and ensure you are receiving a safe, quality
and effective HSE Home Birth Service.

If you have any issues or concerns about the HSE Home Birth Service, please do not hesitate
to contact me.

Whatever you decide, I wish you a safe and happy birthing experience.

Yours sincerely

____________________________________
Designated Midwifery Officer for Home Births
Information for expectant mothers choosing a Home Birth

About this document
This document tells you about home births, how safe they are and factors that help to identify women suitable – and not suitable – for home birth. Together, you, your midwife and other medical advisors of your choice will decide if a home birth is a safe option for you and your baby.

Your midwife will be happy to explain the medical terms with this leaflet. So if you are unclear about anything, ask.

Home birth can be a safe option for a healthy woman
You are considered healthy if you have no history of medical or surgical problems that might affect your pregnancy and no present or previous pregnancy complications. Research shows that a planned home birth is a safe alternative to a planned hospital birth for some pregnant women. However, this is when the home birth service is structured in a maternity care system with well-trained midwives and a good referral and transportation system.

How many women have a home birth in Ireland?
In 2013, 250 women planned a home birth with the HSE Home Birth Service. This represents less than 1% of all births in the country. Factors that may influence a woman in choosing a home birth include:

- availability of a midwife
- support and comfort in the home
- timely availability of emergency services, and
- distance from a maternity hospital.

Short transfer times may not always be available across Ireland, so we have to consider the safety of home birth in relation to the availability of services in your area.

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PPPG Code: HB004 PPPG Title: Midwifery Practice Guidelines HSE Home Birth Service Revision No: 1 Approval Date: December 2016
**Who will support me during labour and birth?**

Professional support will be provided by your midwife. You may also choose to have your partner or whoever you decide to have with you in labour.

A second midwife, also funded by the HSE, will be present at the birth to support the midwife during your labour and birth of your baby. Your midwife may arrange to introduce you to the second midwife during your pregnancy.

**When might home birth not be a safe option?**

Pregnancy and childbirth is a process where risks and safety may change at any stage. Midwives are trained to recognise signs of complications during pregnancy and labour. If complications arise during your pregnancy, labour or following the birth of your child, your midwife may advise you to transfer to hospital care. To view the most recent statistics on planned home birth in Ireland, visit:


**Is it safe to plan a home birth for your first baby?**

Yes, it is safe to plan a home birth for your first baby as long as you listen to the advice from your midwife, your GP and your hospital consultant obstetrician.

Data shows that first-time mothers are four times more likely to transfer to hospital during labour (NPEC 2013). The reasons for transfer are to ensure a safe delivery for you and your baby.

You should be aware that the risk to your baby’s wellbeing doubles if you are a first-time mother.

The key points from this study are available at:

https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/downloads/files/birthplace/Birthplace-key-findings.pdf
Risk factors to be considered when approving a home birth

The following risks, if present, may mean that you are not considered suitable for a home birth:

- Previous or existing medical, surgical or mental health conditions
- Previous pregnancy and birth histories that are outlined in the six tables on the application form
- Risks that may develop during your pregnancy
- Environmental risks such as distance from hospital, from midwife, and adequacy of support at home.

The application form has six tables that provide more details. Your midwife will discuss these with you. It is important to ask your midwife any questions you have. You can also look for further information from the following websites.

Useful web sites

Association for Improvements in Maternity Services – Ireland [www.aimsireland.ie](http://www.aimsireland.ie)
Community Midwives Association [www.communitymidwives.ie](http://www.communitymidwives.ie)
Home Birth Association of Ireland [www.homebirth.ie](http://www.homebirth.ie)
Health Service Executive [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland [www.nursingboard.ie](http://www.nursingboard.ie)
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [www.rcog.org.uk](http://www.rcog.org.uk)
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie)
The Child and Family Agency [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
The Department of Children and Youth Affairs [www.dcyagov.ie](http://www.dcyagov.ie)

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Appendix IV Application Consent Form

Section A: To be completed by applicant

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Address (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Eircode: Date of Birth: Mobile: Tel: E-mail:

Hereby apply to:

(Self-employed community midwife)

To provide such services as can appropriately be given by him/her in connection with motherhood under the terms of the Health Service Executive’s Home Birth Service. I understand that the midwife will be required to enter into a formal agreement to provide such service for which he/she will be paid by the HSE and for which I will not be required to pay.

I certify that any particulars that I have given to the midwife are, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and complete and I have not made any arrangements for these services with another midwife.

My expected date of delivery is:

I intend to give birth at:

(Please give details of name and address of location (BLOCK CAPITALS))
*(Please register with a GP and ensure that you have notified him/her of your intended home birth prior to completing the GP’s name and address hereunder)*

**My general practitioner is**

Dr………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Address…………………………………………………………………………………………………**

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

*(Please ensure you are registered with a maternity unit and inform your named consultant of your intended home birth)*

Name of maternity hospital where I have registered for maternity services:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

**Midwifery services are being provided**

by………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**(Name of midwife in full and in block capitals)**

♦ It is my wish to have my baby at home under the care of the undersigned Self-Employed Community Midwife.

♦ I have read and I understand the information pack and eligibility Tables 1 to 6 accompanying this consent form.

♦ I understand that the midwife will be the principal carer for me and my child up to the age of 14 days.

♦ That a copy of all records created by the midwife in relation to services provided by him/her will be provided by the midwife to the Health Service Executive. This will include any records created where the provision of the service is over and above that which the HSE considers to be a complete Home Birth Service, where such records are created within the time period specified for the delivery of the Home Birth Service, as stipulated below, and I agree as a condition of my participating in the service for the provision of such records to the HSE by my midwife.

♦ These records are required by the HSE for the following purposes:
  - To fulfil its statutory obligations
  - For the clinical governance and audit of its Home Birth Service
  - To arrange payment to the midwife for services provided

♦ I understand that the Home Birth Service, which is free of charge to me, extends from and includes the date of my first consultation with the SECM until the child is aged 14 days only and that the midwife’s indemnity insurance cover and payment by the HSE for services provided under the terms of the Home Birth Service, are confined to this period.

♦ The midwife has explained to me that should any unforeseen complications occur, my choosing to have my baby at home could put my baby and myself at greater risk.

♦ If a complication arises during my pregnancy/labour/postnatal period, I agree to have the management of my care transferred to a hospital-based team.
Records created by the midwife for services provided prior to the date of approval by the HSE of the mother’s application for services, and subsequent to the date the child is aged 14 days, are outside the terms of the Home Birth Service and are not required by the HSE.

I agree to emergency transfer by ambulance to the nearest or most appropriate maternity hospital if in the interest of my safety and the safety of my baby the midwife deems it necessary. I hereby give permission to the midwifery and medical/obstetric staff to access my medical/obstetric records.

I agree to have a second SECM in attendance at my planned home birth.

Signature of applicant: ………………………………………………….  Date: …………………….  

Section B: To be completed by the Self-Employed Community Midwife:

I, having conducted a risk assessment, consider it safe to provide midwifery services in accordance with the conditions laid down in the memorandum of understanding, contractual agreement, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) guidelines for midwives, and associated documents.

I have read through the information pack and eligibility Tables 1 to 6 accompanying this application form with the expectant mother and we have agreed she is eligible for the HSE Home Birth Service.

I hereby undertake to provide such services for the above-named woman and confirm that the first consultation took place on the:

Date : ………………………………………………………..

I agree to forward the clinical records to the Designated Midwifery Officer following transfer of care of the woman and baby to the public health nurse (not later than one month following the birth) – however, if the clinical records are required at any time by the HSE or maternity hospital where the woman is registered I will submit them upon request.

I have arranged to have a second SECM in attendance at this planned home birth.

Signed:……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Please return completed application form to the appropriate Designated Midwifery Officer for this applicant’s address within 10 working days of signing.

Received by DMO:  
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
APPLICATION FOR DOMICILIARY MIDWIFERY SERVICES

Additional Information:

1. Mother’s name:

2. Gravida: ………………………… Para: ……………………………

3. Previous home birth? Yes/No? Date: ……………………………

4. Previous caesarean section?

5. Any other risk factors?

6. Distance to maternity hospital:

7. Distance to midwife:

8. Name of consultant obstetrician:

9. Maternity hospital:

10. Special circumstances

Second midwife details:

Signed SECM:………………………………………………………. Date:……………………

To be completed by the midwife at booking: Please tick the following as appropriate:
### Table 1: Medical conditions requiring planned birth at an obstetric unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease area</th>
<th>Medical condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>Confirmed cardiac disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypertensive disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory</td>
<td>Asthma requiring an increase in treatment or hospital treatment in current pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cystic fibrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haematological</td>
<td>Haemoglobinopathies – sickle-cell disease, beta-thalassaemia major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of thromboembolic disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immune thrombocytopenia purpura or other platelet disorder or platelet count below 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Von Willebrand’s disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bleeding disorder in the woman or unborn baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atypical antibodies that carry a risk of haemolytic disease of the newborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infective</td>
<td>*Risk factors associated with group B streptococcus whereby antibiotics in labour would be recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infective hepatitis B or hepatitis C with abnormal liver function tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrier of/infected with HIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toxoplasmosis – women receiving treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current active infection of chicken pox/rubella/genital herpes in the woman or baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuberculosis under treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immune</td>
<td>Scleroderma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrine</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal</td>
<td>Maternal thyrotoxicosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological</td>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastrointestinal</td>
<td>Liver disease associated with current abnormal liver function tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric</td>
<td>Psychiatric disorder requiring current in-hospital care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Confirmed maternal colonisation with group B streptococcus in current pregnancy, pre-term labour <37 weeks, pre-term pre-labour rupture of membranes, pre-labour rupture of membranes longer than 18 hours at onset of labour.*

**Signed SECM:** .............................................  **Date:** ..........................
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous pregnancy complications</td>
<td>Unexplained stillbirth/neonatal death or previous death related to intrapartum difficulty [to be discussed with neonatologists and obstetrician]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Previous baby with neonatal encephalopathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-eclampsia requiring preterm birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placental abruption with adverse outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eclampsia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uterine rupture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary postpartum haemorrhage requiring additional pharmacological treatment or blood transfusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caesarean section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoulder dystocia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retained placenta requiring manual removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current pregnancy</td>
<td>Multiple birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placenta praevia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-eclampsia or pregnancy-induced hypertension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-term pregnancy [For medical review by 40 weeks +10 days’ gestation]. Home birth feasible to day 14 post-term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-term labour &lt;37 +0 weeks’ gestation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-term pre-labour rupture of membranes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body mass index at booking greater than 35kg/m² or less than 18 kg/m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term pregnancy (37+0 to 42+0 weeks’ gestation) rupture of membranes for more than 18 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placental abruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anaemia – haemoglobin less than 10g/dl at onset of labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmed intrauterine death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Induction of labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol dependency requiring assessment or treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onset of gestational diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malpresentation – breech or transverse lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recurrent antepartum haemorrhage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetal indications</td>
<td>Small for gestational age in this pregnancy (less than fifth centile or reduced growth velocity on ultrasound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abnormal fetal heart rate (FHR)/doppler studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ultrasound diagnosis of oligo/polyhydramnios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous gynaecological history</td>
<td>Myomectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hysterotomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed SECM: …………………………………………………… Date: ……………………………….  

Applicant’s Name…………………………………………………………………………………………
place of birth. If yes to any of the below, please advise the woman that she will need to be assessed by a consultant obstetrician for eligibility for the HSE Home Birth Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease area</th>
<th>Medical condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>Cardiac disease without intrapartum implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haematological</td>
<td>Atypical antibodies not putting the baby at risk of haemolytic disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sickle-cell trait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thalassaemia trait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infective</td>
<td>Hepatitis B/C with normal liver function tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immune</td>
<td>Nonspecific connective tissue disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrine</td>
<td>Hyperthyroidism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unstable hypothyroidism such that a change in treatment is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeletal/</td>
<td>Spinal abnormalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neurological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Previous fractured pelvis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastrointestinal</td>
<td>Liver disease without current abnormal liver function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crohn’s disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ulcerative colitis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed SECM………………………………………………………… Date……………………

