

Guidance for ICVs
Pregnant and Breastfeeding Detainees
December 2024



Introduction

At scheme request, ICVA has produced a briefing about the particular needs of pregnant and breastfeeding detainees.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

The APP recognises that pregnancy, known or possible is something that may lead to a detainee being considered vulnerable - particularly when considering modes of restraint, transport and the potential requirement for additional and different types of food and/or drinks.

The APP goes on to note that “pregnant women in police custody may have a range of additional health and welfare requirements. They are likely to experience heightened levels of physical and mental vulnerability”.¹

Liaison and Diversion

As a pregnant detainee may be vulnerable it may be appropriate that they go through liaison and diversion to ensure they are diverted if custody is not the best place for them.

What can ICVs monitor?

As with all detainees, ICVs can monitor either by speaking to the detainee, reviewing the custody record or both to satisfy themselves that detainees have had individualised consideration of their condition, and that their time in custody has been adjusted appropriately.

1. Has the detainee been asked about caring responsibilities for any children they may already have, and steps taken to ensure their appropriate care for the period of detention?
2. Has the detainee spoken to healthcare and/or liaison and diversion where appropriate?
3. Has the detainee been offered accommodations for individual health and welfare requirements? For example, a pregnant detainee may need different types of food or drink.
4. Has the force used appropriate modes of restraint where necessary as to not put the detainee or their pregnancy at risk?
5. If the detainee is breastfeeding, subject to risk assessment, they may be offered access to a breast pump (or be allowed for a friend/relative to bring one in from home).

Briefing ends.

¹ <https://www.college.police.uk/app/detention-and-custody/detainee-care/equality-and-individual-needs#female-detainees-d5e91aaa-f57b-430e-a16f-0d67aa8ee37d>