



Scottish
Perinatal
Network
NEONATAL



NEONATAL SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

Information for Expectant Parents

This leaflet provides information about what to expect if your baby needs neonatal care after they are born.

What are Neonatal Services?

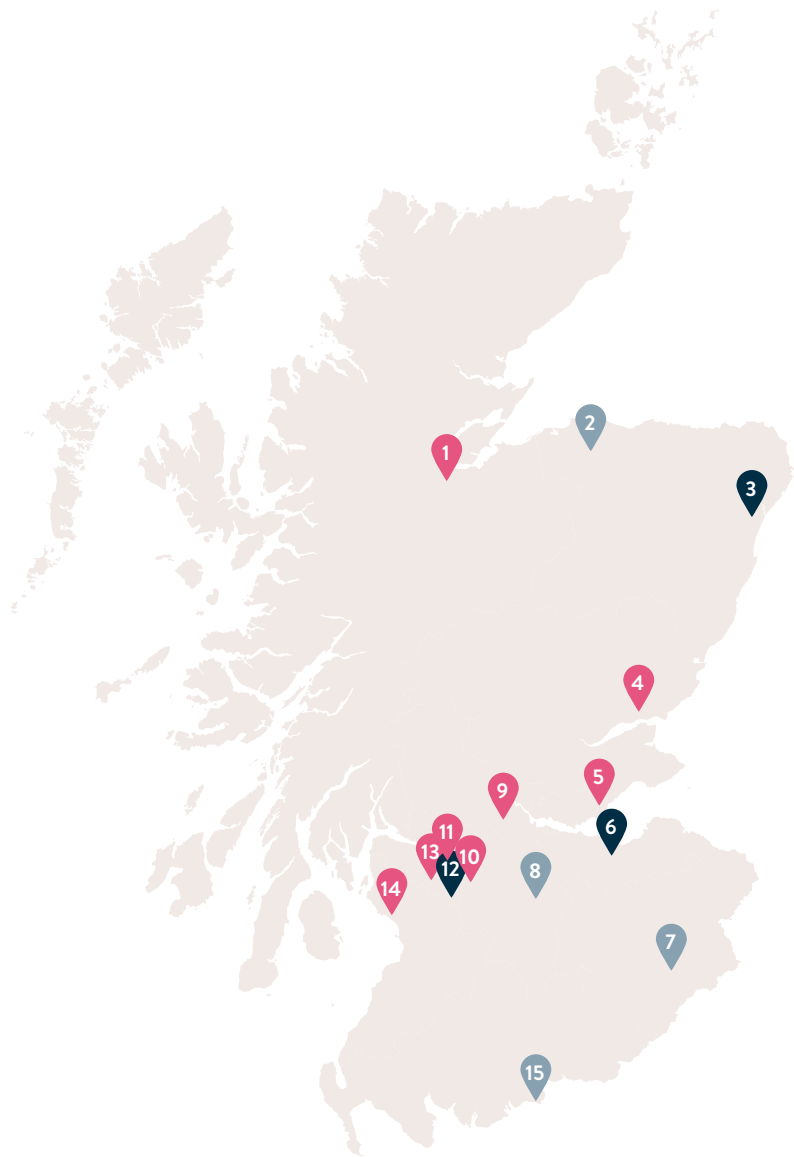
Neonatal simply means 'newborn'. Most babies are born healthy and without any problems. In Scotland, around one in ten babies will need some specialist care after they are born. This care may be provided on the postnatal ward or in a special ward called a neonatal unit.

Reasons for babies needing neonatal care include being born too early (preterm / premature), too small, or becoming unwell after birth. Some babies are born with particular problems that require services such as surgery or help from heart specialists (cardiology). Babies born as part of a twin or multiple pregnancy are more likely to need neonatal care.

How is Neonatal Care provided in Scotland?

There are 15 neonatal units in Scotland. Each of these units provides a particular level of specialised care. Neonatal care is available in most hospitals where babies are born in Scotland, but more specialised treatment for the smallest and sickest babies is limited to fewer more specialist neonatal units. The neonatal units in Scotland work together as a National Neonatal Network to make sure that mothers and their babies are treated in the right hospital for their needs, at the right time. If babies need access to specialist services, they will need to be cared for in one of the units where these services are available; this may involve a transfer either before or after birth if those services are not available in their nearest hospital.





