

Maternity Services in North Somerset

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Introduction

Healthwatch North Somerset collects information from the public about their experiences of local health and social care services. We call this information 'Intelligence'. Intelligence is gathered through a wide range of methods including letters, website, emails, surveys, telephone calls, meetings, social media, Enter and View visits, talking face to face and from partner organisations.

We also gather information on specific issues through surveys, meetings or by working with a specific group of people. Healthwatch North Somerset takes great care to treat all information objectively.

Once gathered, the intelligence is collated onto our information database, we analyse the data each month to ascertain trends. This information is shared with health and social care service providers, local commissioners and all other relevant bodies. All intelligence is shared with Healthwatch England.

Healthwatch North Somerset would like to thank to everyone who contributed and provided information for this report.

Background

According to statistics obtained from the North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, there were 2178 births in North Somerset in the period April 2014 - March 2015.

The majority of these births took place at St Michaels Hospital or the North Bristol Trust hospitals of which only Southmead Hospital and Cossham Hospital have maternity facilities.

In this period, 233 births took place at Weston Area Health Trust Ashcombe Birth Centre, amounting to just over 10% of the total births in North Somerset. This is a midwife led unit, and although a much larger number of expectant mothers receive their antenatal care at this unit, most opt to have their baby elsewhere where a consultant and emergency facilities are available.

Healthwatch North Somerset considered that based on feedback received from the public a more thorough evaluation of maternity services would be useful. Although a number of negative comments were received, the majority of feedback was of a positive nature. Healthwatch North Somerset considers this should be celebrated and best practice shared.

It is of note that 33 of the local Healthwatches have identified maternity services as a key priority to review since 2013. The common themes identified by these studies are included in the Appendices of this report.

Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The aim of this service evaluation is to highlight the issues that the public view as important in supporting their needs in pregnancy and maternity services. The information has been presented to service providers to indicate where service users feel hospital services are not meeting their expectations and also to highlight best practice and give positive recognition.

“Overall, the care I had received has been excellent.”

Methods

A community engagement approach was adopted for this report as it represents an empowering method to give service users a voice in how services are delivered.

The information and feedback obtained was gathered through a questionnaire (see appendices) via the following engagement activities.

- Nailsea and Backwell Children’s Centre
- Milton and Old Worle Children’s Centre
- Long Ashton Community Centre
- Mothercare Store in Weston super Mare
- Public engagement activity at Weston super Mare, Clevedon and Portishead libraries

The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the maternity services that they have accessed on a scale of 1-5 (1=Poor -> 5=Excellent) and also offered the opportunity for additional comments to be made regarding specific services.

In addition to the questionnaire, the results of this review also incorporate general intelligence received by Healthwatch North Somerset through a variety of means including:

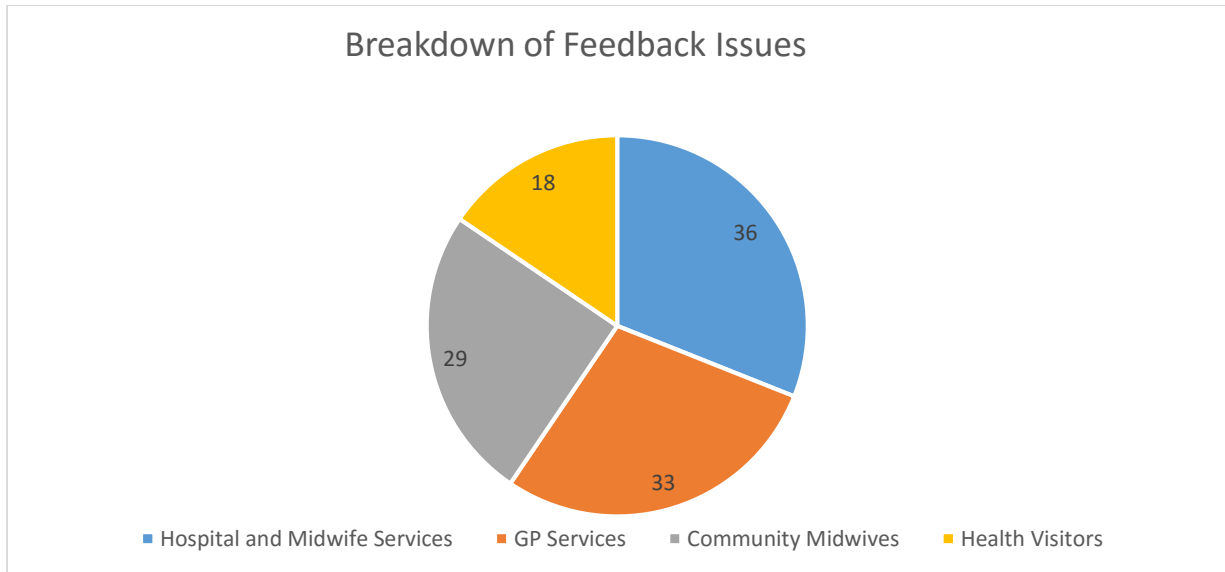
- Letters
- Emails
- Website feedback

☎ Telephone calls

Within this report, we have captured 92 responses from North Somerset users of maternity services including 41 questionnaires.

Results and Findings

The breakdown of the issues commented upon in the questionnaires was as follows.



It should be noted that a number of respondents did not fully complete the questionnaire and may have only commented on one or two specific issues. The chart above reflects the total number of comments received.

Positive Feedback

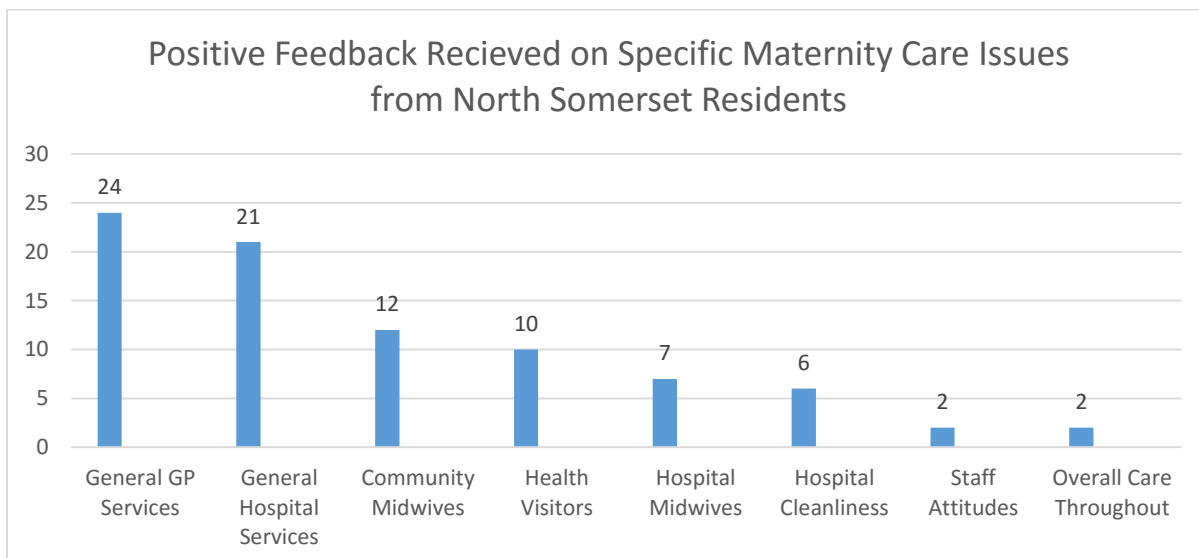
We received 82 positive comments regarding maternity care provision in North Somerset, which is 84% of the total responses received. Any rating of 3 or above on the questionnaire has been categorised as 'positive' feedback.

Quotes from respondents included:

“Very supportive GP”

“Friendly and caring midwives with excellent knowledge”

“Amazing team, especially anaesthetist”



