

A step-by-step guide for maternity hospitals, healthcare professionals and local authorities

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## Using real nappies on maternity wards



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# How to use this guide

The guide is colour-coded to help you go straight to the place you want:

## The initial investigation

This is where the detailed planning happens. To engage busy people you need to be prepared with all the answers. This section covers what is involved in setting up a real nappy scheme in your maternity unit, barriers that most units come across, and information to help you overcome them.

## Preparing a business case

This section provides you with headings and points to consider when putting together your business case.

## Making it happen

Here we take you through the final steps needed to pull it all together and start your real nappy scheme.

## Raising awareness

Whether you are using real nappies or not, it's good to raise awareness among staff and parents.

## Evaluating the success of your scheme

An evaluation of your scheme will give you feedback on improvements to make and successes to note and will prove whether it's been value for money. This section tells you how.

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# Introduction

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is aimed at anyone interested in promoting the use of real nappies on maternity wards, especially midwives, healthcare professionals and local authority staff.

## About this guide

In this guide we give practical advice on how real nappies could work in your maternity unit, how to go about introducing them, and options for raising awareness of the issues.

It is based on the experiences of maternity units throughout the UK including those already using real nappies and those considering introducing them. We have also drawn on the experience of those who have decided against using them at present, since their views are valuable in understanding practical barriers to change.

## Why are maternity units considering the use of real nappies?

We found that concerns about the volumes of disposable nappies thrown away each year and the cost to hospital trusts of buying and disposing of nappies were major drivers. There were also concerns about the cost to parents of buying disposable nappies, combined with a perception that early experience of real nappies could motivate parents to continue to use them at home.

Information from people who have made the change to real nappies revealed a complex decision-making process, involving stakeholders, such as the midwifery team, hospital procurement function, waste management and others, including laundry services.

Financial constraints, sometimes exacerbated by accounting practices, were one of the main barriers encountered.

For example, the capital cost of buying real nappies might be charged to ward funds, while savings gained through not having to pay for the disposal of nappies might be credited to central budgets in the hospital trust. Laundry issues, including uncertainty over infection risks, were frequently mentioned by hospitals as obstacles.



This guide outlines the costs and benefits of introducing real nappies, lists potential sources of funding, and explains the benefits to various stakeholders and discusses potential barriers to implementation.



### For local authorities

#### Why encourage your local maternity unit to introduce real nappies?

Parents who are given the opportunity to try real nappies on the maternity ward are more likely to use real nappies when they take their baby home.

Since the use of real nappies reduces the amount of disposable nappy waste collected and disposed of, there are direct cost savings to be made in waste management terms, as well as reductions in the weight of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.

### For Midwives

#### Why introduce real nappies for maternity wards?

Real nappies can save your hospital money on incineration and other disposal costs, money that can be used for other essential services. The greatest benefit, however, is the chance to educate new parents on the choices available to them.

**Parental choice of nappy can be influenced by experiences at antenatal classes and, in particular, in the maternity unit. Parents who have had the opportunity to try real nappies in hospital are more likely to use them when they go home.**

The Implementation and Evaluation of Real Nappy Provision at East Surrey Hospital Maternity Unit; a Report by David Uzzell and Rachel Leach available at [www.surrey.co.uk](http://www.surrey.co.uk)

