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Health Board

Birth Centre Abduction Guideline

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Powys Teaching Health Board is the operational name of Powys Teaching Local Health Board
Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys yw enw gweithredol Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Addysgu Powys

To ensure that you are always using the latest version of this written control document, please refer to the version on the Corporate Governance SharePoint site

Section	Contents	Page
1	Introduction	5
2	Objectives	5
3	Definitions	5
4	Procedure for the security & identification of infants	6
4.1	Security	6
4.2	Identification	7
5	Roles/Responsibilities	7
5.1	Role of Powys midwives	7-8
5.2	Role of Brecon Switchboard	8
5.3	Multi-disciplinary team	8-9
5.4	Involvement of PTHB staff	9
5.5	Role of Maternity Bronze on call	9-10
5.6	Role of Silver on call	10
6	Involvement of other agencies	10
6.1	Involvement of Police	10
6.2	Involvement of Powys Childrens Services	11
7	In the event of a false alarm or infant is found/returned	11
8	Training	11
9	Monitoring Compliance / Audit	11
10	Review and Change Control	11-12
Appendices		
1	Safe Security letter	12
2	Checklist for Mock Abduction Drill	12
3	Action cards in the event of Infant Abduction	12

Associated Policies and Written Control Documents

Version Control

Version	Summary of Changes/Amendments	Publication Date
1	Initial Issue	March 2005
2	No change	Jan 2007
3	Format updated with national guidance	July 2008
4	Format changes only	Feb 2012
5	Updated with new organisational structures and guidance, Format changed and changed to a guideline.	July 2025
6	Reviewed by Lead Midwife – No changes made	March 2018
7	<p>Reviewed by Lead Midwife for Safeguarding and Head of Midwifery and Sexual Health services</p> <p>7.1 Updated with Silver Operational On-Call as per Handbook</p> <p>7.2 Updated with Civil Contingency Manager to use PTHB Incident response action cards</p> <p>7.3 Updated with Security Oversight Group for risk of baby abduction to be considered as part of the Site Security Plans and CCTV implementation</p> <p>7.4 Update with Clinical Service group to reflect current Organisational structure</p> <p>7.5 Reference to CODE PINK as all Wales terminology</p> <p>7.6 Updated with Incident Notification / handling in line with Patient Safety framework</p> <p>7.7 Updated with Action Card templates to support roles and responsibilities for the response</p>	Sept 2021
8	<p>Reviewed by Lead Midwife Safeguarding and Assistant Head of Midwifery</p> <p>Updated Action Cards to support roles and responsibilities for the response.</p> <p>Updated with Bronze/Silver/Gold on Call</p> <p>Updated roles and responsibilities</p>	12 May 2026

ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Key Individuals/Groups involved in Developing this document

Role/Designation
Midwifery Management and Leadership team
Lead Midwife for Safeguarding
Support Service Manager
PTHB Safeguarding team
Security Oversight group
Community Services Managers
Silver Operational on Call forum
Assistant Director for Support Services
Civil Contingency Manager

Date	Role / Designation
June 2025	Community Service Group
June 2025	Civil Contingency Manager
June 2025	Silver Operational On-Call
June 2025	PTHB Security Oversight Group
June 2025	PTHB Midwives via Midwifery Policies and Procedures group
June 2025	Women's and Children's Policies and Procedures group
June 2025	Safeguarding Team
June 2025	Brecon Switchboard

1. Introduction

Infant and child abductions are rare, however, the trauma and publicity surrounding such events highlights the importance of ensuring that, should an incident occur, PTHB has a comprehensive, easy to follow response plan to:

- Ensure that staff are aware of how to raise the alarm quickly as time is critical.
- Ensure that staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure that staff are deployed effectively to conduct a search of the area.
- Ensure effective communication and co-operation between Health Board staff, the police and security services.
- Ensure effective communication with other agencies.

Implementation of the above will aim to:

- Facilitate the speedy return of the infant/child to a place of safety.
- Ensure that the parents/carers of an abducted infant/child are kept fully informed of the situation and are appropriately supported.
- In the event of suspicion that one or more parents/carers may be the perpetrator of the abduction, the above ensures effective communication between agencies.

2. Objective

The overall aim is to ensure safe and effective care is provided to the mother and baby in the immediate period following birth and at any time where she or baby receives care with a Powys Birth Centre.

3. Definitions

PTHB – Powys Teaching Health Board

Abduction: the criminal act of taking someone away by force or deception.