Applicant’s Name…………………………………………………………………………………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous complications</td>
<td>Stillbirth/neonatal death with a known non-recurrent cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-eclampsia developing at term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placental abruption with good outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of previous baby more than 4.5 kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive vaginal, cervical, or third- or fourth-degree perineal trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Previous term baby with jaundice requiring exchange transfusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current pregnancy</td>
<td>Antepartum bleeding of unknown origin (single episode after 24 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of gestation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body mass index at booking of greater than 35kg/m² or less than 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kg/m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blood pressure of 140 mmHg systolic or 90 mmHg diastolic on two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical or ultrasound suspicion of macrosomia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Para 5 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreational drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under current outpatient psychiatric care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age over 40 at booking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetal indications</td>
<td>Fetal abnormality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynaecological history</td>
<td>Major gynaecological surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cone biopsy or large loop excision of the transformation zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibroids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factors that may need</td>
<td>Lack of family support/peer support network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Other factors requiring assessment by consultant obstetrician when planning place of birth. If yes to any of the below, please advise the woman that she will need to be assessed by a consultant obstetrician for eligibility for the HSE Home Birth Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PPPG Code: HB004 PPPG Title: Midwifery Practice Guidelines HSE Home Birth Service Revision No: 1 Approval Date: December 2016 45
There is no national or international policy or a guideline indicating acceptable duration for transfer from home to hospital when a woman is in labour. The Birthplace National Prospective Cohort Study (2011) states: “effective management of transfer is clearly integral to providing good quality and safe care across a range of birth settings”. In this study, team-working and transport issues were factors that staff and stakeholder respondents felt were key in the management of transfer. In the cohort study, the three main reasons for transfer were delay in the first stage of labour, signs of foetal distress, and delay in the second stage. Repair of perineal trauma was the primary reason for transfer after birth. A secondary analysis of the Birthplace National Prospective Cohort Study, Rowe (2013) et al, concluded that “transfers from home … commonly take up to 60 minutes from decision to transfer, to first assessment in an obstetric unit, even for transfers for potentially urgent reasons. Most transfers are not urgent and emergencies and adverse outcomes are uncommon, but urgent transfer is more likely for nulliparous women.” It is noted that “in women who gave birth within 60 minutes after transfer, adverse neonatal outcomes occurred in 1-2% of transfers” (Rowe et al, 2013).

Other considerations include the RCOG principle that if LSCS is required, to obtain an optimal outcome the baby should be delivered within 30 minutes of the decision being made.

Another is the HIQA Response Standards for the National Ambulance Service, which requires a first responder to be on scene to a life-threatening or potentially life-threatening emergency within eight minutes in 75% of cases and a transporting vehicle on the scene of a life-threatening and potentially life-threatening emergency within 19 minutes in 80% of cases.

Using the above evidence, the clinical governance group recommend that it is the responsibility of the SECM to transfer the woman as soon as possible once the decision to transfer is made and to communicate clearly with the woman, her partner, ambulance service, the receiving maternity unit, labour ward manager and if necessary the consultant obstetrician and paediatrician on call. The communication must include the reason for the transfer, the current status, and possible preparation that would make handover of care more succinct. The midwife plans the transfer knowing the woman’s home distance from the local maternity unit, the usual ambulance response times in that area and other influencing factors such as time of day, weather etc. Harris et al (2011) indicate that midwives in more remote units take account of distance and are more cautious in their decision-making about transfer. Ideally, the woman should be transferred to an obstetric unit within 30-40 minutes from the phone call to the ambulance service requesting the transfer. However, it is recognised and acknowledged that for many women it commonly takes 60 minutes (Rowe et al, 2013). The clinical governance group recommends that all transfers are prospectively reviewed and analysed so that more accurate guidance can be made in future policy documents.
### Table 5: Indications requiring intrapartum transfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have the following issues been discussed with and explained to the woman?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous rupture of membranes greater than 18 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indications for electronic foetal monitoring (EFM) including abnormalities of the foetal heart rate (FHR) on intermittent auscultation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed *delay in the first or second stage of labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presence of meconium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal request for medical (epidural or alternative) pain relief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetric emergency – including haemorrhage, cord presentation, cord prolapsed, maternal seizure or maternal collapse, shoulder dystocia, neonatal resuscitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained placenta or incomplete placenta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature of 38.0°C or above on a single reading or 37.5°C or above on two consecutive readings one hour apart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malpresentation or breech presentation diagnosed for the first time at the onset of labour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A reading of 2+ of protein on urinalysis and a single reading of either raised diastolic blood pressure (over 90 mmHg) or raised systolic (over 140 mmHg)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either raised diastolic blood pressure (over 90 mmHg) or raised systolic blood pressure (over 140 mmHg) on two consecutive readings taken 30 minutes apart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third- or fourth-degree tear or other complicated perineal trauma requiring suturing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any indication of maternal infection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prolonged labour guidance (NICE 2014)**

**Delay in established first stage of labour**

To define delay in established first stage, take the following into account:

- parity
- cervical dilatation and rate of change
- uterine contractions
- station and position of presenting part
- the woman’s emotional state and physical mobility
- referral to the appropriate healthcare professional.

If delay in the established first stage is suspected, assess all aspects of progress in labour when diagnosing delay, including:

- cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours for first labours
- cervical dilatation of less than 2 cm in four hours or a slowing in the progress of labour for second or subsequent labours
- descent and rotation of the baby’s head
- changes in the strength, duration and frequency of uterine contractions fetal and maternal wellbeing.