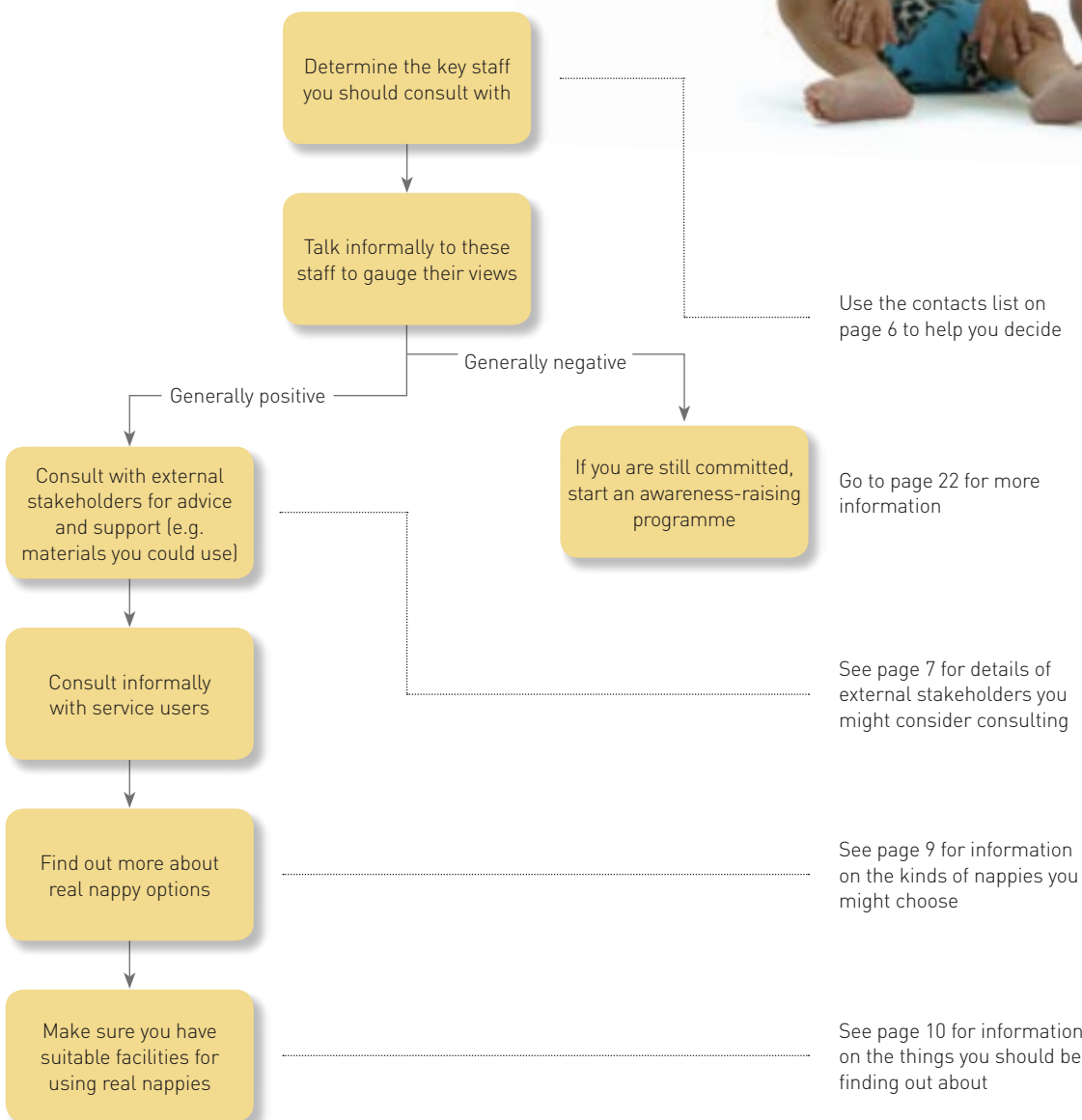
**St Richard's Hospital Chichester is saving an estimated £4,000 per annum as a result of introducing real nappies on ward.**

See the case study on [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

# Do people want real nappies? The initial investigation

If you are thinking that introducing real nappies into your maternity ward might be a good idea, it's essential to thoroughly investigate the pros and cons as they apply to your circumstances and to talk to key decision-makers.

On the other hand, maybe seeing this guide is the first time you've thought about alternatives to disposable nappies. Follow the flow chart below for a step-by-step guide to undertaking an initial investigation.



# Step 1

## Consulting informally within the hospital

It's critical to ensure that all key stakeholders within the hospital who will need to approve real nappies are involved in proceedings from the beginning. You may hold one of the roles identified below and may need to adjust your approach accordingly.

The people who need to be consulted at an early stage are listed on this page in order of priority, although exact details and roles may vary across hospitals.

Discuss your ideas informally with these people. Later on, make sure you invite them to stakeholder meetings. Involvement from inception will ensure that barriers are identified and dealt with from the outset, rather than becoming insurmountable later.

### 1. Senior midwifery staff

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Head of infection control

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Laundry manager (if there is an on-site laundry)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Head of finance

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Representative of midwifery care assistants/nursing auxiliary staff

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Estate services

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Others

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 2

# Consulting wider stakeholders and service users

Additional stakeholders are listed here. You may wish to consult these organisations informally to start with. Consider holding separate consultation meetings with one or more of them to get their input and to keep them informed as you get into the feasibility phase.