Lockdown is the process of controlling the movement, access and egress of people around NHS property in response to an identified risk, threat or hazard that might impact on the safety and security of people and assets or, indeed, the capacity of that facility to continue to operate. Lockdown can be partial, progressive or full depending on the situation and identified risk, threat or hazard.

4. Midwifery Procedures for the Security & Identification of Infants

It is a responsibility of all midwives to inform women and their families about the need for vigilance regarding the safety of babies and personal property whilst in the Birth Centre. Women must be advised to report anyone acting in a suspicious manner to a member of staff. A generic letter regarding security must be given to all women receiving postnatal care within all Powys Birth Centre's (Appendix 1) and a laminated copy displayed in all Birth Centre's. This should be documented in the notes.

4.1 Security

- Babies should always remain with the mother, and the mother should accompany the baby if it needs to leave the ward for any reason.
- Staff must always wear a clear identification badge with a current photograph when working for Powys Teaching Health Board.
- Women should have an opportunity to meet all midwives and aim to meet/know who their health visitor will be during the antenatal period who are likely to provide care for her and her baby in the postnatal period.
- Women should be advised not to hand over their baby to anyone they do not know whilst they are in hospital.
- The Birth Centre door always remains locked and visitors must be advised to ring the bell for admission, this affords the opportunity to vet all callers to the Birth Centre.
- In line with Fire Procedures, any accompanying partners, visitors or staff who are not normally part of the team should sign the attendance book.
- All non Birth Centre PTHB employees, contractors and visitors to be always accompanied when they are in attendance in the Birth Centre.
- Staff must not give out the security code to any member of the public.
- Women should also be advised not to admit any strangers claiming to be health professionals into their home who are not known to them or do not show identification. Visits from PTHB are routinely prearranged.

4.2 Identification

- Immediately following the birth, it is the responsibility of the midwife to ensure identification bands are completed.
- Three matching numbered identification bands, especially for this purpose, must be checked with the mother.
- Two are then attached to the baby's ankles and one to mother's wrist.
- The band number should be recorded in the care pathway
- The bands should be checked when care is handed from one midwife to another. This action is recorded in the baby notes.
- If either band comes off before discharge women must be advised to let a midwife know and a new set will be made. The old ones should be fixed securely inside the case notes.
- On discharge, the midwife should check all bands and remove the mother's and one baby band. These should be secured in the case notes. The third band is left in place to be checked and removed by the midwife at home on the first community visit or by the parents when home.

5. Role/Responsibilities

All midwives should ensure that they are familiar with the agreed process, have information and any necessary paperwork available and provided to the relevant authorities should a baby go missing from a Powys Birth Centre.

5.1 Role of Powys Midwives in the Event of infant abduction

- Follow departmental procedures for security of newborn babies

The Midwife will become Incident Coordinator, if an infant is identified as missing and is suspected of having been abducted. This role includes:

- Contact the Police on (9)999 and request immediate Police attendance.
- Contacting Brecon switchboard on 01874 622443 stating 'Missing infant from.... (Birth Centre). Possible abduction' with location and time of last sighting of the infant.
- Initiate search of the area.
- Discuss last known whereabouts of infant with parents and revisit those areas.

- Lock down department i.e. no-one is allowed to enter or leave except for emergency treatment.

Delegate tasks:

- Assign a member of staff to the exit.
- Ensure mother of abducted infant is supported.
- Pursue abductor if identified and appropriate.
- Comfort and support other ward attenders and check other infants ID bands (if relevant)
- Do not touch the infant's cot or belongings as this may disturb evidence
- Delegate one person to record all events including details of anyone entering or leaving the department with their reason for doing so.
- Confirm all staff aware of the incident and undertaking their responsibilities
- Should the infant be found during the hospital search, the incident coordinator must inform all that the infant has been found.

5.2 Role of Brecon Switchboard

The role of Brecon Switchboard is to receive call which will state:

'Infant missing from..... (Birth Centre), possible abduction' with the location and time of last sighting of the infant.

Urgently contact and report situation to:

- Bronze on call
- Silver on call
- Ward staff and porters who may be able to support the midwifery staff

The incident coordinator should ensure that they share their contact details, and any other senior managers present to the switchboard for onward communication.

5.3 Multi-Disciplinary Team – in Liaison with the Police

The Multi-disciplinary Team – PTHB staff, Midwives, Nurses, Support Workers, Administration Staff and Porters will be formed

into search teams to check areas with minimal disruption of potential evidence.

