

**Acute Commissioning Unit**

120 Broadway  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 1RH

Telephone: 020 8251 1111

Fax: 020 3458 5401

25 July 2011

Dear Colleagues

**Access for low risk women to Maternity Services at St George's Healthcare NHS Trust**

In our capacity as GP leads on the Clinical Quality Review Group at St George's Healthcare NHS Trust (SGH), we write to inform you about the need to limit access to the provider's maternity services.

Due to an increasing number of referrals from GPs and a capacity constraint at SGH of a safe maximum number of 5,128 deliveries per year, it has become necessary to agree with SGH and the South West London (SWL) Acute Commissioning Unit (ACU) a strategy to limit access for low risk women. Please note that current high risk referrals, approximately 25 per month, are not affected by the changes.

We felt the most equitable restriction would be based upon proximity of the patient to SGH, applying knowledge of where other hospitals have capacity, for example St Helier and Croydon University Hospital.

Therefore, access will be based upon the patients' postcode rather than GP postcode. To inform which postcodes would serve as a catchment we jointly reviewed the number of deliveries at SGH in 2010/11 by postcode sector (the first 4 digits of the postcode e.g. SW17). The list below is comprised of those postcode sectors from which the majority of deliveries in 2010/11 came, with the exclusion of those postcodes which also are served by other local providers with capacity.

Where a postcode is given in this letter, SGH will prioritise referrals from the total area covered by that postcode sector. This is an attempt to avoid any confusion of identifying specific streets and assist with the SGH Maternity Service operating a catchment area.

A review will be conducted after 3 months of implementation to assess effectiveness of this arrangement.

Should it be found that the cap, as detailed above, is not effective at maintaining maternity bookings at safe levels, there would be further consultation with LMCs agreeing any additional contingency to be put into effect.

From 8<sup>th</sup> August 2011, SGH will **only** accept:

- 1) Referrals for women with low risk pregnancies living within postcode sectors:

<b>SW2</b>	<b>SW12</b>	<b>SW18</b>	<b>CR4</b>
<b>SW4</b>	<b>SW15</b>	<b>SW19</b>	<b>SM4</b>
<b>SW8</b>	<b>SW16</b>	<b>SW20</b>	
<b>SW11</b>	<b>SW17</b>		

- 2) Referrals for late transfers of maternity care for women who were previously booked elsewhere **if** there is a clinical indication, or they have moved into one of the above postcode sectors and are not already booked with another local provider
- 3) High risk / complex referrals

In extenuating circumstances, St George's will consider referrals from non complex women outside of our catchment area if they have delivered at SGH previously. However, acceptance of the referral will take place on an individual basis and the safety of the unit in terms of numbers of referrals already accepted will take priority.

Please note that this temporary arrangement is around the number of deliveries at SGH. ***There has been no change to the areas covered by community midwives for post-natal care.***

Whilst regrettable, this capping is necessary in order to maintain a safe service for women giving birth at St George's. Although Maternity Services are excluded from Patient Choice, we are deeply sorry for having to restrict choice for women wishing to give birth at St George's, who fall outside of the above restrictions.

We would like to thank those GPs that have provided constructive feedback and hope that the methodology being applied is one that is understandable and supported, at least in principle.

Yours sincerely

Tom Coffey  
Chair SGH Clinical Quality Review Meeting

Mike Lane  
GP Maternity Lead, SWL Cluster