You should also speak to parents using the maternity unit to explain why you are interested in making a change and to gauge their views on whether it would be well received.

### Local authority waste minimisation or recycling officer

Many local authorities run their own real nappy schemes and may have useful advice or materials you could make use of.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### Other maternity hospitals

Some hospitals have tried real nappies already (some are described in this guide) and may have useful advice for you.

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### Nappy laundry (if you don't have one in-house)

Commercial nappy laundries exist in some parts of the country and may be useful if you don't have in-house facilities.

(Visit [www.realnappycampaign.com/nappyfinder](http://www.realnappycampaign.com/nappyfinder) or call the Real Nappy Helpline on 0845 850 0606 to find details of your local nappy laundry).

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Care Trust**

Your PCT may be able to offer you access to low income groups.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Patient forum**

Your patient forum may be a useful place to test your ideas and see how they are received by service users.

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



# Step 3

## Finding out more about real nappy choices

There are many makes of real nappies on the market. You will need to consider which type is likely to be attractive to new parents, as well as being suitable for long-term use and laundering to hospital standards.

There are three basic types of real nappy currently in use in hospitals in the UK:

### 1. Nappies with separate water-resistant outer wraps

Shaped nappies are simple to use and can be adjusted using either poppers or Velcro. They require a separate water-resistant wrap.

### 2. All-in-one nappies

With all-in-one nappies, the nappy and the water-resistant cover are an integral unit. Fuzzi Bunz nappies are an example. The main problem with this type of nappy is that it tends to go home with the baby!

### 3. Flat nappies

The main two types of flat nappies are Terries, which now fasten with a grip, and prefolds. Flat nappies have the advantage of being simple to launder and adjustable to various sizes. Prefolds can be folded differently for boys and girls. Both types of flat nappy require a water-resistant outer wrap.

The Stork Eco Nappy is a tried-and-tested nappy developed specifically for newborns. It's a popular choice for maternity units currently using real nappies and has been developed specifically for NHS use and for washing in accordance with HSG (95) 18. Easy to use.

### Procurement

If you have decided which nappy you want to use, check on nappy availability from your chosen supplier. Confirm that they have the size and number of nappies needed in stock, or that they can get them. Confirm the length of time the order will take to process.

Nappy agents supply a wide range of real nappies from many suppliers. Nappy agents are a great source of impartial advice about nappies, based on their own wide experiences.

Visit [www.realnappycampaign.com/nappyfinder](http://www.realnappycampaign.com/nappyfinder) or call the Real Nappy Helpline on 0845 850 0606 to find details of your local agents. You can record details of your local nappy agents below.

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



## Step 4

# Making sure you have suitable facilities and procedures in place

The key procedural issues are **infection control** and **procurement**. The key facility issues are **laundry facilities** and **storage space**. All four are important considerations at the early stages of planning to use real nappies on your ward.

### Infection control policies

It's vital to talk to the infection control manager to make sure he or she is fully aware of your plans and has time to consider the implications. You will need to explain by reference to other hospitals systems, that real nappies can be successfully introduced.

Infection control managers are naturally cautious about changes of this sort, though in reality all their questions can be answered. It may help to introduce your infection control manager to a counterpart in another hospital where real nappies have been successfully introduced.

**The successful introduction of real nappies at St. Richard's Hospital Chichester was instigated from the outset by a close co-operation between the midwifery manager and West Sussex County Council. Infection control staff were consulted from the initial stages.**

See the case study on [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

### Nappy laundering

A reliable laundry service is crucial to the long-term success of a real nappy scheme. The ideal arrangement is an on-site, NHS laundry where the laundry manager is enthusiastic and prepared to work with the maternity unit to make real nappies work and to bring the benefits of cost savings to the hospital trust.

### The NHS laundry option

**You should have already talked informally to the laundry manager about your ideas for real nappies. Now it's time to talk specifics.**

Find out whether the laundry has the capacity to launder the nappies. **We recommend that you use a specific machine rather than batch washing with other hospital laundry.** Find out whether a budget can be found for an additional machine.

Consult the laundry manager on the suitability of the various nappy options for the laundry regime.

Check the extent to which the manager is prepared to be flexible regarding charging practices and laundry procedures. Most hospital laundries charge per item. This means that a nappy and

wrap cost as much to launder as two hospital sheets, whereas, for example, 17 Stork Eco Nappies weigh the same as one sheet. Try to negotiate a price at this stage, so you can feed it into the development of your business case.