**If delay is diagnosed, transfer the woman to obstetric care if she is at home.**

**Delay in established second stage of labour**
For a nulliparous woman:
- Birth would be expected to take place within three hours of the start of the active second stage in most women.
- Diagnose delay in the active second stage when it has lasted two hours and refer the woman to a healthcare professional trained to undertake an operative vaginal birth if birth is not imminent.

Midwives will need to take into account the transfer time to the local maternity unit, knowing that birth has to take place within three hours from the start of the active second stage.

For a multiparous woman:
- Birth would be expected to take place within two hours of the start of the active second stage in most women.
- Diagnose delay in the active second stage when it has lasted one hour and refer the woman to a healthcare professional trained to undertake an operative vaginal birth if birth is not imminent.

Midwives will need to take into account the transfer time to the local maternity unit, knowing that birth has to take place within two hours from the start of the active second stage.

Signed SECM.................................................. Date..............................

Table 6: Indications requiring postpartum transfer up to 14 days post-delivery*

Applicant’s Name.........................................................................................................................
(\*The following criteria may necessitate immediate transfer to acute services or in some instances they may involve referral to the woman’s doctor, and in consultation with the doctor then transfer of care to the acute services. If there is any concern or any need for assessment for the baby when born, refer to the nearest paediatrician.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have the following issues been discussed with and explained to the woman?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpartum haemorrhage (&gt;500 ml) or any amount that causes the mother’s condition to deteriorate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrexia (38.0°C on one occasion or 37.5°C on two occasions one hour apart)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained tachycardia more than 90 beats/minute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tachypnoea more than 20 breaths/minute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehydration and/or vomiting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastitis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any abnormality or concern noted as per IMEWS observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal pain/pelvic pain or tenderness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of urinary tract infection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive lochia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perineal infection or excessive pain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman generally unwell or seems unduly anxious or distressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns for psychological wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs of thromboembolic disease, for example DVT or pulmonary emboli</td>
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<td>Increase ( \geq 10 ) mmHg in the systolic or diastolic blood pressure reading where a baseline has been established two hours following delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Infant</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Congenital or genetic abnormality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respiratory symptoms – tachypnoea (RR&gt;60/minute), grunting, rib recession, abnormal colour (for example cyanosis), suspected diaphragmatic hernia, trachea-esophageal fistula/atresia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Apgar, ongoing central cyanosis</td>
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<td>Heart rate below 120 or above 160 beats/minute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Body temperature of 38°C or above, or 37.5°C or above on two occasions 30 minutes apart, or less than 36°C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxygen saturation below 95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyanosis confirmed by pulse oximetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bile-stained vomiting, persistent vomiting or abdominal distension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay in passing urine or meconium ( \geq 24 ) hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fits, jitteriness, abnormal lethargy, floppiness, high-pitched cry, pallor, reduced urinary output, symptoms of dehydration</td>
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<tr>
<td>If meconium is present during labour, the woman should be transferred. If there is meconium at the birth, an assessment of the situation occurs. If the baby is vigorous and there are no signs of distress, transfer would not be indicated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The appearance of jaundice less than 24 hours old</td>
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</table>

**In exceptional circumstances**

if a baby is born at home to a woman with rupture of the membranes \( \geq 18 \) hours

- Record the infant’s temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate at regular intervals in the first 24 hours following birth, ongoing observation and monitoring for offensive odour, change in skin colour, levels of alertness, feeding pattern, lethargy.
- Where there is any deviation from the norm in respect of the mother and the baby then transfer to hospital should be considered.

Signed SECM: ................................................................. Date:............................
Appendix V: Guidance to the Schedule for Antenatal Care for the HSE Home Birth Service

This schedule is a guide and must be individualised as needs dictate (refer to NICE Antenatal Care Guideline 2008 and Maternity and Infant Care Scheme DOHC).
Appendix VI: Procedure to Stretch and Sweep Membranes

Prior to formal induction of labour, women should be offered a vaginal examination for membrane sweeping.

The procedure must be discussed with the woman and her partner and the following information will be given:
- Membrane sweeping is not associated with any major maternal adverse effects and is not associated with an increase in maternal or neonatal infection.
- It is associated with discomfort and some pain during examination.
- Some bleeding may occur.
- Abdominal palpation to ensure cephalic presentation and level of engagement.

