

New transfer arrangement supports reduced journeys for Moray women

As part of a new arrangement between NHS Grampian and NHS Highland, work has been done to ensure women who are eligible to birth in the midwife-led unit at Dr Gray's Hospital – who develop a complication during their labour which requires timely obstetric care – will now be transferred directly to Raigmore Hospital as the closest obstetric unit.

A midwife from Dr Gray's will accompany women during these transfers to support their continuing labour care and transition to clinicians based at Raigmore.

This significant step builds on the close working arrangements already in place between the two health boards for other services and provides certainty for mothers and families over their transfer destination should it become necessary. This arrangement will remain in place until consultant-led birth services are available in Elgin in three years' time.

Announcing the important development, Simon Bokor-Ingram, NHS Grampian's Moray portfolio lead said: "This arrangement with NHS Highland is a milestone moment in the evolution of local maternity services. We still have much to do and skilled staff to recruit but communities across Moray should be in no doubt about our commitment to deliver a sustainable consultant-led birth service for them."

The arrangement follows the recommendations of the 2021 (Roberts) review of maternity services at the hospital and subsequent recommendations from the independent external assurance panel led by Dr Linda de Caestecker.

Simon added: "With NHS Grampian and NHS Highland working in partnership we have laid the foundation for a resilient, sustainable maternity service with safety at its heart."

A new midwife consultant joined the recently appointed unit operational manager in Elgin last month and joint teams from both health boards continue to work closely with the independent panel as work on the Maternity Service Plan continues.

Isla Barton, Director of Midwifery for NHS Highland, added: "The new Associate Director of Midwifery in NHHSH together with the Consultant Midwife role has already been hugely beneficial and supported colleagues across both Highland and Grampian in taking this work forward. We're delighted that there are now clear pathways in place for all women that includes Inverness, as well as Aberdeen."

Anyone with questions or feedback relating to the Moray Maternity Service Plan should email gram.maternityengagement@nhs.scot For advice on any aspect of maternity care, please get in touch with your midwife.

Ends