Key Points

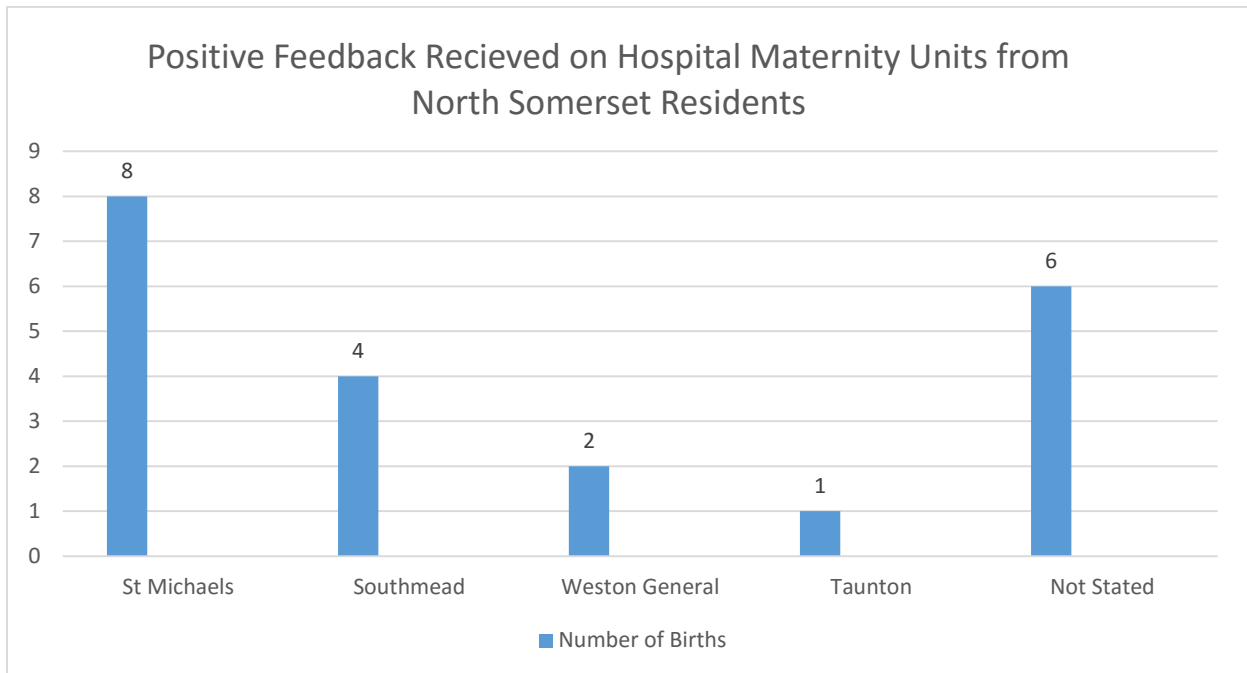
- Feedback regarding the care received from GP practices was largely very positive and amounted to 29% of the positive comments received. It is worth noting that this category also includes the services received by community midwives as well as GP attitudes, appointment coordination and information provided via GPs.

- We found that the positive responses received on GP services related to a broad cross section of the GP surgeries in North Somerset incorporating a large geographical area including:-
 - Long Ashton Surgery
 - Tudor Lodge Surgery
 - Clarence Park Surgery
 - Worle Medical Centre
 - Cedars Surgery
 - Yeo Vale Medical Practice
 - Tower House Surgery
 - Backwell and Nailsea Medical Group
 - New Court Surgery

- We also received two responses about GP surgeries outside the North Somerset region, Highbridge Medical Centre and Burnham and Berrow Medical Centre.

- The range of hospitals used by the respondents, which make up the ‘General Hospital Service’, is broken down in the following chart.

- The ‘Community Midwives’ category received 12 positive comments, many of which related to ‘friendly and supportive attitude’ and the quality of the service overall.



- Feedback recorded under ‘Midwives’, ‘Staff Attitudes’ and ‘Cleanliness’ are recorded separately from the Hospital Maternity Services. This explains the relatively small number of responses displayed in the Positive Feedback chart above.
- The category ‘Hospital Services’ included comments regarding: -
 - Appointments
 - Discharge
 - Inpatient services
 - Service during labour