It's possible that laundry managers may be unaware of the requirements for washing nappies. These are:

- laundry and wraps should be washed to HSG (95) 18 guidelines for soiled linen, that is, either 71°C for not less than three minutes plus mixing time or 65°C for not less than 10 minutes plus mixing time. Either option will ensure thermal disinfection as long as regular checks are carried out on the wash cycle to ensure that correct temperatures and times are maintained. Full details of HSG (95) 18 can be downloaded or ordered as a hard copy from the Department of Health website: **[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)**
- all-in-one nappies and wraps should be dried at a maximum of 60°C to prevent shrinkage and maintain waterproofing; and
- fabric softeners are not recommended as the absorbency of the nappy will be reduced.

## TOP TIP

A key factor in the successful introduction of real nappies at St. Richard's was the enthusiasm of the laundry manager. His involvement throughout the planning and introduction enabled problems to be identified and overcome as they arose. His willingness to negotiate a price per kilogram for laundering nappies meant that the scheme was economically viable.

Good communication between the ward staff and the laundry enabled minor problems to be identified and corrected quickly. For example, the twice-weekly collection of soiled nappies resulted in a few nappies remaining stained after laundering. This was resolved by collecting the nappies three times a week, so stains do not dry on.



### The commercial laundry option

If your hospital doesn't have an on-site laundry, it doesn't mean that real nappies are out of the question. Talk first to the person in the hospital who is responsible for managing laundry services to see whether the commercial laundry that you use could also wash nappies. Ask the same questions that you would of an NHS laundry (see previous pages).

If this isn't possible, you could also approach the commercial nappy laundries that you identified when pulling together your contacts lists (see page 7). They will be more aware of the issues associated with washing and may be helpful contacts, even if you don't plan to use their services.

A commercial nappy laundry may offer free laundry service for a limited period, as an incentive to the unit to start using real nappies, or in the expectation that a high percentage of new parents will subscribe to the service after leaving hospital. However, their estimates of the numbers of parents who will go on to use the service after leaving hospital, may be over-optimistic. This can lead to the withdrawal of the service at short notice. What seemed like a bargain may prove to be more trouble than it's worth. So, make sure your commercial nappy laundry is realistic about its business proposition and consider carefully the risks involved.

If there is more than one nappy laundry in the area, you may get a better price if you ask them to tender for providing the service. At this stage ask for estimates, so you can feed them into your business case.

Later you will need to prepare a more detailed service level agreement covering:

- laundering nappies to HSG (95) 18;
- collection frequency – commercial laundries may only collect weekly;
- management of sufficient stock levels, particularly if collection and delivery is not daily;
- storage facilities for soiled nappies;
- provision for cleaning the bins provided by the laundry for storage while awaiting collection; and
- minimum length of contract.

Discuss these issues with the laundries at this stage to see whether they have any relevant information to feed in.

### No laundry available?

Don't consider introducing real nappies on the ward if you can't find suitable laundry facilities.



### Storage space

If you have adequate storage space then using real nappies is a practical option. First, it's important to check whether you have enough space for clean stocks of nappies, somewhere that is accessible both for staff and mothers. You also need to ascertain if there is an acceptable space for soiled nappy containers – somewhere away from the clean nappy stocks, away from disposable waste and

where the soiled nappies can easily be retrieved and washed by the laundry. Please also remember to carefully label the bins, perhaps using different coloured labels with clear descriptions of what they are for, to prevent any confusion.



## TOP TIP

Fleece liners are absorbent, softer on a baby's skin and have the added environmental and economic benefit of being reusable. However for the first few nappy changes, staining from meconium (a baby's first black bowel movement) is very difficult to remove and a disposable liner is better.