Verbal informed consent will be obtained prior to the procedure. The SECM shall offer the membrane sweep to women at their appropriate antenatal appointment.
- Prepare for and undertake the examination per vagina “Locate the cervix........” expecting to find a posterior, largely uneffaced, almost closed cervix (do not rupture the membranes).
- Undertake a Bishop’s scoring (or similar) assessment of the cervix.

Evaluation of Cervical Ripening (Bishop Score)

The most commonly used methodology to evaluate cervical ripening is the Bishop score because it is simple and has the most predictive value. This score uses cervical dilatation, effacement, consistency, position, and the station of the presenting part.

A Bishop score of 5 or more is considered significant for cervical ripening and favourable for the induction of labour. The Bishop score is calculated as follows:

**Dilatation**
- For 0 cm: 0 points are scored.
- For 1-2 cm: 1 point is scored.
- For 3-4 cm: 2 points are scored.
- For 5-6 cm: 3 points are scored.

**Effacement**
- For 0-30%: 0 points are scored.
- For 40-50%: 1 point is scored.
- For 60-70%: 2 points are scored.
- For 80%: 3 points are scored.

**Station**
- For -3 station: 0 points are scored.
- For -2 station: 1 point is scored.
- For -1 and 0 station: 2 points are scored.
- For +1 to +2 station: 3 points are scored.
Consistency

- For firm consistency: 0 points are scored.
- For medium consistency: 1 point is scored.
- For soft consistency: 2 points are scored.

Position

- For posterior position: 0 points are scored.
- For mid position: 1 point is scored.
- For anterior position: 2 points are scored

- Insert one or two fingers between the lower uterine segment and the foetal membranes and move the finger(s) with a sweeping circular action through $360^\circ$ with some inward pressure. Do this fairly decisively as the woman will be uncomfortable and this will be increased if the procedure is unnecessarily prolonged.

- Remove the examining hand gently.

- Auscultate the foetal heart.

- Assist the woman to dress and resume a comfortable position; discuss the finding. Explain to the woman that she may have some blood-stained loss post-procedure. If this is abnormal in any way, i.e. bright red, she should go to the labour ward.

- Dispose of equipment appropriately and wash hands.

- Document the findings and act accordingly.

- Give the woman the follow-up plan, i.e. induction of labour date, next antenatal appointment.
Appendix VII: IMEWS Chart

Irish Maternity Early Warning System (IMEWS)
Escalation Guideline

ALL IMEWS TRIGGERS
Consider context and complete full clinical assessment. Implement measures to reduce triggers if appropriate. Complete a full set of observations on IMEWS immediately. Inform the Midwife in charge.

1 YELLOW
Repeat full set of observations on IMEWS after 30 and before 60 minutes.

2 YELLOWS OR 1 PINK
Call the obstetrician to review. Repeat a full set of observations after 30 minutes.

>2 YELLOWS OR >2 PINKS
Call the obstetrician and request immediate review. Repeat a full set of observations within 15 minutes or monitor continuously.

ALL IMEWS TRIGGERS
Liaise with the Midwife in charge
Document all communication including:
- Redefined plan of care
- Ongoing frequency of observations

IMPORTANT:
1. If concerned about a woman, escalate care regardless of triggers.
2. If action is not carried out as above, CMM/Midwife in charge must contact the senior obstetrician on duty.
3. Document all communication and management plans in notes.

CONSIDER MATERNAL SEPSIS
Are 2 or more of the following SIRS criteria present?
- Temperature ≥ 38°C or <36°C
- Respiratory rate ≥ 20 breaths per min
- Heart rate ≥ 100 beats per min
- White cell count > 16.9 or < 4.0 x 10⁹/L
- Blood glucose ≥ 7.7 mmol/L (in the absence of diabetes)
- Acutely altered mental status

AND
If infection is suspected after medical review

Intervention: within one hour
COMPLETE SEPSIS 6

TAKE 3
1. Appropriate cultures*
2. FBC +/- lactate
3. Start urine output chart

GIVE 3
4. Maintain O₂ (94-98%)
5. Consider IV fluid bolus**
6. IV antibiotics

* e.g. blood, wound, vaginal swab, urine etc
** exercise caution in presence of pre-eclampsia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMIWS Trigger</th>
<th>Normal Values</th>
<th>Yellow Zone</th>
<th>Pink Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory rate (bpm)</td>
<td>11-19</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>≥30 or ≥35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpO2 (%)</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>≤55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>36.0-37.4</td>
<td>35.1-35.9 or 37.5-37.9</td>
<td>≤35 or ≤38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal HR (bpm)</td>
<td>60-99</td>
<td>100-119</td>
<td>&lt;90 or &lt;70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systolic BP (mmHg)</td>
<td>100-139</td>
<td>140-159</td>
<td>≤90 or ≤160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diastolic BP (mmHg)</td>
<td>50-89</td>
<td>90-99 or 90-99</td>
<td>≤40 or ≤100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVPU</td>
<td>Alert</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contact appropriate doctor for early intervention if the woman triggers one PINK or two YELLOW zones at any one time.

### Childbirth
- Pro Laurie
- Glucose
- Other

### Pain Score (0-10)
- Alert (A)
- Value (V)
- Fall (F)
- Temperature (T)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Yellow Zones</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Pink Zones</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PPPG Code:** HB004  **PPPG Title:** Midwifery Practice Guidelines HSE Home Birth Service  **Revision No:** 1  **Approval Date:** December 2016
Instruction Manual for the completion of the 4-part

Birth Notification Form

BNF01

These instructions should be read carefully by all personnel involved in the birth notification system, and should be available for consultation in an area where the forms are completed.

Issued by: National Perinatal Reporting System
Healthcare Pricing Office
Brunel Building
Heuston South Quarter
St. John’s Road West
Dublin 8

www.hpo.ie

August 2016
Appendix IX: Example of Birth Notification Form (36-Hour Birth Notification Form to the CHO/DPHN. Other examples are also in use in different CHO areas).

### NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACTS 1907 & 1915

Notification that a Male ☐ / Female ☐ Live ☐ / Still Born ☐ child was born at ___________________________ on D.O.B.: __ / __ / ____________

Mother’s Name: ___________________________ Tel.: ___________________________

Address: ___________________________ Occ.: ___________________________

Infant’s Surname: ___________________________ Father’s Occ.: ___________________________

Confidential: ☐ Date of Last Delivery: __ / __ / ____________ S M W D SEP

Gravida: ☐ Para: __ / / Gestation: ☐ Apgar: ☐ Birth Weight: ____________

Name of G.P.: ___________________________ Address: ___________________________

P.H. Nurse: ___________________________ Health Centre: ___________________________

(Please tick the appropriate box only)

#### FAMILY HISTORY:


#### PRE-NATAL HISTORY:

1. Rubella (before 16th. week) ☐
2. X-Rays in first 3 months of pregnancy ☐
3. R.H. Blood Group incompatibility, (with anti-bodies) ☐
4. Other serious Illness: ___________________________

#### PERINATAL:

1. Prematurity (under 36 week) ☐ Precipitate Birth ☐ Asphyxia ☐
2. Prolonged Labour ☐ Epidural ☐ Birth Injury ☐
3. Breech: ☐ Forceps: ☐ Caesarean: ☐ Vac.: ☐ S.V.D.: ☐

_________________________ Signature:
Appendix X: Discharge Summary

The SECM Discharge Summary Report to PHN, GP & Hospital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mothers Name:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel No. - Home:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP Name (and Address)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Civil Status: L S P M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L = Lone Parenting, S = Single, P = Partner, M = Married</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Labour/Delivery Summary

- **Date of Delivery:** 
- **Time:** 
- **Place of delivery:** 
- **Source Material:** 
- **Blood loss:** 
- **Oxygen therapy required:** 
- **Position:** 
- **Mental status:** 
- **Cord Abnormalities:**

### Puerperium

- **Ant D:** 
- **Rubella Vaccine:** 
- **Last Hb:** 
- **Bv/Revised:** 
- **Lactose:** 
- **Pnemia:** 
- **BP:** 
- **BO:**
- **Postnatal/Depression information given:**
- **Date of discharge:**
- **Postnatal Day:**

### Infant Details

- **Baby’s Name:** 
- **Address:** 
- **Father’s Name:** 
- **Type of Delivery:** 
- **Gestation at Delivery:** 
- **Resuscitation Required:** 
- **Outcome:** 
- **Gender:** 
- **Birth Weight (kg):** 
- **Apgar Score:** 
- **Head Circumference:** 
- **Anatomic Fontanels:**
- **Placenta weight:**
- **Length:**
- **Midwifes Examination of Newborn Completed: YES/NO:**
- **Diabetes:**

### Progress notes on mother and baby:

### Further information e.g. on appointments required or outstanding:

### Date of referral to PHN:
- **SECM Signature:**
- **Date:**

### Contact details:
Appendix XI: Neonatal Resuscitation Programme 6th Edition Algorithm

Term gestation? Breathing or crying? Good tone?

