

Appendix – suggested draft letter

Dear

We understand you wish to decline any further care from maternity services during your pregnancy and the birth of your baby. This letter is to provide you with information about what is legally required for birth notification and birth registration following an unassisted birth. We also include information on how to arrange care for yourself and your baby if you wish it at any point.

In our conversations to date we have shared with you the benefits of professional antenatal care, in identifying any emerging problems for you and the baby, such as pre-eclampsia or slow growth of the baby. We have also shared with you the benefits of having a professional attend your labour and birth, which enable you to know how the baby is coping with labour and identify any emerging problems for you and the baby during the labour and birth. We have shared with you the potential risks of an unattended birth at home for both you and the baby.

You can still access maternity care, should you choose do so. It can recommence at any time during your pregnancy, your labour and birth, or during the postnatal period.

Maternity Triage (ADD NUMBER) can also provide help or advice, and are available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Registering the birth of your baby

Registering the birth of your baby is a legal requirement and all births must be registered within 21 days of your baby being born. Registering the birth of your baby is a two part process - Notification of Birth and Registration of Birth.

Notification

This is normally done by the health professional in attendance and requires to be done within 24 hours. The arrangement we have in place for anyone who has an unassisted birth is that we ask you to call Maternity Triage (ADD NUMBER) within 24 hours of birthing.

Please advise the staff in Maternity Triage that you have had an unassisted birth, and please update them on your and your baby's wellbeing. Maternity Triage will liaise with the community midwifery team who will contact you. We will offer to send a midwife to your house to obtain your baby's birthweight, offer to examine you both and ask for the details needed for a notification of birth. These are the date and time of birth, the sex of the baby, and who was present at the birth. Once we have this information we can generate a Community Health Index (CHI) number for your baby, which will allow you to access health services in the future (such as registering your baby with a GP).

Registration

We will give you a registration of birth card to take to any registry office in Scotland to arrange for a birth certificate. This card gives you contact details of all the local registry offices. All births should be registered within 21 days.

Postnatal Care

We would be happy to provide postnatal care for you and your baby after the birth. Our normal care pathway is community visits for mum and baby on days 1-4, 6 and 10. More can be facilitated if required.

If you wish to decline care for yourself, we could just provide care for your baby. This is another option available to you.

Care for your baby

We offer your baby:

- A detailed examination between 6 and 72 hours of age. This examination screens newborn babies for conditions relating to their heart, hips and eyes.
- A weight at 60-84 hours of age
- Newborn Bloodspot Screening between 96 and 168 hours of age.
- Further weights on Day 6 and Day 10

Vitamin K is recommended for all newborn babies as it is required for the production of essential clotting factors in the liver. Haemorrhagic disease of the newborn (HDN) is caused by a deficiency of Vitamin K. HDN may cause severe bleeding which may be fatal or cause severe brain damage. Bleeding can occur without warning. Vitamin K can be administered either by injection or orally (by mouth). It is best if it is given to a baby as soon as possible after birth.

As part of the latest government guidelines we have started supplying Vitamin D for both yourself and your baby if you are breastfeeding or if your baby is taking less than 500mls of formula daily. If you would like a supply of tablets and drops we can arrange this for you.

Care for you

Perineal tears often happen during birth. Whilst small skin tears can heal very well without repair, some deeper tears do not heal effectively unless they are sutured (stitched). Large tears, if not repaired, can lead to issues with incontinence. It is recommended that suturing is completed within 6 hours to achieve optimum healing. You would be welcome to attend the hospital for this to be done timeously.

We are always here to support you if you have any questions or concerns, or to further discuss options. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

If at any point you change your mind and wish to receive antenatal or labour care, please be in touch with Maternity Triage on the number above or call 999 for emergency attendance.

Kind regards