**Crowborough Birthing Unit found that there were no problems with infection or perception that nappy rash was either better or worse than with disposables.**

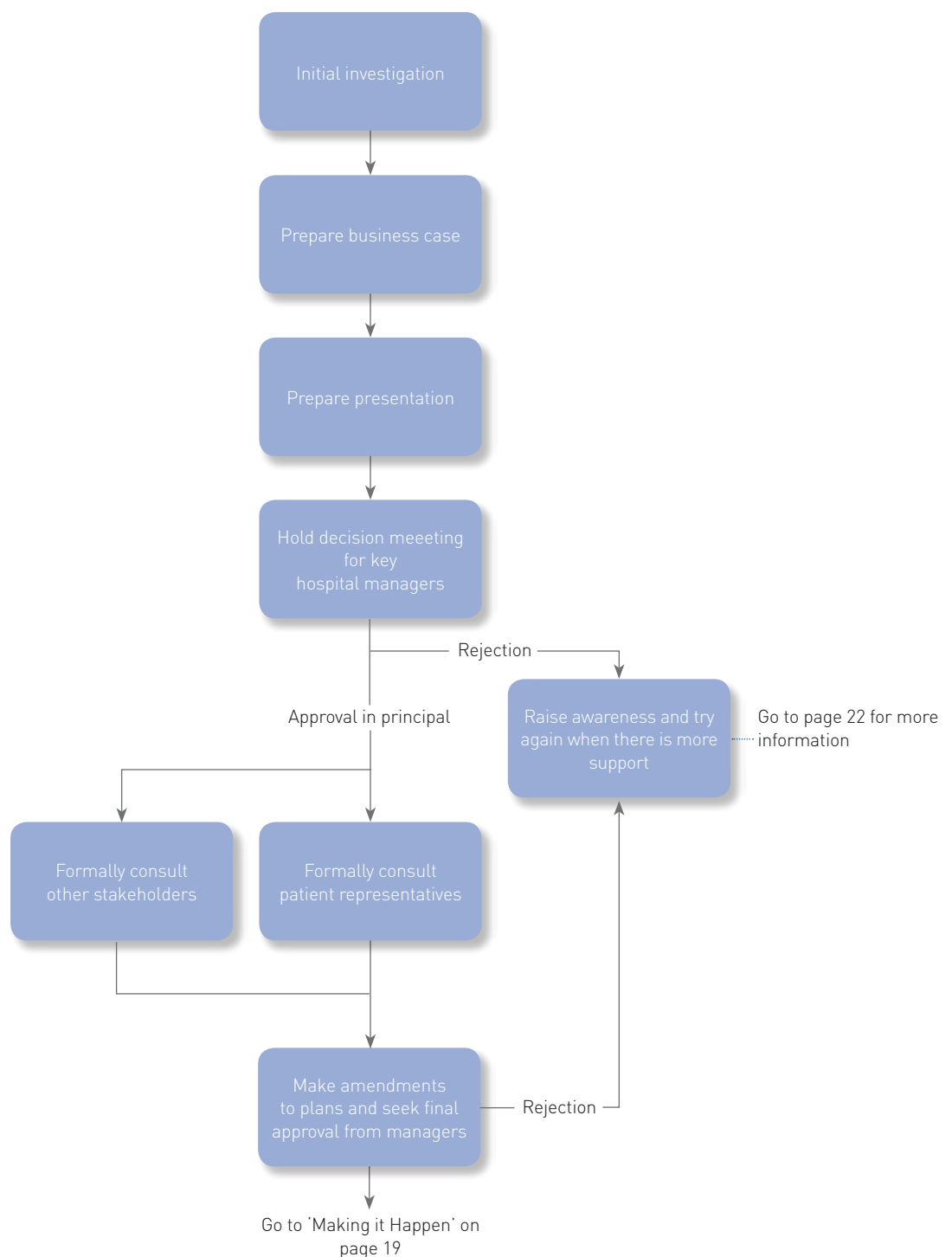
See the case study on [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

**Over 400,000 tonnes of disposable nappies are disposed of to landfill per year in the UK; this costs local authorities £40 million.**

See [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

# Convincing managers and stakeholders: Putting together and presenting a business case

Once you've conducted your initial investigations and concluded that the facilities and infrastructure are in place to put real nappies on the maternity wards, you can put together a business case to present to managers and other stakeholders. Follow the flow chart to see the steps involved.



# Step 1

## Preparing the business case

The business case must be accurate for the individual hospital being targeted. The following are the main sections to include when preparing a business case:

### Project name

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### Names of partners

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### Business idea

Give a brief description of how the project will work and what it will achieve.

### Key success factors

Here you should describe the background to the idea and the reasons why you believe the project will be successful. For example, you can describe similar projects which have already achieved a good success rate. Use the case studies in this guide to illustrate your point.

### Project host

Identify where the project will take place.

