

## **Update from the Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on Maternity Services and 'Choose and Book' procedures.**

### *Maternity:*

The expected birth rate at the Trust for this year (2010/11) remains below 6,000 births. The rate has remained steady over the past two years.

The fluctuations in demand have been greater this year. During the period of September – November 2010 we experienced an unprecedented increase in demand which stretched capacity in the Trust. To ensure that they were offered the best possible care for their delivery, some mothers were diverted to nearby units during this period. The number of births during December has remained well within the expected range and we anticipate the same for the remainder of the financial year. There were no diversions during December.

The forecast for the birth rate in our area remains static. However, we have in place plans which will enable us to improve our existing service further.

During the coming financial year we will open a midwife led unit which will be located and staffed separately from the delivery unit. The four birthing rooms will double our midwife led capacity and offer an increased focus on natural births as well as creating additional capacity in our delivery suite. Following this development, we will create a high dependency unit which will co-locate mothers with the highest level of need with appropriate staffing.

These developments will offer a better experience for mothers using our services and will continue the pattern the Trust has established of only diverting patients to other services during exceptional circumstances.

We are therefore confident that the maternity service offered remains adequate for the expected birth rate both now and in the future, based on current predictions.

### *Choose and Book:*

The Trust has seen a reduction in instances where a patient cannot book an appointment first time on Choose and Book due to capacity issues. This has reached a point where we now match the national best practice target.

An external team reviewing cancer pathways in the Trust praised the use of Choose and Book in the Breast Cancer pathway (which allows GPs to refer patients with suspected Breast Cancer issues via Choose and Book and reduce the turn around times in contacting patients and booking them for their appointment). This will be rolled out to all other cancer areas during 2011.

We have also broadened the range of appointments that are available through Choose and Book.

To ensure the best possible performance is delivered consistently we hold monthly meetings with our PCT and local GPs where any Choose and Book related issues are raised and addressed, along with performance monitoring.