No

Warm, clear airway if necessary, dry, stimulate

HR below 100 bpm, gasping, or grunting?

No

Laboring breathing or persistent cyanosis?

Yes

Clear airway $S_{O2}$ monitoring

Consider CPAP

Yes

PPV, $S_{O2}$ monitoring

No

HR below 100 bpm?

Yes

Take ventilation corrective steps

No

HR below 60 bpm?

Yes

Consider intubation

Chest compressions

Coordinate with PPV

Yes

HR below 60 bpm?

Yes

IV epinephrine

* Critical points at which endotracheal intubation should be considered.
Appendix XII: Basic Life Support Algorithm

BLS Healthcare Provider Adult Cardiac Arrest Algorithm—2015 Update

1. Verify scene safety.
2. Victim is unresponsive. Shout for nearby help. Activate emergency response system via mobile device if appropriate. Get AED and emergency equipment (or send someone to do so).
3. Monitor until emergency responders arrive.
   - Normal breathing, has pulse
     - Look for no breathing or only gasping and check pulse (simultaneously). Is pulse definitely felt within 10 seconds?
       - No normal breathing, has pulse
         - Provide rescue breathing: 1 breath every 5-6 seconds, or about 10-12 breaths/min. (not on train."
           • Activate emergency response system (if not already done) after 2 minutes.
           • Continue rescue breathing: check pulse about every 2 minutes. If no pulse, begin CPR (go to "CPR" box).
           • If possible, opioid overdose, administer naloxone if available per protocol.
         - No breathing or only gasping, no pulse
           - CPR
             Begin cycles of 30 compressions and 2 breaths. Use AED as soon as it is available.
           - AED available.
             - Check rhythm. Shockable rhythm?
               - Yes, shockable
                 - Give 1 shock. Resume CPR immediately for about 2 minutes (until prompted by AED to allow rhythm check). Continue until ALS providers take over or victim starts to move.
               - No, nonshockable
                 - Resume CPR immediately for about 2 minutes (until prompted by AED to allow rhythm check). Continue until ALS providers take over or victim starts to move.

By this time in all scenarios, emergency response system or backup is activated, and AED and emergency equipment are retrieved or someone is retrieving them.
Appendix XIII: Maternal Cardiac Arrest

Maternal Cardiac Arrest

First Responder
- Activate maternal cardiac arrest team
- Document time of onset of maternal cardiac arrest
- Place the patient supine
- Start chest compressions as per BLS algorithm; place hands slightly higher on sternum than usual

Subsequent Responders

Maternal Interventions
Treat per BLS and ACLS Algorithms
- Do not delay defibrillation
- Give typical ACLS drugs and doses
- Ventilate with 100% oxygen
- Monitor waveform capnography and CPR quality
- Provide post-cardiac arrest care as appropriate

Maternal Modifications
- Start IV above the diaphragm
- Assess for hypovolemia and give fluid bolus when required
- Anticipate difficult airway; experienced provider preferred for advanced airway placement
- If patient receiving IV/IO magnesium prostrates, stop magnesium and give IV/IO calcium chloride 10 mL in 10% solution, or calcium gluconate 30 mL in 10% solution
- Continue all maternal resuscitative interventions (CPR, positioning, defibrillation, drugs, and fluids) during and after cesarean section

Obstetric Interventions for Patient With an Obviously Gravid Uterus†
- Perform manual left uterine displacement (LUD)—displace uterus to the patient’s left to relieve aortocaval compression
- Remove both internal and external fetal monitors if present

Obstetric and neonatal teams should immediately prepare for possible emergency cesarean section
- If no ROSC by 4 minutes of resuscitative efforts, consider performing immediate emergency cesarean section
- Aim for delivery within 5 minutes of onset of resuscitative efforts

†An obviously gravid uterus is a uterus that is deemed clinically to be sufficiently large to cause aortocaval compression

Search for and Treat Possible Contributing Factors (BEAU-GHOPS)
- Bleeding/DIC
- Embolism: coronary/pulmonary/amniotic fluid embolism
- Anasthetic complications
- Uterine atony
- Cardiac disease (MI/ischemia/oriental dissection/cardio myopathy)
- Hypertension/preeclampsia/ eclampsia
- Other: differential diagnosis of standard ACLS guidelines
- Placenta abruptio/prvias
- Septus

©2010 American Heart Association
13. Signature Page

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the attached:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Area of Work</th>
<th>Date</th>
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