These teams will be set up by the Incident Co-Ordinator and Police and will be given designated search areas.

The staff will congregate at the fire assembly point and await instructions from the Coordinating Officer.

5.4 Involvement of PTHB Support Staff

This will be unique for Powys and will depend on available staff in or out of hours e.g. Managers, Porters, Patient Services Teams, and Reception staff.

The role of support staff is to:

- Lockdown - Secure main doors and supervise all movement through one set of manual doors.
- CCTV are on 24/7 record functionality, and each site has designation person trained to access the camera recording.
- All available staff to monitor secure doors (locked).
- Assist in the search teams using Hospital CAD diagrams as a checklist / confirmation that each section has been reviewed
- It is essential that the area is fully searched, and nobody leaves the area until the police have arrived and given permission for people to leave.
- Best practice would be to provide the Police with in and out list of the staff within the PTHB premises.

5.5 Role of Maternity Bronze on call

The role of Maternity Bronze on call (previously Midwifery OTL) will be to:

- Attend the birth centre, assume the role of incident coordinator and gather all information
- Liaise with police on scene
- Provide support to staff/family/carers
- Ensure Powys Childrens Services 01597 827666 or 0345 054 4847 (out of hours) and PTHB Safeguarding Team 01686 252806 are informed.

- Ensure Datix 'Once for Wales' Incident notification form is completed as soon as possible following incident.
- Ensure each staff member prepares a Statement of Events for their involvement and actions taken.
- Arrange Debrief / support process and incident review for key members of staff involved in the process

5.6 Role of Senior Manager from Women, Children and Families (office hours) or Silver on Call (out of hours)

The role of the Senior Manager/Silver on Call will be to:

- Support incident coordinator
- Notify the Gold on Call who will notify CEO.
- If present on scene, to be Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the police and delegate tasks to PTHB staff
- Staff awareness to ensure all external communication is handled through PTHB Communication team.
- Liaise with site coordinators

Opportunity will be provided for staff and women to reflect on the situation, and professional support and advice offered by the midwifery management and leadership team.

6. Involvement of other agencies

6.1 Involvement of the police

- To advise the Incident Coordinator
- If required, manage entrances/exits and manage traffic in and out of the site
- Provide specialist search facility
- Interview witnesses
- Examine the crime scene

6.2 Involvement of Powys Children's Service

If the infant is the subject of a safeguarding plan, Powys Children's Services to be contacted.

7. In the event of a false alarm or infant is found/returned

If the infant is found or returned to PTHB premises, the Incident Coordinator is to inform:

- Police
- Powys Children's Services (If the infant is subject of a safeguarding plan)
- PTHB Safeguarding Team
- Parents/carer/relatives
- The health professional in charge of the area will assess the child's condition and initiate any medical treatment necessary. This will follow consultation with the Police to ensure that contamination of evidence does not occur.

8. Training

All Powys Maternity staff will be aware of the risk of infant abduction and site orientation for the environments they are working in.

The annual schedule of training will be carried out locally in the form of practice drills, undertaken to ensure staff are familiar with the relevant action in the event of abduction.

Awareness of the guideline will be part of mandatory training for midwives and support staff.

Six annual mock drills will be undertaken in hours and out of hours across varied PTHB sites with Powys Birth Centre's involving Midwives and community service groups.

The planning of each drill to be supported by the senior midwife, Support Service Manager, W&C Governance lead and Civil Contingencies Manager.

9. Monitoring Compliance/Audit

Compliance with these guidelines will be monitored by the Datix reporting system and any issues raised through the mock baby abduction drills.

10. Review and change control

This document will be reviewed every three years or earlier should audit results or changes to legislation / practice within PTHB indicate otherwise.

Appendix 1:
SAFE SECURITY OF YOUR BABY GENERIC LETTER
[SAFE SECURITY OF YOUR BABY LETTER.docx](#)

Appendix 2: Checklist for Mock Abduction Drill
[Checklist for Mock Abduction Drill.docx](#)

Appendix 3: Actions to be taken in the Event of Infant Abduction

[Actions to be taken in the Event of Infant Abduction.docx](#)



Equality Impact Assessment

It is not mandatory to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for a written control document. If you feel it would be of benefit, please complete the box below and attach an EIA as an appendix to this document.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed		NO
Name of the person giving this response	Debbie Allmark Lead Midwife Safeguarding	
If NO:	N/A	
If YES:	Attach EIA as an appendix to this document	