



# Creating a better birth environment 2005

The *National Childbirth Trust* wants all parents to have an experience of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood that enriches their lives and gives them confidence in being a parent. We are working to improve labour and delivery rooms in the United Kingdom. We are interested in what labour and birth rooms look like, what equipment is available, and the noise level, temperature, and lighting. If you have **been in labour** during the **last two years** please help us influence how maternity units are designed in future by answering this survey.

**It will only take 5-10 minutes to answer our survey and it is free to post back (address at end of form). All forms received by 2 APRIL 2005 will go in a draw to win £50 worth of NCT Maternity Sales vouchers.**

## A little about when you last gave birth

1. What year did you last give birth?      2003       2004       2005
2. What sort of birth did you have?        
(tick all that apply)      Vaginal birth with forceps or ventouse   
Vaginal birth   
Emergency caesarean   
Epidural   
Induction   
Acceleration (labour speeded up)   
Continuous electronic monitoring   
Other - please describe:
- 
- 3a. Where was your baby born?        
At home   
Midwife-led unit or birth centre   
Hospital maternity unit with doctors and midwives
- b. If you gave birth in a midwife-led unit or birth centre, was this next to      Yes   
or part of a hospital where caesarean sections could be carried out?      No
4. What is your age group?      Under 20       20s       30s       40 plus
5. What is your ethnic group? (eg white, Pakistani) \_\_\_\_\_

## How important is the birth environment?

*Some people think that the surroundings can affect how you give birth. Some environments may make your labour seem harder. Some environments may make your labour seem more manageable and straightforward.*

- 6a. Do you think the physical environment can affect how easy or difficult it is to give birth?
- No, strongly disagree   
No, disagree   
Yes, agree   
Yes, strongly agree
- b. Why do you say that?

7. Now we would like to know a little about the place where you **last gave birth**. If you used more than one room during labour and birth, please provide details about the room in which you spent the most time.

We would like to know whether you had (or could do) the following things, and how important it was for you to have them. For example, if you could not see a clock during labour even though you really wanted to see a clock, then you would answer as in the example.

|   | Yes                      | No                                  | How important is this to you?<br>(circle low, medium, or high importance) |        |                                  |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| example: I was able to see a clock                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | low   | medium | <input checked="" type="radio"/> |
| 1 I could control the temperature                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 2 I could control the brightness of the light             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 3 I could control who came into the room                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 4 I was able to walk around                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 5 I had a pleasant place to walk                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 6 I could move the furniture around to suit me            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 7 I had an adjustable bed                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 8 I had a private bath attached to my room (ensuite)      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 9 I had a private toilet attached to my room (ensuite)    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 10 There was a birth pool for me to use if I wanted       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 11 There was a comfortable chair for my birth partner(s)  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 12 We had easy access to snacks and drinks                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 13 I could not hear other women giving birth              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 14 ...enough bean bags, pillows, and mats to use          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 15 I was in a room that looked homely (not like hospital) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 16 I was able to see resuscitation and other equipment    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 17 I had a clean room                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 18 I was able to stay in the same room throughout labour  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |
| 19I ... same room for labour, birth & afterwards          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | low   | medium | high                             |

8. What, if any, **physical aspects** of the room did you find **helpful** for encouraging the type of birth you wanted? (list up to three things)

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9. What, if any, **physical aspects** of the room did you find **unhelpful** for encouraging the type of birth you wanted? (list up to three things)

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10. Did a midwife encourage you to try any of these things to help you cope with pain? (tick all that apply)

- Trying different positions
- Rocking
- Walking or moving around
- Using a birth pool
- Using a shower or bath
- Using a birth ball
- Using wall bars or equipment to help you lean or squat
- Relaxation
- Massage
- Focussed breathing
- Other - please describe:

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### Other important factors

11. Overall, how would you rate the support you received from midwives during your last birth?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Average
- Not very good
- Not good at all

12. At some maternity units, one midwife looks after lots of different women in labour at the same time. The midwife might pop in and out, visiting different women. At other maternity units a midwife looks after just one woman at a time (continuous care). When that midwife goes off duty, another takes her place.

a. When you were in labour, did you have continuous care from a midwife or was the midwife looking after other women too?

- Midwife looked after just me (continuous care)
- Midwife looked after other women too

b. Did you have continuous care from a healthcare worker who wasn't a midwife?

- Yes
- No

13. What was the **ONE** most supportive thing that a midwife did or said to you during labour?

14. Apart from your physical surroundings, did anything have a **negative** effect on the birth? List up to three things.

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If you last gave birth in a particularly good environment, why not nominate your maternity unit for our Better Birth Environment Award? Even if you do not want to nominate a unit, you can still enter our prize draw by adding your contact details at the bottom of the next page.

# Better Birth

This year we will award a 'Better Birth Environment Award' to units that are particularly good at meeting the needs of women and families. If you would like to nominate your midwife-led unit, birth centre, or hospital as a good birth environment, please complete the following details.

Name of the unit, centre, or hospital that you are nominating:

Address of unit, centre, or hospital that you are nominating:

Why have you nominated this centre for the *Better Birth Environment Award*?

Please use a separate page if needed.

How would you rate the physical environment at this unit?

Average  Good  Very good  Excellent

How would you rate the midwifery care and support you received at this unit?

Average  Good  Very good  Excellent

How would you rate the medical care and support you received (if applicable)?

Average  Good  Very good  Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your birth experience at the unit?

Average  Good  Very good  Excellent

Have you completed the questionnaire overleaf about THIS unit? Yes   
No

We will use information about your experience from the questionnaire to help us choose finalists.

Thank you for answering our questions. If you would like to be entered in our draw to win £50 worth of NCT Maternity Sales vouchers please tell us your name. Your details will not be used for any other purpose.

First name:

Email address:

OR Telephone number:

Your answers will assist with our work to help women have a better experience of birth.  
Please return this form to The National Childbirth Trust, FREEPOST LON 3525, London W3 6BR by 2 April 2005.  
No stamp is needed, but using one will save NCT charity money.