THE MUSLIM MOTHERHOOD

YOUR RIGHTS IN MATERNITY CARE

A guide for Muslim women

The decisions about your body, your baby, and your care belong to you — in pregnancy and in labour. The law is clear, even when the system forgets it. Here is what you are entitled to.

NOTHING WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT

No one can examine, touch, or treat you without consent. Staff must ask every time, explain the risks, benefits, and evidence for a procedure, and give you time. **You can say no, and change your mind — even mid-procedure.**

REFUSE — AND ASK

You can decline anything, including care offered "because it's policy." **Policies are not law.** You can also request a female practitioner, a home birth, more time — and they must consider it properly.

DIGNITY & MODESTY

You have the right to privacy, to an interpreter if you need one, and to have your modesty and religious practice respected — not treated as an inconvenience. This is enshrined in the UK Human Rights Act 1998.

WHAT GOOD CARE PROMISES

The NHS's own standard is care that is safe, personalised, and equitable, built around you. If your care falls short, **you are not asking for too much.**

KEEP THIS SENTENCE READY

"I need you to stop and explain this to me before you continue."

IF YOU ARE NOT BEING HEARD

In the moment — ask for the midwife in charge or a second opinion; ask whether Martha's Rule applies (an urgent review by a separate team). · **On the ward** — ask for PALS. · **Afterwards** — complain to the trust, then the Ombudsman. · **Free advice** — Birthrights.

Sources: Birthrights factsheets (2025); Montgomery v Lanarkshire [2015] UKSC 11; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Human Rights Act 1998; NHS England, Three Year Delivery Plan for Maternity & Neonatal Services (2023). Information, not legal advice; reflects the law in England as of 2026.

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