



This is an easy read document.



We would like to make neonatal services in the North West of England better.



The NHS would like to understand what it feels like for people who have used neonatal services or work in these services as they are now.



We want to make sure all families get good quality care for their newborn babies who need extra care.



What are neonatal services?



Neonatal services are special hospital services for newborn babies who need extra care after birth.



Some babies are born too early, too small or are unwell and need help before they can safely go home.



A baby may need neonatal care if they:

- are born early (before 37 weeks)
- are born very small or underweight
- need help with breathing, feeding or keeping warm
- have a condition that needs special treatment.



A team of specialist staff give the care including:

- doctors who are experts at caring for newborn babies
- specially trained nurses
- other staff, like therapists, pharmacists and dieticians when needed.





Why are we looking at neonatal care?



Most neonatal services do not meet the national standards around the number of babies they see.



Babies do better in hospitals with bigger neonatal units that see larger numbers of poorly babies.

This is because staff get more skilled at caring for them when they do it more often.



Across the North West there are also too many neonatal cots for the number of babies that need them.



It is sometimes hard to find enough specialist neonatal staff to work in units across the North West.



What do we want to do?



We would like to make care better for babies and their families.



We want to make sure that everyone gets the same good care wherever they live or are treated in the North West of England.



We want to make sure babies have the best chance of growing up healthy.



We want to use the skills of specialist staff in the best way.



We want to make sure we have the right services now and in the future.



Which hospitals have neonatal services in the North West of England?



There are 22 different hospital neonatal units in the North West.

They provide four different types of care for babies. This includes:



- **Neonatal Intensive Care Units** – they care for the sickest babies.
- **Local Neonatal Units** – they care for babies that only need extra care for a short time.
- **Special Care Units** – they care for babies that only need a small amount of extra care.
- **Surgical Neonatal Units** – they care for babies that need an operation.

In Cheshire and Merseyside there are 9 units:



- **2 Neonatal Intensive Care Units** – Arrowe Park Hospital, Liverpool Women's Hospital
- **1 Surgical Neonatal Unit** – Alder Hey Children's Hospital
- **5 Local Neonatal Units** – Countess of Chester Hospital, Leighton Hospital, Ormskirk District General Hospital, Warrington Hospital, Whiston Hospital
- **1 Special Care Unit** – Macclesfield District General Hospital

In Greater Manchester there are 8 units:



- **3 Neonatal Intensive Care Units** – St Mary's Hospital, Royal Bolton Hospital, Royal Oldham Hospital
- **5 Local Neonatal Units** – North Manchester General Hospital, Wythenshawe Hospital, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Stepping Hill Hospital, Tameside General Hospital
- Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and St Mary's Hospital also work together to provide **neonatal surgical care** at St Mary's Hospital.

In Lancashire and South Cumbria there are 5 units:



- **2 Neonatal Intensive Care Units** – Royal Preston Hospital, Burnley General Hospital
- **2 Local Neonatal Units** – Royal Lancaster Infirmary, Blackpool Victoria Hospital
- **1 Special Care Unit** – Furness General Hospital





We want your help



We want to hear from **parents, carers and families** who have used neonatal services in the North West.



We also want to hear from **staff** who work in neonatal services.



To help, please tell us what you think.



How to tell us what you think:



We will be talking with **NHS staff** who work with neonatal services to understand their views.

This will be from 26th January 2026 until 6th March 2026.



In spring 2026, we will ask **parents, carers and families** who have used neonatal services for their views.



You can learn how to get involved at:
www.england.nhs.uk/north-west/improving-neonatal-services-in-the-north-west



Why tell us what you think?



It will help us understand how we can make services better for people in the future.



What will we do with the things people tell us?



We will take some time to look at the information people give us.



We will explain what people told us in a report.



We will use this to make suggestions for how we can change and improve services.



In the future, we will share the report on our website at:

www.england.nhs.uk/north-west/improving-neonatal-services-in-the-north-west



If you want to know more:



To learn more, visit our website at:
www.england.nhs.uk/north-west/improving-neonatal-services-in-the-north-west



To receive future updates about this work,
email:
england.nw-specialisedbabieschildren@nhs.net



To find out more about neonatal care
services in the North West, visit:
<https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn>



To request this document in another format
or language:

Email: ghmscp.engagement@nhs.net
Call/Text or WhatsApp us on: 07786 673762



Thank you.