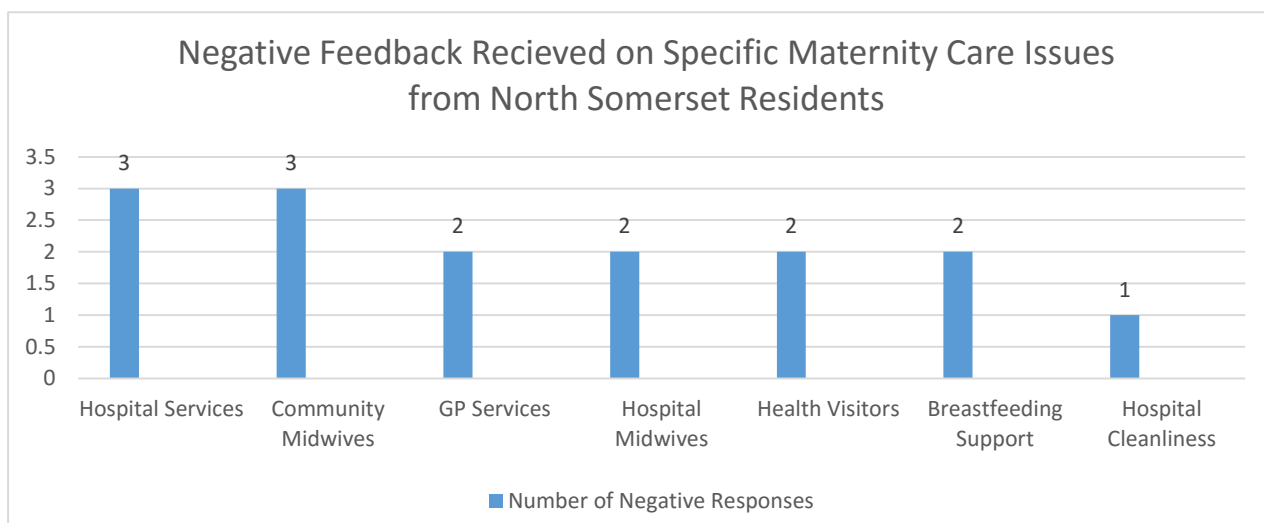
Negative Feedback

We received 15 negative comments regarding maternity care provision in North Somerset, which is 16% of the total responses received. Any rating of two or less on the questionnaire was categorised as ‘negative’ feedback.

Comments received included:

“Very slow discharge, waited all day”

“More consistent midwives would be nice”



Key Points

- Hospital services and community midwives were the two categories that received the most negative feedback, with each receiving three negative comments.
- No negative feedback was received that could be described as ‘general or ‘overall’ which indicates that respondents are more inclined to be specific about the issues that concern them.

Additional Comments

Below are a number of specific concerns that were raised which we felt should be brought to the attention of service providers and commissioning services.

- One respondent suggested that there should be a dedicated breast-feeding supporter on the hospital ward.
- Two respondents suggested home births could be promoted more.
- One respondent was concerned about receiving conflicting advice from midwives.

Conclusion

The feedback received in this review of Maternity Services was overwhelmingly positive.

Since collecting the feedback, Healthwatch North Somerset has obtained information from North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group on the overall provision for new and expectant mothers in the region:

With regard to the standard of antenatal care that North Somerset residents can expect, the routine pregnancy pathway for North Somerset provided by North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is largely in line with the National NICE 'Schedule of Appointments in Routine Antenatal Care' with the only difference being a 42 week check on the NICE guidelines which is absent from the North Somerset CCG pathway. The pathway does, however, clearly state that 'the pattern of care may change and will be tailored to your individual needs'.

Further information is available in the Appendices of this report.

Recommendations

Healthwatch North Somerset recommends the following based on the feedback received:

1. A review of the information provided to support pregnant or new mothers to include information about accessing health visitor support when there are particular difficulties, home births and breast feeding support.

Appendix 1 - Positive Quotes from Respondents

St Michaels Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Doctors and Midwives were fantastic, very friendly and helpful. • Some rushed services but mostly friendly and helpful. • Couldn't fault cleanliness.
Backwell NSCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was lucky enough to see the same midwife throughout my pregnancy. This I found Excellent as it meant really great continuity of care and I felt like I had a very good relationship with her. • Overall, the care I had received has been excellent.
St Michaels Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazing Team, especially anaesthetist.
Long Ashton GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very supportive GP, took time at 6 week check.
Southmead Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southmead Hospital was really good with all scans and changing appointments if needed.
New Court Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors amazing.
Ashcombe Birth Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very clean friendly and caring midwives with excellent knowledge. • Great friendly services, but should be more promotion of home births. • Friendly Midwives, so far I am happy with the Services I have had the last 26 weeks.

Appendix 2 - Negative Quotes from Respondents

Backwell GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had to chase up immunisations for baby at 2, 3 and 4 months old.
St Michaels Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After Care at St Michaels not so good, not helped with breast feeding and also never told about doing stomach excising for muscles. Very slow discharge, waited all day. Etopic pregnancy dealt with at St Michael's very poor.
Long Ashton GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GP Appointments confusing kept switching between 2 locations in Nailsea and 1 location in Long Ashton.
Locking Castle GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information generally.
Ashcombe Birth Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information generally.
Wrighton Vale Medical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More consistent midwives would be nice.
Health Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some concerns not dealt with by Nailsea health visitors. Regular meetings with health visitor to help with sleep issues, supportive but not actually able to offer in-depth advice.



