Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Update on the temporary suspension of birth services at North Devon District Hospital

9 September 2026

We know many women, birthing people and families continue to have questions about the temporary changes to birth services at North Devon District Hospital (NDDH). We remain committed to keeping people informed and supporting families throughout this period.

Latest update at a glance:

- We are working towards a proposed reopening date of Tuesday 29 September for birth services at NDDH.
- A final review and decision will take place on Monday 14 September.
- Recruitment continues for permanent consultant doctors to support the long-term future of the service.
- Up to 8 September, 93 North Devon women and birthing people have given birth at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (RD&E) with no incidents.
- Community maternity services in North Devon continue as normal.

Proposed reopening of birth services

Last week, we announced that we are working towards a proposed reopening date of **Tuesday 29 September**.

Before this can happen, a final review will take place on **Monday 14 September** to ensure staffing arrangements and all plans required to reopen the service safely are in place. This also helps ensure women and birthing people have clear and reliable information about where they can give birth. Until then, the temporary suspension remains in place.

Women and birthing people should continue to follow their personalised birth plans and contact our maternity triage team on **01392 406616** as soon as they think they may be in labour or if they have any concerns.

Our most important message remains: Don't wait, call maternity triage early.

Recruitment update

Recruiting permanent colleagues remains a priority and is key to securing the long-term future of obstetric and gynaecology services in North Devon.

Recruitment continues for the obstetrics and gynaecology consultant and obstetrics lead consultant posts. The campaign is being promoted through NHS Jobs, the BMJ, Career Gateway, professional networks, social media and targeted searches for potential candidates.

By Friday 4 September, the campaign had generated more than 154,000 social media views and 15,000 clicks through to recruitment information.

This work is taking place in a highly competitive national recruitment market, with more than 40 similar consultant vacancies currently advertised across the NHS. Despite this, we continue to actively promote these opportunities and engage with potential candidates.

Service update

Since the temporary suspension began on 11 August, and up to Tuesday 8 September:

- 93 North Devon women and birthing people have safely given birth at RD&E.
- No incidents have been reported.
- 182 North Devon women have attended triage at RD&E.
- Five babies have been transferred back to transitional care at NDDH.

Community midwifery appointments, antenatal care, scans and outpatient maternity services continue in North Devon.

Supporting women and families

We continue to provide regular updates and support to women, birthing people and their families. Women and birthing people have recently received information covering:

- the proposed reopening plan
- current care arrangements
- when and how to contact maternity triage
- travel and accommodation support available during this period
- how to share feedback about their experience.

Appointments with community midwives continue, and early feedback from the Devon Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership survey suggests women and birthing people feel well supported.

Dedicated appointments are also available to discuss transport and accommodation needs.

Key reminders

- Speak to your midwife at your next appointment if you have questions about your care.
- For any urgent concerns, or if you think you may be in labour, call the maternity triage line on 01392 406616 straight away.

We would like to thank women, birthing people, families and the wider community for their continued patience and support.

Where to find more information

For the latest updates, FAQs and support information visit our website.

Our online patient information pack includes details about:

- What the temporary changes mean.
- Travel and accommodation support.
- Contact numbers and advice.
- Frequently asked questions.

We will continue to provide regular updates as we work towards the proposed reopening of birth services at NDDH.

Thank you for your continued support. We will update you again soon.