

30th October 2026

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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Further to your recent request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, I now set out our answers to your specific questions, and any clarifications sought and provided, as follows:

I have seen a few home birthing units across the country have either had suspensions and been closed for a few weeks at a time or been closed this year.

Please can you answer the following questions:

1. How many home birthing units do you have in the Trust?

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) does not have home birthing units. A home birth refers to a planned physiological birth which occurs at home, rather than in a hospital. However, ESHT operates a home birth [service](#); this is provided as part of our wider maternity service, rather than by a dedicated home birth team.

2. Have any of these home birthing units had to close between December 2025 and October 2026?

Not applicable; please refer to our response to Question 1 above. However, ESHT's home birth service has not had any closures between December 2025 and October 2026.

3. Have any of these home birthing units had suspensions between December 2025 and October 2026?

Not applicable; please refer to our response to Question 1 above. However, ESHT's home birth service has experienced partial and full suspensions between December 2025 and October 2026.

4. What were the reasons for the closures or suspensions?

ESHT's home birth service has experienced suspensions due to staffing levels and acuity on our hospital labour and delivery units.

5. Have you had any cases of women giving birth at home without the help of a midwife?

Yes.

I trust this information is helpful in its detail or explanation however, if you are dissatisfied with the response, then you have the right to request an internal review. If you wish to seek an internal review, please write to the Freedom of Information Team at esh-tr.foi@nhs.net quoting the above FOI reference number, within 40 working days. Please note the Trust is not obliged to accept a request for an internal review after this time period.

Yours faithfully

Freedom of Information (FOI) Team
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
0300 131 4716
Core Hours of Business: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm