

# HYWEL DDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD



## Women attending with a Doula Doula Guideline

Guideline Number:	1046	Supersedes:		Classification	Clinical
Version No:	Date of EqlA:	Approved by:	Date Approved:	Date made active:	Review Date:
1	11/2021	Obstetric Guideline, Audit and Research Group	18/06/2021	22/12/2021	18/6/2024

Brief Summary of Document:	To appropriately manage the care of the woman attending with a Doula
Scope	Healthcare professionals involved in the care of women attending with a Doula

To be read in conjunction with:	Responsibility for Care Throughout All Stages of Pregnancy guideline
Patient Information	National Childbirth Trust.' What is a Doula? Your questions answered'. <a href="https://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/who-will-care-for-you-during-pregnancy/what-doula-your-questions-answered">https://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/who-will-care-for-you-during-pregnancy/what-doula-your-questions-answered</a>
Owning committee/group	Obstetric Guideline, Audit and Research Group

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Reviews and updates		
Version no:	Summary of Amendments:	Date Approved:
1	Guideline update	18/6/2021

Keywords	Doula, Birth attendant
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This pathway is for women wishing to attend with a Doula to ensure that the woman is fully informed of the role and remit of a Doula.

## 2. SCOPE

Healthcare professionals involved in the care of women attending with a Doula

## 3. DEFINITION

A Doula supports women through labour and birth, and/or after she has her baby, they offer practical and emotional support but not advice, to the mother and/or parents, empowering them in their own choices (Doula UK 2019).

## 4. REMIT OF A DOULA

A Doula does not perform clinical, midwifery or medical tasks, diagnose medical conditions or give medical advice. They are there in a solely supportive role. A woman will assume the responsibility for decisions made re the birth, parenting style or feeding method that she feels is right for her and her baby.

## 5. QUALIFICATION

Doula's are not legally required to have training, they may or may not have any qualifications. However, doulas should disclose their doula education and experience, and should not mislead clients or other birth professionals at any time. Doulas do not perform clinical, midwifery or medical tasks, diagnose medical conditions or give medical advice, whilst working as a doula, even if trained as a health professional.

## 6. CONSENT

Legally midwives and doctors have to speak directly to a woman when gaining consent; this is a requirement of their professional code of conduct (NMC, 2018. GMC, 2020). Midwives and doctors have a professional responsibility to explain any care they are suggesting so that women have an opportunity to question and, understand what is being suggested and to give or not give informed consent, either for herself or her baby.

## 7. REFERENCES:

Doula UK. 2019. ' Doula UK Code of Conduct'. Available at : <https://doula.org.uk/doula-uk-code-of-conduct/>

National Childbirth Trust.' What is a Doula? Your questions answered'. Available at <https://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/who-will-care-for-you-during-pregnancy/what-doula-your-questions-answered>

TOMMY'S, 'What is a Doula?'. 2020. Available from: <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/labour-birth/labour-and-birth-faqs/what-doula>

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## 8. Appendix 1 – Information leaflet for women considering a Doula



I hinking of having a Doula?

### What is a Doula?

Doulas are usually experienced women who have completed some basic training but are not medically trained and can't replace the clinical care you'll get from your midwife or doctor. They provide practical and emotional support. They don't give advice but can help you find balanced information to make informed decisions. Some Doulas work as both birth and postnatal (the time after you have had your baby) doulas, while others work only as birth doulas or postnatal doulas. Doulas provide non-NHS support to women and families during pregnancy, childbirth and once the baby is born. They will agree a contract and the cost of their support directly with you.

### What to consider when hiring a Doula

#### ANTENATAL

- What qualifications does the Doula have? There are courses across the UK, your doula should be able to tell you what sort of qualification they have and where they did their training.
- What insurance does the Doula have?
- Some, but not all, Doulas are members of Doula UK or NCT Doulas. These organisations have a code of conduct for their members.
- Doulas offer practical and emotional support but not advice, to the mother and/or parents.
- Doulas do not perform clinical, midwifery or medical tasks, diagnose medical conditions or give medical/midwifery advice.

#### LABOUR/BIRTH

- You may feel that you want the maternity team to speak directly to your Doula rather than directly to you whilst you are in labour. However, midwives and doctors have a professional and legal duty to speak directly to women when providing information and discussing care to ensure that women have an opportunity to question what is being said, understand what is being suggested and to give or not give consent, either for herself or her baby.
- Hywel Dda University Health Board supports women having Doulas as their birth partners, but it is important that they respect the environment we are all working in and work together as part of the maternity team and importantly do not inhibit the provision of care.