### Target market

Describe the type of customer the business is aimed at and the geographic area in which the project will operate. Use birth rate figures available to quantify this figure. Describe how the use of real nappies will benefit the hospital as the main customer, parents as users, and the local authorities.

### Skills and abilities

Indicate the main skills that are needed to make the project work. These will include good communications, negotiation skills and the ability to promote awareness to staff at every level.

### Business partners and key stakeholders

Describe the partners who will be involved in the project, what their role is and what they will bring to the project.

### Staff and employees

Describe the numbers of key staff required to support and run the project, including their present role and their role within the project.

### Calculate the cost savings

Costs and cost implications will form an essential part of your business case. Here we have outlined the main cost implications that the real nappy scheme will have. Although the initial start-up costs may be higher than disposable nappies, savings are made in the long-term through reduced clinical waste disposal costs.

### Start-up costs

- Nappy purchase.
- Facilities and equipment (particularly bins and signs).
- Training and awareness.
- Other.

### Ongoing costs

- Laundering.
- Replacement of nappy stocks.
- Consumables (such as bin liners, if you chose this option).



### What we currently spend on nappies

- Nappy purchase.
- Nappy waste disposal.
- Other.

### Potential sources of funds for meeting real nappy costs

- Local authority and nappy laundry subsidies.
- Other.

The real body of the business case is the illustration of cost savings to the hospital, local authorities and parents. Items to consider when calculating the onward costs of disposables against the costs of using real nappies are given below. There is a spreadsheet on [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com) to enable you to calculate costs for your unit.

- Estimate the amount of nappies disposed of annually – you can do this based on seven nappies per day for newborns and multiplying by the number of babies born each year to the unit and their average stay in hospital.
- What are the current costs of clinical waste disposal?
- What are the costs of various types of real nappy? Use the above formula to calculate the amount of real nappies you will need for the ward. It's crucial to take wear and tear and the loss of real nappies into consideration.
- Calculate the costs of using real nappies:
  - funding for the initial purchase of nappies;
  - laundry costs;
  - replacement costs for nappies;
  - calculate the potential savings on clinical waste; and
  - what are the advantages and disadvantages for your unit?



## Step 2

# Getting agreement

First of all, seek an agreement in principle, so you have a mandate to work up your ideas in more detail.

Prepare a presentation about your scheme and the business case you've developed. This doesn't necessarily need to be formal but you must be confident about what you are going to say and how you are going to put across your arguments. This is your chance to introduce real nappies to the key stakeholders.

Unless you've already spoken informally to people, assume no prior knowledge on their part. Some key stakeholders may not even be familiar with the term 'real nappies'.

Remember to prepare what you are going to say, taking into account your audience's various points of view. Managers are likely to want to know the impacts the scheme will have on the hospital, both positive and negative. Patients' representatives will want to know how they might benefit from the scheme. Midwives will want to know whether it means any changes to their working practices.

### What to take

- Your business case.
- This guide, so you can make notes and inform debate. Download and take copies of the case studies available from [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)
- A sample of a real nappy, plus a leaflet and poster from the Real Nappy Campaign or your local authority campaign, as appropriate.

Once you have agreement in principle from the hospital, you should consult other stakeholders and parents on the type of nappy scheme they want. Then you can finalise the details.

Once you have a final proposal, go back to the hospital managers for final agreement, including if possible a dedicated budget for the scheme.

### TOP TIP

St Richard's Hospital in West Sussex and Noble's Hospital in the Isle of Man both use the Stork Eco nappy. It is suitable only for newborns but too small for use on babies after leaving the unit. The outer wrap for this nappy is marked 'hospital property' to further discourage theft, but the design is attractive so the baby looks cute in the nappy. Ayrshire Central and Maternity Hospital and Borders General Hospital, Melrose are using the Tots Bots Onward nappy which has been specifically designed for onward use with newborns. The fitted design of the nappy and its popper fastenings makes it really easy to put on.

See glossary for information on the suppliers.

# Making it happen

## STEP 1: Getting everything in place

Once you have the go-ahead for your scheme, you need to get the ball rolling. Consult for a final time with the midwifery and laundry teams to:

- introduce the new scheme to them;
- agree an appropriate start date;
- discuss and agree suitable storage arrangements, for both the fresh nappies and the bins for soiled nappies; and
- decide how you are going to introduce parents to real nappies, for example you could decide to use real nappies for all newborn babies unless otherwise instructed by the parent.

