



6th October 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Changes to maternity self-referrals at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
(6 October 2025)

I am writing to formally notify you of a change in policy regarding self-referrals to maternity services at Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust, effective 6 October 2025. This decision is a necessary and proactive step to ensure the continued safety and sustainability of our maternity services in the face of significant and sustained demand.

We will be limiting self-referrals to our two maternity units – Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and West Middlesex University Hospital – to individuals living in NHS North West London from Monday 6 October.

We will continue to accept referrals from GPs and maternity units in surrounding ICBs where there is a clinical need for complex pregnancy care, including material medicine and fetal medicine.

Our decision, supported by North West London ICB, has not been taken lightly. It is necessary to ensure safe and high quality care and to maintain sufficient capacity for complex pregnancies and births considering significant and unanticipated increases in demand, especially from outside our sector and our neighbouring sector.

In relation to births for 2024/2025, our births exceeded planned activity by approximately 497. A substantial proportion of births at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (67%) and West Middlesex University Hospital (21%) are from outside our immediate catchment area. This has been exacerbated by referral restrictions at other trusts, such as Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

Our new policy will continue to prioritise clinical need and geographical proximity. We will maintain an appeals process that considers individual circumstances, with explicit consideration given to factors such as deprivation, ethnicity, and other vulnerabilities, to ensure our approach is equitable. We would be grateful for your support in cascading this information to your relevant teams, particularly those in maternity services and primary care. We are committed to working with you to manage this transition as smoothly as possible.

Should you require any further information, please contact Claire Davidson or Gina Short, Deputy Directors of Nursing and Midwifery.

Victoria Cochrane (pronouns she/her)
Divisional Director of Midwifery & Nursing