



Public Home Birth Policy

1. Purpose

The *Public Home Birth Policy* (the policy) sets out the mandatory requirements to ensure maternal and newborn services are safe, integrated, effective and responsive to the individual needs of women and their babies when having a public home birth under the WA health system public home birth service.

This policy should be read in conjunction with [MP 0164/21 Patient Activity Data Policy](#).

This policy is a mandatory requirement for Health Service Providers under the *Clinical Services Planning and Programs Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(c) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

2. Applicability

This policy is applicable to Health Service Providers that provide maternity services.

The requirements contained within this policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider. The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

3. Policy Requirements

Health Service Providers providing a public home birth service must ensure local policies and procedures are in place which adhere to and align with the following policy requirements, and the public home birth standard. This includes completion of a clinical risk assessment of all women using the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in the public home birth standard.

Health Service Provider local policies and procedures must document the following:

- minimum training requirements for midwives attending home births
- minimum of two midwives present at home births (primary and support midwife)
- the role of the primary and support midwife
- eligibility requirements for the service including:
 - criteria for inclusion and exclusion
 - terms of care agreement
- role and responsibilities of the booking/receiving maternity hospital
- the process and criteria for transfer when a woman refuses to accept clinical advice to transfer from the midwife/health professional.

- minimum equipment list required to attend home births including for maternal /newborn resuscitation and medications for obstetric emergencies
- safe transport and storage of oxygen.

Health Service Providers must submit annual reports on policy compliance using the [Public Home Birth Compliance Audit Tool](#).

Health Service Providers who do not currently provide a public home birth service must have documented care pathways for consultation, referral and/or admission for women who may require urgent access to their maternity service from a public home birth service.

4. Compliance Monitoring

Health Service Providers are required to monitor their compliance with this policy by using the public home birth compliance audit tool provided in section 5: Related Documents.

The Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office (CNMO), on behalf of the System Manager, will require Health Service Providers to demonstrate that the relevant staff have undertaken the required training and provide evidence that they meet the policy requirements. This data is to be provided at the end of June each year. The information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

Information on the number of Severity Assessment Code 1 and 2 incidents related to public home births and the actions taken to address the recommendations must also be provided.

5. Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this policy:

- [Public Home Birth Standard](#)
- [Public Home Birth Compliance Audit Tool](#)

6. Supporting Information

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of this policy:

- N/A

7. Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this policy.

Term	Definition
Home birth	Where a woman opts to give birth at home with midwifery care.
Maternity hospital	Service that includes the assessment, management and treatment of women and babies during pregnancy, labour, birth and the postnatal period.
Public home birth service	Where a planned home birth is governed by a WA health system Health Service Provider.

WA health system	The WA health system is comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Department; (ii) Health Service Providers (North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service, WA Country Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA, Quadriplegic Centre and Health Support Services); and (iii) contracted health entities, to the extent they provide health services to the State.
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8. Policy Contact

Enquiries relating to this policy may be directed to:

Title: Principal Midwifery Advisor
Directorate: Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office
Email: CNMO.CED@health.wa.gov.au

9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0141/20	10 August 2020	August 2023	Original version
MP 0141/20 v.1.0	12 April 2024	April 2027	Policy review with amendments as follows.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title renamed from Public Home Birth Program Policy to Public Home Birth Policy. • Word 'Program' removed throughout the policy. • Applicability amended for consistency with other CNMO policies. • Policy requirements amended to establish minimum training requirements for relevant staff and clarify Health Service Provider compliance monitoring requirements. • Compliance monitoring section updated to align with other CNMO policies. • Related document: Public Home Birth Program Standard renamed to Public Home Birth Standard, revised, and updated. • A new related document: Public Home Birth Compliance Audit Tool developed. • Policy contact amended to reflect new policy ownership with Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office. 			

Note: Mandatory policies that exceed the scheduled review date will continue to remain in effect.

10. Approval

Approval by	Nicole O'Keefe, Assistant Director General, Strategy and Governance Division Department of Health
Approval date	07 August 2020

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