Once your approach to introducing the scheme is agreed, you should make sure you have covered the following as a minimum:

### Things to buy

- Nappies and wraps, if required (depending on nappy choice).
- Bins for storing the soiled nappies.
- Containers to store nappies in maternity changing unit, if required.

### Things to discuss and agree

- Negotiate and sign the laundry agreement.
- Provide information to the laundry on how the nappies should be prepared for first use, for example by pre-washing to increase absorbency and soften.
- Nature and scale of the local authority involvement.
- How and where fresh nappies are going to be stored.
- How and where soiled nappies are going to be stored.

### Things to do

- Create stickers to label the bins for storing fresh nappies.
- Create stickers to label the bins for storing dirty nappies for laundering.
- Prepare the fresh nappy storage areas; one for nappies coming back from the laundry and one in the maternity ward baby changing area.
- Place the bins for storing soiled nappies and make sure the locations are suitable and the bins are labelled.
- Set a date for the nappies to arrive.
- Check that the laundry is prepared for arrival and pre-wash of new nappies.



### Promotional activities

- Set up a nappy display area in hospital. Ask the nappy agent for samples, use information from **www.realnappycampaign.com**
- Talk about educating parents and supplying them with information while they are at the hospital and to encourage continued use of real nappies when they leave.

### Monitoring and evaluation

- Agree monitoring and questionnaire requirements and make sure staff understand the importance of monitoring the scheme (see page 21).

### STEP 2: Training staff

**Identify which staff should attend. Use your contact list on page 6 to make sure you have covered everyone who should be trained. Use the handy list below to record which people to invite.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Plan enough training sessions geared to staffing rotas, to ensure all staff can attend.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Venue \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Venue \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Training should include:**

- a good background understanding of the wider environmental issues and social benefits of real nappies;
- how to fit the nappy;
- colour coding and labelling of the bins and how to use them;
- responsibilities for emptying the nappy bins on the ward;
- infection control measures for staff and parents;
- managing and checking the nappy stocks. To whom should any shortfalls be reported?
- what information should parents be given when they leave the unit? This should include any money-off offers they may be able to access, for example through the local authority, for buying real nappies. Link up with local schemes and networks, and work alongside them. Parents wanting to use real nappies should leave hospital with all the information they need about them, including possible sources of further support and advice;
- how to monitor the success of the real nappy scheme, including parents' reactions to real nappies and whether they intend to carry on using them (see page 23 for more information on monitoring the scheme); and
- information about the hospital's policy on parents who wish to use their own disposable nappies on ward.

**Make sure you have the following things with you at the training sessions.**

- Samples of the various types of nappy.
- Posters.
- Leaflets.
- Examples of signs and labels to be used on the ward for bins etc.
- Copies of any questionnaires or monitoring forms people will be asked to use.

Consider inviting your contact at the local authority or your local real nappy agent, so they can learn more about what you are doing and answer any general questions about real nappies that might arise.

**TOP TIP**

Some maternity units may be concerned that working with a real nappy agent may compromise the strict rules about endorsing a commercial product. However, real nappy agents can offer impartial advice on the full range of real nappies available, as well as a list of suppliers.

# Raising awareness about real nappies on the ward

Whether or not you're using real nappies on the ward, it's essential to ensure that parents and staff have access to information on the nappies. The way in which the information is presented will depend on whether or not real nappies are used.

If you're already using real nappies, aim to get feedback from staff and parents, and maintain enthusiasm for the scheme. Both parents and staff will have concerns, most of which can be easily addressed, with information presented on posters and by staff who understand real nappies and the reasons for introducing them onto the ward.

If real nappies are not appropriate for your situation, ensure that new parents have as many other opportunities as possible to experience real nappies and make an informed choice.

## How to inform staff and parents about real nappies:

- first, talk to staff to make them aware;
- use case studies and examples from this guide to show how staff in other hospitals have been impressed;
- post information on staff notice boards. Include details of local nappy schemes using posters, examples of real nappies and leaflets (see page 25 for a list of places to get literature and information);
- use newsletters and the intranet, if the hospital has them, to feature the issues and start a debate;
- aim to raise staff interest and enthusiasm over time;
- have real nappy samples on the ward for staff and parents to touch and feel;
- discuss real nappies as an alternative:
  - in staff training (page 21)
  - with parents in parent education classes
  - at antenatal classes, including demonstrations of real nappies for home use and in the hospital
  - when parents book in;
- get internal ward feedback. For questions to ask see page 23;
- consider follow-ups with your local authority, health visitors and the Primary Care Trust;
- present the information with a positive outlook. Remember, it's all about promoting choice; and
- finally, give parents all the information they need to continue to use real nappies once they have left hospital.