Maternity Services Questionnaire

Please be assured that your answers will be kept completely confidential.

**1. Have you accessed any of the following pregnancy or maternity services?
Please place 'X' to indicate that you have used the service and put the name
of the Hospital/Birth Unit/ Surgery/Medical centre**

Hospital pregnancy and maternity services

GP - pregnancy and maternity consultations

Health visitor services

Midwife services

Other, please state

2. When did you access the services?

Currently using services

In the last 6 months

In the last 12 months

In the last 2 years

**3. Using the ratings below please turn over the page and rate the services
you have received on the following aspects?**

5 – Excellent

4 – Good

3 – Satisfactory

2 – Not very good

1 – Poor

GP Support Rating: Further details:	Hospital Appointments Rating: Further details:
GP Appointments Rating: Further details:	During Labour Rating: Further details:
Midwives Rating: Further details:	Cleanliness of Hospital Rating: Further details:
Health Visitor Rating: Further details:	Inpatient Services Rating: Further details:
Post Natal Rating: Further details:	Discharge Experience Rating: Further details:
Staff Attitudes (Please indicate which service/s your rating applies) Rating/s: Further details:	Dealing with Complaints (Please indicate which service/s your rating applies) Rating/s: Further details:
Catering to Special Needs (Please indicate which service/s your rating applies) Rating/s: Further details:	Information about the Services (Please indicate which service/s your rating applies) Rating/s: Further details:

4. Please use this space to give us more information about your specific experiences that will assist us to improve services in North Somerset. Please ensure you have included the name of the service provider.

Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback.

If you would prefer to complete the survey via our website please go to www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

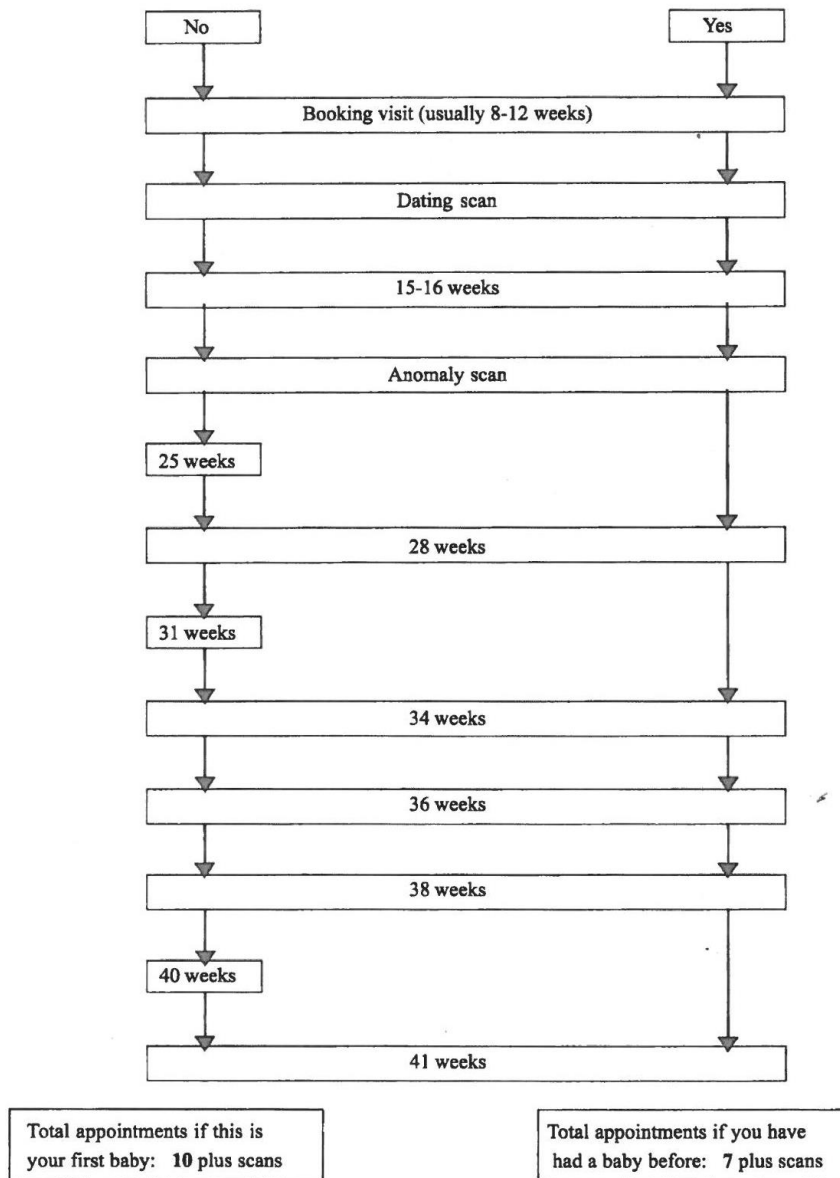
Appendix 4 - Routine Pregnancy Pathway for North Somerset

