Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with some information which will enable you to make an informed decision about bringing your baby into hospital to be with you during your stay.

Can I bring my baby into hospital with me?

- If you are a breastfeeding mother and your baby is less than six months old, then your baby may stay in hospital with you.
- You will need to arrange for a family member or friend to come in and care for your baby’s needs.
- The person you nominate must stay to care for your baby at all times to ensure you have adequate recovery and rest.
- You will need to provide for all your baby’s requirements such as a carry cot, nappies, wipes, clothes and any other items you may need.
- Your baby will only be able to stay with you if there is a single room available to nurse you in.
- Your baby must be healthy and not be showing any signs of illness.

Babies under six months who are not breast fed or older children are not allowed to stay with you as we do not have the facilities to care for them.

What happens if a single room is not available?

- The staff will make every effort to nurse you in a single room; however there is a possibility that there may not be a single room available.
- If there is no single room available, you should express your breastmilk to maintain your supply. It may be possible to borrow a breast pump or arrange hire if you do not have your own. Your baby can visit you during the day for breastfeeding.
- Single rooms are sometimes needed at short notice so there is a possibility that you may be asked to vacate a single room in the event of an emergency.

Will my baby be safe in hospital with me?

- You and your family will be responsible for ensuring your baby’s safety.
- Your baby will need to be closely observed by the person you have chosen to care for your baby.
- You must ensure that your baby is never left unattended on the ward.
- Your baby will need to wear a hospital name label.

**Will my baby be exposed to germs?**

- People come into hospitals with a variety of illnesses or diseases, which is why you and your baby will need to be in a single room.
- You and your family will be advised to wash your hands carefully when caring for the baby, as this is the best way of reducing the risk of passing on any germs or infections.
- There may be clinical reasons why bringing your baby into the hospital with you may not be recommended. Your nursing team can discuss these with you if they arise.
- Breastfeeding and keeping your baby close will ensure your body makes antibodies to any infection you come into contact with and these antibodies are passed to your baby in the breast milk and immediately protect your baby too.

**What happens if I leave the ward for investigations or treatment?**

- The person staying with you will be responsible for your baby if you leave the ward area.
- The ward staff will not be able to look after your baby, as your baby is not a patient on the ward.

**Will the hospital provide my family member or friend with food?**

- The person with you will need to provide their own food and drinks; they may use the hospital catering facilities.
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free environment which means that neither you nor your family members or friends are allowed to smoke anywhere in the buildings or grounds.

**What shall I do if I am unable to bring my baby into hospital with me, and I do not have any family or friends to provide child care at home?**

- We encourage you to try to find a family member or friend who can care for your baby while you are in hospital.
- If you are unable to find a responsible adult to care for your baby we may be able to help. The Trust has a close working relationship with Social Care, they can help to organise temporary foster care for your baby / children while you are in hospital.

**Can my children visit me while I am in hospital?**

- We appreciate the importance of keeping families together and so encourage children to visit their parents whilst they are in hospital.
- Visiting times on the different wards vary, so it is best to check the times with the ward staff.