## TOP TIP

The Warwickshire Real Nappy Advisor holds regular "Nappuccino" coffee mornings on the ward to give new parents the opportunity to see and handle the range of real nappies and discuss them with an expert and with other parents who use them.

# Evaluating the success of your real nappy scheme

Evaluate how successful your scheme has been in order to improve it if necessary. This will help you justify continuing with it, as well as providing useful feedback to those involved. You can also use the results of the evaluation to publicise how successful it's been. An assessment of how cost-effective the scheme has been should also be undertaken.

Evaluation doesn't need to be complicated. You just need to ask questions in a structured way at specific points in time, perhaps three months into a new scheme and then on an annual basis.

## Questions to ask

- What have staff experiences been like with the real nappies? Ask for both positive and negative points.
- How are staff finding the stock management?
- Are nappies going missing?
- Have staff received any comments, complaints or compliments from parents?
- Do staff have any suggestions to improve the implemented system?
- Do staff have any questions about the system or real nappies?

When you have responses from the majority of staff, prepare a short report that summarises their views. You can then act to improve problem areas. Use the report to support your case for the real nappy scheme continuing.



### Feedback from parents

Parents should also be asked for their views. Use the appropriate questions below on a form that parents can hand back anonymously.

1. Did you use real nappies during your stay in the hospital?

Yes

No

If yes, please go to Q2. If no, please go to Q3.

2. Did you find the nappies easy to use?

Yes

No

If no, please tell us why not \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you intend to use real nappies at home?

Yes

No

4. Has using real nappies while in hospital influenced your decision on the type of nappies you will use at home?

Yes

No

5. Are you part of the county council nappy initiative?

Yes

No

Don't know

6. Have you applied for your free nappy pack?

Yes

No

7. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you have a good number of forms (at least 50), collate the responses. You can do this manually, by adding together the responses from each form, or you can enter the responses into a database or spreadsheet package. Calculate the percentage of parents giving each answer. Write it up in a brief report on parents' feedback. It's good practice to do this regularly, even once the scheme has become mainstream.

# Where to find real nappy literature

## For information, support and advice about real nappies:

- **The Real Nappy Campaign**

**T** 0845 850 0606 (Real Nappy Helpline)

**W** [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

- **The Women's Environmental Network (WEN)**

WEN runs a Real Nappy Project to raise awareness about the environmental impact of nappies and to ensure that parents have a choice.

Real Nappy Project  
PO Box 30626  
London  
E1 1TZ

**T** 020 7481 9144

**W** [www.wen.org.uk/nappies](http://www.wen.org.uk/nappies)

**E** [nappies@wen.organisation.uk](mailto:nappies@wen.organisation.uk)

- **Local councils**

Contact your local or county council waste management department to find out if they can support you in any way, for example through real nappy incentive schemes. Find their website through [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

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## GLOSSARY

### Real nappies

A general term covering the various types of modern washable nappy.

### Alginate bags

Laundry bags made from a material that dissolves on contact with hot water, enabling the sealed bag to be loaded directly into the machine. This means that laundry staff do not need to handle soiled contents.

### HSG (95) 18

Health service guidelines for laundering used and infected linen. They can be downloaded from the Department of Health website: [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

### PAS 106

Nappy laundry guidelines specifically for laundering real nappies, published in September 2006. Details from [www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)

## SUPPLIERS

Stork Eco: Castle Industries Ltd., Ronaldsway Industrial Estate, Ballasalla, Isle of Man, IM9 2RA, 01624 828400, email [stork-econappy@castleiom.com](mailto:stork-econappy@castleiom.com)

Tots Bots: Tots Bots Ltd., Office 214 Abercromby Business Centre, 279 Abercromby Street, Glasgow, G40 2DD, 0141 550 1514, [www.totsbots.com](http://www.totsbots.com)





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[www.realnappycampaign.com](http://www.realnappycampaign.com)