SUMMARY OF YOUR ROUTINE APPOINTMENTS DURING PREGNANCY

Each appointment will have a specific purpose and the aim of these antenatal appointments is to check on you and your baby's wellbeing and to provide you with clear information to plan your care accordingly.

As well as face-to-face information you should have access to antenatal classes and written information that is based on the best research evidence available.

Have you had a baby before?



This pattern of care may change and will be tailored to your individual needs.

Appendix 5 - Summary of Antenatal Care in North Somerset

ANTENATAL CARE (in brackets are some of the abbreviations you may see)

At each antenatal visit your midwife or doctor will check you and your baby's well being. You will be given appropriate information in order to make decisions about your place of birth and type of care you choose during pregnancy. You will also receive information on diet and lifestyle and you will be given information and the opportunity to discuss screening tests that are available during pregnancy with a health professional. You will be asked for information regarding your health, previous pregnancies and family medical history. You will also be asked about various social issues including domestic abuse.

At each antenatal visit your **Blood Pressure (BP)** will be checked to detect pregnancy-induced hypertension or pre-eclampsia.

You will be asked for a **urine sample** which will be tested.

From 25 weeks your midwife or doctor will check on your baby's growth. To do this they measure the distance from the fundus (top of the uterus) to the symphysis pubis (top of the pubic bone) with a centimetre tape. This is called the symphysis-fundal height measurement (SFH), which is recorded in the notes and on a growth chart.

Presentation and engagement describe the way your baby lies. Presentation may be cephalic (CEPH, also called vertex = V, which means baby's head is entering the pelvis first or breech, which means baby's bottom is coming first. Engagement is how much the presenting part has not descended into the pelvis and is usually written in 'fifths', e.g. 2/5ths.

Fetal movements (FM/FMF = fetal movements felt). You will usually start feeling some movements between 16 and 22 weeks. Your baby's movements are an important sign of your baby's well-being. It is important that you are aware of your own baby's activity.

If you feel your baby's movements have decreased or changed at any time after 24 weeks of pregnancy you should contact your midwife or the hospital.

Fetal heart (FH or FHHR - fetal heart heard and regular). Your midwife or doctor may be able to listen to your baby's heart with either a pinard stethoscope (ear trumpet) or a hand-held listening device.

Most pregnancy symptoms are normal. However, it is important to be aware that certain symptoms might suggest the possibility of pregnancy complications.

CONTACT YOUR MIDWIFE OR GP FOR ADVICE IF ANY OF THESE OCCUR:

- Pain on passing urine
- Smelly vaginal discharge
- Your baby's movements change or reduce
- Membranes ('waters') breaking early
- Vaginal bleeding
- Abdominal ('stomach') pains
- Persistent itching
- Severe headaches
- Blurred vision

Appendix 6 - Community Midwife and Health Visitor Schedule of Appointments for North Somerset

The schedule consists of five appointments in total:

Appointment 1	Antenatal
Appointment 2	10-14 Day Check
Appointment 3	6-8 Week Check
Appointment 4	1 Year Check
Appointment 5	2 1/2 Year Check

Appendix 7 - Further information on Maternity services:

- Maternity Voices - Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
Maternity Services Liaison Committee: **Maternity services activity and performance 2015/2016 quarter 1 and trends**

- North Somerset CCG
<https://www.northsomersetccg.nhs.uk/your-health-local-services/help-support/maternity-services/>

Maternity Services - Get involved! Would you like to help us improve maternity services for women in North Somerset through your experiences? 'Maternity Voices' is an opportunity for parents who have used local maternity services to work with the people who plan and provide them. We want to hear about your experiences of existing services and identify priorities and improvements. To get involved and work with the Maternity Services Liaison Committee, please email: MSLC@bristolccg.nhs.uk - See more at:
<https://www.northsomersetccg.nhs.uk/your-health-local-services/help-support/maternity-services/#sthash.8lxMAHU2.dpuf>

