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| Changes to services |
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The [Policy and funding guidelines](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) represent the system-wide terms and conditions for government-funded healthcare organisations. As outlined in the capability frameworks section of the guidelines, further information regarding planned or unplanned changes, including diversions related to maternity and newborn care be found below.

### Diversion

Diversion is defined as a short-term temporary change in service, where birthing mothers may be diverted or transferred to another hospital for their continuing care. The decision to divert or transfer birthing mothers is always made in the interest of safety. For example, this may be due to workforce leave arrangements, which are time limited and short in duration.

When diversion of maternity services is required, health services must complete the standard maternity diversion template and email it to the Manager, Health Performance for the appropriate region (South East, North East or Western).

The frequency and duration of service provision outside agreed capability levels will be monitored by the department. This, along with other factors, will inform decision-making about ongoing capability levels for the service.

### Medium-term planned or unplanned service changes

The occasions that a health service cannot meet its capability requirements should be rare, and each health service must have plans in place to ensure service continuity.

An example of medium-term planned service changes would be planned infrastructure works to the maternity unit that are time limited.

An example of unplanned service changes would be the loss of essential workforce personnel, meaning the maternity or newborn service cannot be provided until the successful recruitment of new staff.

On occasions where medium-term planned or unplanned changes to a service’s maternity and newborn capability are required, the service must:

* escalate the issue immediately to the department via the Manager, Health Performance for the appropriate region (South East, North East or Western)
* department agrees that a service capability level review be undertaken by the health service
* develop a management plan in partnership with the department, with steps taken to action the requirements outlined below
* once the plan is agreed to by the health service and the department, communicate the plan to staff, patients, key partners (including Ambulance Victoria and the Paediatric Infant Perinatal Emergency Retrieval (PIPER) service) and the community.

### Long-term service changes

The occasions that a long-term or ongoing change to a service capability level is required should also be rare.

On occasions where this is the case for reasons such as a change in demand for the services or change in complexity of cases presenting, the service must:

* notify the department via the Manager, Health Performance for the appropriate region (South East, North East or Western)
* department agrees that a service capability level review be undertaken by the health service
* develop a service capability level review plan in partnership with the department (Health Service Performance, System Planning, and Maternity and Newborn Policy) and Safer Care Victoria (Nursing and Midwifery Chief)
* once the plan is developed by the health service and reviewed by the department and agreed, communicate it to staff, patients, key partners (including AV and PIPER) and the community.