

A report about:

Maternity Services in Wales

(Part one)

And how good and safe maternity services are.



Easy read version

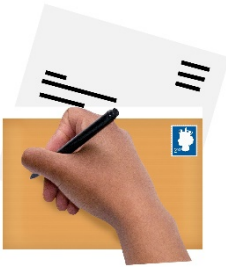


You can read the full report on
our website www.hiw.org.uk



You can ask for a copy of the
report

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Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is independent and looks at all healthcare services in Wales.



We looked at maternity services across Wales, which give care to women having babies.



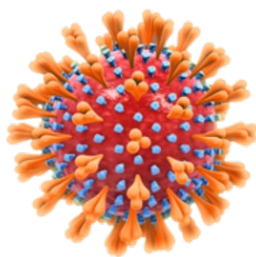
We wanted to check how good maternity services are and if they are safe.



We did this because there have been problems in the past in some hospitals.



Our full review is in two parts. This report is about part one. Part two will start at the end of 2020.



COVID-19



Part one of the review took place from July 2019 to January 2020 which was before the start of COVID-19.



Our review did not check how maternity services have worked since the start of COVID-19.



What we wanted to find out.

We wanted to know:



- How women feel about their maternity care
- How maternity care is given
- If maternity care is safe and good enough from start to finish. That means from when a woman gets pregnant to after her baby is born
- If maternity staff get the right support to do their jobs.





What maternity services are available?



Maternity services are available to women and their families all across Wales.



Women can chose where they want to have their baby. This can be in a hospital or at home.



If women chose to have their baby in a hospital, they can chose one in a different area from where they live.

What we did

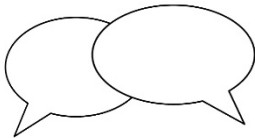


We inspected all maternity services across Wales to see how they do things.

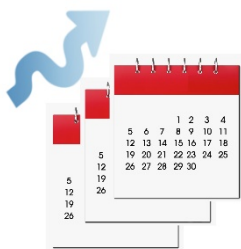


We looked at maternity care given to women when they are pregnant, when they are in labour and give birth, and after they give birth.

When we did the inspections, we wanted to know:



- If maternity staff explained about the care available for women and their family
- If women have safe and good care
- If staff are good at their jobs and work together
- Can care remain good in the future
- If there is good management in the maternity services.





We looked at lots of paperwork.



We asked questions to lots of different staff and women about maternity care.



We did interviews with senior hospital staff.



We also did 2 surveys across Wales and got answers from:

- 3303 people using maternity services
- 564 staff working in maternity services.

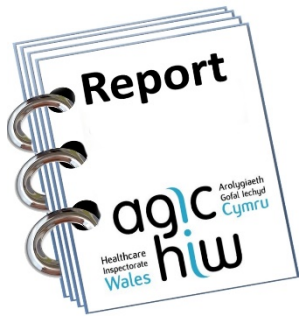


Lots of different experts took part in the review.

Organisations who support women and children also helped.



We want to thank everyone who helped us do this review.



What we found out



Staff working in maternity services are dedicated to providing the best care to women and families.



Care is good, and maternity services overall are delivered safely.



People who completed our public survey agreed with this.

They were satisfied and said good things about the care and support they had.



Staff try hard to make women feel good about their visits to maternity services.

We wanted to know if:



- Maternity care is based on good information



- Staff have good knowledge



- Care is planned to fit each woman



- Services work with the whole family to make plans.

We found:



- Most women were happy with the care and communication they had from services through their pregnancy



- We found that support and advice given by maternity staff was good, so women could make choices about their care.



We heard some upsetting stories about women:

- Feeling alone
- Not being listened to
- Left in pain.



Some women did not feel they could say what they want about their birth choices.



Sometimes medical problems mean that women cannot give birth in the way they want. This needs to be looked at further.



More needs to be done to help women speak in their own language when they get maternity care.



Women need the chance to say how they are feeling because pregnancy and childbirth can be scary.



Not all maternity services let family members visit when women want them to.



We think all maternity units should have open visiting. That means visitors should be allowed whenever the woman wants them to.



Some women told us they were looked after by too many health workers while they were pregnant.



This made them feel uncomfortable as they did not have a chance to get to know staff.



Some had to tell their medical history again and again to different people. That was sometimes upsetting.



We know it can be hard to make sure the same staff can look after the same women through their pregnancy, but we feel this should be looked at across Wales.



There is a strong message in Wales that breastfeeding is important. This is good.



We were told that there is not enough support for women who want to breastfeed their baby.

There are too few staff and too much work. This needs to improve.



We found was that there was not enough mental health support for pregnant women and women with a new baby.



If they do not get mental health support it can cause problems.

The problems can last a long time and affect the whole family.



We think that mental health support in maternity services should be looked at and improved.



All health boards are doing good work to support women if their baby dies.



We heard that staff were well-trained for this but find it hard to get training at the right time.



We think it is very important for health boards to share what they learn when things do not go well.

Health boards should also share the changes they make when women and families give them feedback.



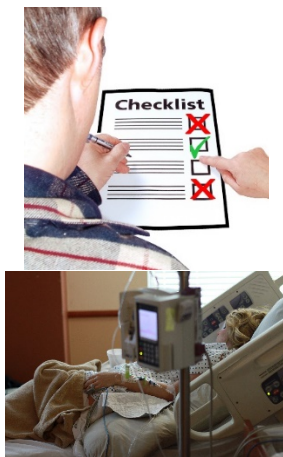
Are women in Wales getting good safe care?



There is a lot happening to give good safe care to women having babies in Wales.



We do have worries about safety in some services.



There are not enough checks on:

- Special emergency equipment
- What should happen in an emergency
- Places where care is given
- Keeping new babies safe
- Looking after medicines.





Women and babies are put at risk when the important checks do not happen.



When we told them what we found, all the health boards told us what they will do to put things right.



We found that maternity services were good at keeping vulnerable people safe.



They are good when special support is needed. This could be for:



- Teenage pregnancy
- Asylum seekers
- Women who have been abused.



Are women getting care from teams with the right skills?



There is a lot of good teamwork and good work relationships.

There is good communication between maternity teams. This helps staff give good care.



We saw lots of good ideas and things in place to make the service better.

Staff were also working on new projects to support mothers and babies.



Health boards need to do more to help share these good ideas across Wales.



This is important because lots of women said they needed more support after having their baby.



We think the plan for staff training is ok.



Not enough staff and time means that some staff cannot always do their top up training on time.



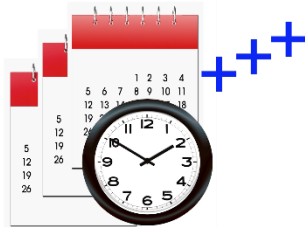
Will maternity care stay as good as it is?



Staff in maternity services always try and do their best, but there are not always enough people to make sure care is safe.



Staff are stressed and tired because of too much work and not enough time to do it all.



They also do a lot of extra work when they are needed.



If they are too stressed and tired then the care may not be as good or as safe as it should be.



It is a hard problem to solve but health boards must do everything they can to give good safe care at all times.



Are maternity services run well?



If services are run well women are more likely to get good care.



Overall we saw services run by committed leaders who always try to deliver the best care possible.

They work hard to make sure women and families are treated very well. Most women are happy with this.



We found that patients are sometimes put at risk.

That makes us worry about how those services are run.



Work is needed to make sure the same good, safe care is given everywhere in Wales.



We found that health boards did report things that go wrong.



They need to share what they learn from this with staff.

That way everybody learns the important lessons about giving the best care.

It is very important that staff feel safe to say if there is a problem.



They need to know that people will work to put things right. Health boards must make this happen.



They must make sure staff are not made to feel bad about pointing out problems.

We have made lots of recommendations to health boards and the Welsh Government to make care safer.



Recommendations for health boards:



Recommendation 1

Make sure women know they can ask for information and support in a language they choose.



Recommendation 2

Make sure women are able to communicate in their choice of language.



Recommendation 3

Think about how water birth can be made available across all units.



Recommendation 4

Make sure women meet the same healthcare professionals.



Recommendation 5

Think about having someone responsible for helping women stop smoking.



Recommendation 6

Work with Public Health Wales to share information on healthier living.



Recommendation 7

Make sure there is always enough breastfeeding advice and support.



Recommendation 8

Look at the mental health support they provide for women and how good it is.

Recommendation 9



One health board has a service called PRAMS. This supports new mothers who may have mental health problems. All health board should look at having a service like PRAMS.



Recommendation 10

Make sure staff can get training about what to do when babies die.



Recommendation 11

Think about how to make sure that they learn from women's experiences.
Share what has changed from listening to feedback.



Recommendation 12

Be better at sharing patient stories at board and quality and safety committees.



Recommendation 13

Make sure they check the emergency medical equipment.



Recommendation 14

Make sure staff know what to do when there is a medical emergency.



Recommendation 15

Make sure staff know how to keep women safe using the water birthing pool.



Recommendation 16

Make sure all services are clean, tidy and safe.



Recommendation 17

Make sure there are good infection controls in place.



Recommendation 18

Make sure all dangerous chemicals are safely stored away.



Recommendation 19

Make sure staff know how to store medicines safely.



Recommendation 20

Health boards have policies about giving medicine these need to be followed.



Recommendation 21

Think about clinics to support women who have had Female Genital Mutilation.



Recommendation 22

When something goes wrong the health board looks at why. These lessons should be shared to all staff.



Recommendation 23

Make sure staff feel okay to speak up when something goes wrong. And they do not worry about getting into trouble.



Recommendation 24

Health boards use dashboards to report how well they are doing. Health boards should agree to use the same dashboard across Wales.



Recommendation 25

Make sure all policies are kept up to date and staff know when there are new policies.



Recommendation 26

Some midwives help in surgery. They should be properly trained for this.



Recommendation 27

Think about having champion midwives to support better ways of working.



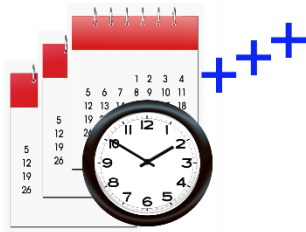
Recommendation 28

Some health boards have monitors to check the babies heart at all times. This is a good idea all health boards should have this.



Recommendation 29

Make sure all staff have good training in good time.



Recommendation 30

Make sure there are plans to avoid staff working too many hours.



Recommendation 31

Think about how to reward staff who do good work.



Recommendation 32

Make sure good records are kept and good patient notes.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Recommendations for Welsh Government:



Recommendation 1

Make sure staff have a computer record for reach women.



Recommendation 2

Think about working the same across Wales to stop babies being taken illegally.



Recommendation 3

Make sure there is a single maternity dashboard across Wales.



Recommendation 4

Staff skills and experience are checked with an appraisal. There should be a Wales wide appraisal system.



Recommendation 5

Look at the plan that supports new nurses and midwives to get new skills, support and experience.

What we have decided



From our review, we think the quality of care given to women and families in maternity services across Wales is mostly good.



Care is given by dedicated groups of maternity staff, but there is work to do to make some things better.

1	✓
2	✓
3	✓
4	✓

There are some clear messages for maternity services leaders, to make services better.

More needs to be done to make sure:



- Women are heard and listened to



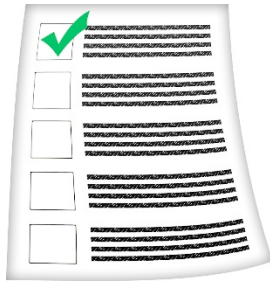
- Arrangements are made better to make sure maternity units are safe and well run



- The way problems are reported and looked at does not make staff feel worried or blamed



- Everyone should learn from problems or mistakes to stop them happening again.



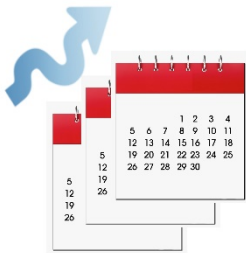
What happens next?



We want health boards across Wales to think about what we found and what we say should happen.



We want them to use this report to make maternity services better.



3 months after this report the health boards and Welsh Government need to send us a plan.



The plan should say how they will make things better.



The second part of our work will start in November 2020.



We will look at:

- the care that community midwife teams give
- the care that women get after a baby is born until they see a health visitor
- changes since our inspections.



We want to find out:

- what it is like for women who use community midwife services
- which health boards across Wales give good and safe maternity services.

