

Table 1 Maternity care and retail sectors in rural areas: Shared characteristics

Supermarket / obstetric unit	Local shop / rural maternity unit
Offers everything / one-stop shop	Basic service /limited range
Little local identity	Local identity
Less personal / impersonal	Familiar / known faces / personalised
Larger / economies of scale	Smaller
More technology-focused	More people-focused
Institution-focused	Community-focused
Dominant ideology	Fringe ideology