

Ref. No: 2748
Date: 11/08/26
Subject: Maternity Unit Closures

REQUEST

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For the period 1 April 2020 to the date of this request, please provide the following:

1. A list of all maternity units operated by the Trust during this period, by site/hospital name, and their classification (obstetric-led/consultant-led unit, midwife-led unit — alongside or freestanding/standalone) at the start and end of the period.
2. For any maternity unit that has permanently closed, been downgraded (for example from obstetric-led to midwife-led status), suspended indefinitely, or otherwise had its status changed during this period: the site name, the nature of the change, the date it took (or is due to take) effect, and the reason recorded for the change.
3. The number of occasions on which each maternity unit was temporarily closed to new admissions (including where the Trust declared itself unable to accept new admissions, or diverted admissions to another site), broken down by unit and by calendar or financial year.
4. For each temporary closure identified in response to question 3: the date, the duration (in hours), and the reason recorded (for example staffing shortages, capacity, or safety concerns).

RESPONSE

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust only became one Trust on 1 July 2023.

1. A list of all maternity units operated by the Trust during this period, by site/hospital name, and their classification (obstetric-led/consultant-led unit, midwife-led unit — alongside or freestanding/standalone) at the start and end of the period.

The Trust operates 2 maternity units:

- i) Ormskirk Hospital – Consultant led unit**
- ii) Whiston Hospital – Consultant led unit**

Both sites have midwifery led rooms within the consultant unit.

2. For any maternity unit that has permanently closed, been downgraded (for example from obstetric-led to midwife-led status), suspended indefinitely, or otherwise had its status changed during this period: the site name, the nature of the change, the date it took (or is due to take) effect, and the reason recorded for the change.

There has been no status change to the units

3. The number of occasions on which each maternity unit was temporarily closed to new admissions (including where the Trust declared itself unable to accept new admissions, or diverted admissions to another site), broken down by unit and by calendar or financial year.

See table below with data for financial years:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Whiston Hospital	<5	0	0
Ormskirk Hospital	0	0	<5

4. For each temporary closure identified in response to question 3: the date, the duration (in hours), and the reason recorded (for example staffing shortages, capacity, or safety concerns).

Whiston Hospital 2023/24: 2 diverts

25/06/2023, for 4 hours. Inability to provide 1:1 care to patients in labour.

27/10/2023, 5 hours. Inability to provide 1:1 care to patients in labour.

Ormskirk Hospital 2025/26: 1 divert. Obstetric staffing shortage.