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| 1 Raigmore Hospital | 7 Borders Hospital, Melrose | 12 Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow |
| 2 Dr Gray's Elgin | 8 St John's Hospital | 13 Royal Alexandra Hospital |
| 3 Aberdeen Maternity | 9 Forth Valley Hospital | 14 Ayrshire Maternity Hospital (Crosshouse Hospital) |
| 4 Ninewells Hospital | 10 University Hospital Wishaw | 15 Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary |
| 5 Victoria Hospital | 11 Princess Royal Maternity Unit | |

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS [NICU]

There are three neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) in Scotland. These units provide the most complex intensive care for the very smallest and very sickest babies. NICUs are located alongside other specialist services that these babies may require, such as cardiac and surgical care, as well as specialist maternity care.

LOCAL NEONATAL UNITS [LNU]

These units provide the majority of neonatal care for most babies. These units may also provide short-term intensive care, but babies needing ongoing specialised intensive care, for example if they are born extremely preterm or have surgical or heart problems, will need to be transferred to a NICU.

SPECIAL CARE UNITS [SCU]

These units provide care for babies who need some additional support, for example with feeding or treatment for infection. They may provide very short-term intensive care, but babies needing ongoing specialised care will need to be transferred to a LNU or NICU, according to need. These units also provide care for babies who have had intensive care elsewhere, but who need less intensive support as they prepare to go home.

TRANSITIONAL CARE UNITS [TCU]

TCUs provide care for babies who need some medical or midwifery support but are well enough to be looked after next to their mothers. In a TCU, the mother, or sometimes both parents, are in hospital with their baby and attend to their baby's needs. They still have support from TCU staff. It is our priority in Scotland to keep babies and their parents together whenever possible, so TCUs are available in all hospitals with a NICU, an LNU or a SCU.

If a newborn baby in any hospital becomes suddenly seriously ill there are always trained staff available to give them immediate treatment. If needed, they can then be transferred to a NICU or the most appropriate unit.

More information about each neonatal unit can be found on the national network website: www.perinatalnetwork.scot

What happens if my baby needs care at a different hospital from where I am booked to give birth?

If it is expected that your baby will need a more specialist level of treatment than your local hospital usually provides, you may be transferred to another hospital before your baby is born. This is called an “in-utero transfer”. In-utero transfers are carried out by the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Sometimes babies who need more specialist care will be born in a hospital which cannot provide that level of care. This might be because there was not enough time to transfer the mother before her baby is born, or because the baby is born unexpectedly very unwell. If this happens, your baby will be treated immediately in the hospital where they are born, and then transferred to a neonatal intensive care unit when it is safe to do so.

All hospitals are able to provide the necessary immediate care and support your baby needs until transfer has been arranged.

If your baby needs to be transferred to another hospital after they are born, we will aim to transfer the mother to the same hospital for her ongoing care. If the mother has already been discharged from hospital, we will work with you to

organise travel and accommodation for both parents so you can be with your baby.

Although we will always aim to transfer you or your baby to the most appropriate hospital nearest to your home, at periods of peak demand this may not be possible. In such a situation you may be transferred to the next nearest unit. Babies are moved to the unit best able to care for their specific needs after careful discussion between specialist medical staff.

Once your baby no longer needs more specialised care, they will be moved to a hospital with an LNU or SCU. This may not necessarily be your booking hospital but will be the most appropriate for your baby’s needs and closer to home than the NICU. Moving away from a NICU means your baby is stable and is progressing towards home. Such moves are called “repatriation transfers”, and these are a normal and important part of neonatal care provision in Scotland. They are carefully planned between staff in both hospitals and you will be involved in discussions about when this might happen.



How will my baby be moved to another hospital?

Transfers of babies within Scotland are managed by the Scottish Neonatal Transport Service, known as ScotSTAR. This is a dedicated service provided by highly trained medical and nursing staff. They are specialists in the care and transfer of newborn babies. Transfers of babies can be organised at short notice but your baby will never be moved from a hospital without discussing the need for this with you. We always aim to keep families together, and if possible, you will have the option of travelling with your baby.

More information about ScotSTAR Neonatal Transport Service can be found at:

www.neonataltransport.scot.nhs.uk/information-for-the-general-public

Is there any help with the costs of travelling to or staying at a hospital further away?

We know how important it is for babies born preterm or sick to have their parents involved in their care, so financial support to assist with the cost of travel and food for families with a baby in neonatal care is available via the [Young Patients Family Fund - mygov.scot](http://mygov.scot). Neonatal units can also often provide accommodation for you to stay close by, if you need to, or else you can claim for reimbursement of accommodation costs from the Young Patients Family Fund.



✉ nss.perinatalnetwork@nhs.scot

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🌐 perinatalnetwork.scot

YOUR NEAREST:

NICU

LNU

SCU

TCU