- Weston Area Health Trust
<http://www.waht.nhs.uk/en-GB/Our-Services/Hospital-Units/Ashcombe-Birth-Centre/>

- NICE
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/service-delivery--organisation-and-staffing/maternity-services>

- St Michaels Hospital
<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/your-hospitals/st-michaels-hospital/>

- North Bristol NHS Trust
<https://www.nbt.nhs.uk/maternity-services>

Appendix 8 - Common Themes Identified by Local Healthwatch - Healthwatch England Report

<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/five-common-concerns-maternity-services>

What common issues have been identified?

We've reviewed what people have told local Healthwatch and identified several common themes:

1. Involvement of mothers in the shaping of services

In some areas, there are concerns that inadequate funding and support could mean mothers are no longer meaningfully engaged in the commissioning and delivery of services. We believe action is needed to ensure that the quality of engagement mechanisms can be guaranteed.

2. Staff attitudes, support and communication

While some parents feel supported, others have to deal with what they experience as 'very unsupportive' members of staff who don't listen to personal requests.

Whether due to pressures on maternity wards or communication issues, parents told some local Healthwatch how this caused distress and had a negative impact on their experience.

We've asked NHS England to see what can be done to establish a more consistent quality of experience for parents.

3. Mental health support for mothers

A significant number of local Healthwatch identified concerns about new mothers not getting the mental health support they need before and after giving birth.

Our recent report on unsafe discharge from hospital, as well as highlighting the negative experiences of some mothers, found that some services were offering excellent mental health support - good practice that needs to be spread more widely.

4. Access to prenatal care in the community

Concerns also exist about a lack of prenatal care in the community and a lack of available information about where and how to access prenatal care.

5. Infrastructure and environment

Creating the right environment can help mothers-to-be to feel empowered. However, evidence in some local Healthwatch areas show services to be uncomfortable and badly equipped.

Appendix 9 - CQC National Survey Results

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/content/maternity-services-survey-2015>

Findings from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) national survey of more than 20,000 women suggest that the majority who gave birth in February this year had a better experience overall compared to the results from previous years, across the 133 NHS trusts in England. Access to midwives, choice of where to give birth, and the quality of information are particular areas where the NHS appears to have improved.

The findings, published on 15th December 2015, highlight women's responses to questions across themes such as access to care, personal choices, type of birth and emotional wellbeing.

The responses from women indicate they have had positive experiences as a result of being first seen by a midwife, being offered a midwife led unit and always being spoken to in a way that is understood.

Being treated with dignity and respect, having clean wards, toilets and bathrooms and more support for feeding also featured favourably in the survey responses.

This is the fourth survey of its kind that CQC has carried out in order to help NHS trusts understand what women's experiences are of their maternity care and to make improvements. CQC uses this intelligence as part of its wider monitoring of NHS trusts.

Notable trends from this year's statistical report include:

- The proportion of women who reported that the first healthcare professional they saw about their pregnancy was a midwife has nearly doubled in the last eight years - around two fifths (37%) reported this in 2015, up from around a fifth (19%) in 2007 (32% in 2013).
- 59% of women in 2015 said they received their first 'booking' appointment before they were 10 weeks pregnant, compared to 37% in 2007.
- 41% of women said they were offered a choice of giving birth in a midwife led unit or birth centre; a 6% increase from 2013 (35%).
- Over a third of women (36%) reported that they saw the same midwife at every antenatal appointment, 2% more than in 2013, although 35% this year said they did not mind.
- 89% of women said that during their antenatal care they were "always" spoken to in a way they could understand - up by 7 percentage points since 2007 (82%). However, this means that 11% were not "always" spoken in this way.

- Nearly two thirds of women (62%) said they felt they were “always” given the information or explanations they needed whilst in hospital and after the birth of their baby; an increase of 3 percentage points compared to 2013 (59%).
- Support during and after pregnancy has considerably improved rising from 42% in 2007 to 63% of women in 2015 saying they felt that midwives and other health professionals gave active support and encouragement about feeding their baby.
- 87% of women reported that they were always treated with dignity and respect during labour and birth compared to 85% in 2013.
- The proportion of women being in a position of lying with legs in stirrups whilst having a normal vaginal delivery has seen a steady increase over the past few years going from 17% in 2010, to 19% in 2013 and 22% in 2015.

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