Writing a birth plan guide:
https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth/preparing-for-the-birth/how-to-make-a-birth-plan/

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):
https://www.merseycare.nhs.uk/pals-and-complaints

Family hub/Start for Life:
https://fisd.liverpool.gov.uk/

Healthy Start: www.healthystart.nhs.uk (free weekly vouchers/vitamins for pregnant women)

Baby Basics: https://baby-basics.org.uk/

Doula support:
https://themotherhoodgroup.org/doula-support/

Tommy's non-urgent helpline for Black women:
https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/about-tommys-pregnancy-information/video-call-service

Tommy's pregnancy relaxation advice:
https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-health-wellbeing/tips

Black Mums App for community support:
https://blackmums.com/



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Useful Services and Tools



COLLECTIVE ENCOUNTERS · LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY · National Museums Liverpool · The British Academy

Hey Mama!

We are a group of Black and ethnically diverse mothers and we would like to increase the safety and positive experiences for Black women in the maternal health care system.

We hope that you will encounter people who will support your health, your emotions and your choices. Remember, you have the right to demand a high level of care.

Listen to your inner voice. Feel confident to express yourself. Your knowledge of your own body is valuable.

This leaflet is designed to aid you in your maternal journey, informed by our own experiences.

We wish you a safe pregnancy!



Communication

"I was bewildered by questions about my ethnicity and how it could affect my birth."

Some medical conditions more commonly affect Black people, such as sickle cell and preeclampsia. Because of your child's heritage or ancestry there may be more questions asked about your health.

You are not the problem.

Whilst the majority of healthcare providers are well-meaning, some conversations can be awkward due to varying levels of unconscious bias and interpersonal skills.

In your appointments:

* Ask about anything you don't understand
* Write things down prior to, or during your appointment, if you need to
* Know your rights and raise anything you feel unhappy or uncomfortable with. Involve PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) if you need to
*You know your own body better than anyone, don't be afraid to advocate for yourself, or bring a trusted person with you.

"Why shouldn't we deserve the best?!"

Alert your midwife immediately if you have any one of the following: severe headaches, visual disturbances, vaginal bleeding, swelling in hands, face and feet and reduced movement. These are symptoms of pre-eclampsia.



Maternal Checklist

"I thought it was important to do my own research and use my own voice."

Do you know your family's (and your baby's family's) health history? Is there anything that you need to share?

Be open, and ask your healthcare provider if you have any concerns. There are links to alternative sources of information on the next page.

Are you aware of any relaxation techniques/classes that can help you through your pregnancy?

As Black women, our bodies have faced stresses due to ancestral trauma and racism. It is important to take time out for intentional relaxation and self care. Again, see resources on the next page.

Do you have a birth plan?

If not, creating one will help you to think through what you want and what you don't. If so, who else needs to know about it? You can have two people with you at the birth.

Creating the right environment.

Are there any items that you would like to have with you in your birthing space? Music? Ask your midwife what will be allowed.

"Beyoncé is going to help me to have my baby!."

Have you considered holistic or alternative support? See next page for more information on this.

