

St Mary's Birth Centre

In July 2025, University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) took the difficult decision to pause births and postnatal inpatient services at St Mary's Birth Centre in Melton Mowbray due to safety concerns arising from staffing challenges and low birth numbers. These services remain paused while work takes place to inform next steps.

Other Maternity Services Continue as Normal

- Antenatal care and scans
- Births at Leicester Royal Infirmary and Leicester General Hospital
- Home birth services
- Postnatal community care

Background

Following the Building Better Hospitals for the Future public consultation in 2021, it was agreed that births at St Mary's should move to a new standalone midwifery-led unit at Leicester General Hospital as part of the national New Hospitals Programme.

That decision still stands, but national changes to the programme have delayed construction of the new maternity hospital planned for Leicester Royal Infirmary. As a result, maternity services have not moved from Leicester General Hospital (LGH) to Leicester Royal Infirmary as originally intended.

Currently:

- There is no capital funding for a new standalone midwifery-led unit.
- National policy emphasises evidence-based, resource-efficient models of care.
- Birth numbers at St Mary's have dropped further, and staffing challenges continue.

Therefore, the plan is to enact the 2021 consultation outcome as far as possible by:

- Relocating births to the existing midwifery-led unit at Leicester General Hospital.
- Maintaining community services in Melton, including antenatal and postnatal clinics, home visits, and infant feeding support.

Listening to Experiences

Before moving forward, the NHS wants to understand what the pause at St Mary's has meant for:

- Women and birthing people
- Their families
- Colleagues who were directly affected

This engagement will ensure that next steps are clear, fair, and informed by those most impacted. The assessment begins in January 2026 and will run until February 2026, allowing time to review the effects of the pause on families and maternity services across the area.

A recommendation will go to the LLR Integrated Care Board (ICB) in March 2026. We appreciate this timeline extends beyond the initial six-month pause, but hearing the voices and experiences of mothers, families, and staff is essential to inform the long-term way forward.

Who We Want to Hear From

- People who were planning or considering giving birth at St Mary's Birth Centre between July 2025 and September 2026 but were (or are) unable to do so because of the pause
- Family members or carers of these individuals
- Staff who worked at St Mary's Birth Centre before the pause

Working with partners and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP), the ICB will be contacting people directly to attend focus groups over the coming weeks.

Feedback will be independently analysed and evaluated, and a Report of Findings will be published. This will inform the recommendation to the ICB Board in public.

Get Involved

If you have any questions or would like to get in touch about the focus groups, please email:
llricb-llr.beinvolved@nhs.net