

Patient Information

Perinatal Mental Health

Women's Services



Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide information about perinatal mental health and detail the services available within the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust. Perinatal is the period during pregnancy and the year following birth.

What is perinatal mental health?

Although it is normal to have periods of worry and stress when you are pregnant, some women have feelings that don't go away and this can be a sign of something more serious. Perinatal mental illness affects up to 1 in 5 women; some women have pre-existing mental illness before becoming pregnant or may have had previous perinatal mental health needs that require additional management during the perinatal period.

Perinatal mental health problems can include a wide range of conditions such as:

- Perinatal depression
- Perinatal anxiety disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Postpartum psychosis
- Tokophobia (fear of childbirth)

Additionally, pre-existing conditions may be exacerbated such as:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Personality disorders
- Existing eating disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia

Please refer to page 6 in this leaflet for information about some of the perinatal mental health conditions that can develop throughout the perinatal period.

What Perinatal Mental Health Services are available?

The Perinatal Mental Health Service is made up of the Community Perinatal Team (CPT). This team is led by consultant psychiatrists, obstetric consultant leads in perinatal mental health, and specialist midwives who act as a source of support and guidance for professionals, women and their families within the maternity unit.

The onset or exacerbation of mental health conditions during the perinatal period can happen very quickly, causing difficult challenges to women and their families and, if not dealt with as soon as possible, can pose a risk to the pregnancy/newborn baby. Recognising these women who need additional support and treatment early on, can minimise such risks.

The service is designed to identify women who may have additional mental health needs as early as the pregnancy booking appointment. The team will work with the woman to support her with mental and emotional wellbeing, ensure she is on the right pathway of care, has the correct referrals completed and is directed to other avenues of support available.

Who are women referred to?

This depends on individual mental health history. At your pregnancy booking appointment, the booking midwife will discuss such information with you and will complete an 'Information Sharing Form', with your consent. Your mental health history will then be assessed by the perinatal mental health midwives and the Community Perinatal Team. Onward referrals can be made to:

- Community Perinatal Team
- Wellbeing Team (IAPT)
- Perinatal Mental Health Midwife Clinic
- Community Perinatal Team
- Community Perinatal Team, with joint obstetric care

What can I expect?

Your community midwife may offer you more frequent antenatal and postnatal appointments to ensure your mental health is cared for alongside your physical health. This will be discussed at your first community midwife appointment at around 16 weeks' of pregnancy.

Community Perinatal Team

The Community Perinatal Team support mums to be, new mums and families who are likely to, or who are experiencing significant mental health problems during the perinatal period. They accept professional referrals only. The team offers:

- Consultation with a specialist doctor
- Specialist psychological therapies
- Additional support from specialist perinatal workers
- Pre-conception counselling
- Birth care planning

Wellbeing Team (IAPT)

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an option of a talking therapy held as 1:1 sessions that can help individuals experiencing mental health problems such as:

- Worry
- Low mood
- Stress
- Insomnia (problems sleeping)

Professional and self referrals are accepted, and sessions are free and confidential.

Perinatal Mental Health Midwife Clinic

This clinic, run by the perinatal mental health midwives, works with women to produce birth plans which help minimise their anxieties and stressors, supporting their mental health.

Contact and self-referral information for local Wellbeing Teams (IAPT):

◆ Wellbeing Team, Hertfordshire

Self referral online form: <https://www.hpft.nhs.uk/services/community-services/wellbeing-service/referrals/self-referral/>

Single Point of Access Telephone: **0300 777 0707**

◆ Wellbeing Team, Bedfordshire

Self referral online form:

<https://bedfordshirewellbeingservice.nhs.uk/get-started/>

Telephone: **01234 880400** (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

Email: elt-tr.bedfordiapt@nhs.net

◆ Wellbeing Team, Cambridgeshire

Self referral online form: <https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/self-refer-here>

Telephone: **0300 300 0055**

(Monday to Friday, 9am - 4pm, excluding Bank Holidays)

Please note: The Community Perinatal Team is in addition to your usual antenatal and postnatal care held at either the hospital or in the community.

Some women may already be receiving mental health support, i.e. from the Community Mental Health Team. In this instance the CPT may offer joint working for the perinatal period.

Some of the perinatal mental health conditions that can develop throughout the perinatal period:

Perinatal anxiety

Perinatal anxiety is anxiety experienced during the perinatal period. It is sometimes referred to as prenatal or antenatal anxiety if experienced during pregnancy, and postnatal anxiety if experienced after giving birth.

OCD

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a type of anxiety disorder. OCD can be distressing and significantly interfere with your life, but treatment can help you keep it under control. Perinatal OCD is when you experience OCD during pregnancy or in the year after giving birth. If you experience perinatal OCD, you're likely to have obsessions and compulsions that relate to your feelings about being a parent to your baby. These may manifest in intrusive thoughts.

Perinatal depression

Perinatal depression is depression experienced during pregnancy and up to one year after birth. It is sometimes referred to as prenatal or antenatal depression, or postnatal depression. Many people are aware of postnatal depression (PND) but it is less commonly known that this can be experienced during pregnancy as well; it is very different from the 'baby blues'. Help could be in the form of talking therapies, medication or a combination of both.

Postpartum psychosis

Postpartum psychosis (PP) is a serious, but rare diagnosis occurring in around 1-2 in 1,000 births. Women can experience depression, mania and psychosis. You would likely be offered antipsychotic medication and could be offered a place in a Mother and Baby Unit (MBU). It is a serious mental health illness and should be treated as a medical emergency.

Useful websites and resources about perinatal mental health

NHS perinatal mental health - <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/mental-health/>

MIND perinatal mental health - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/about-maternal-mental-health-problems/>

PANDAS - <https://pandasfoundation.org.uk/what-is-pnd/perinatal-mental-health/>

Useful contact numbers in mental health crisis

- **NHS 111** - ☎ 111, option 2
- **Samaritans (free phone)** - ☎ 116 123
- In an emergency dial **999**

Please use this space to write down any questions you may wish to ask:

Scan this QR code for more information



Useful contact details

Antenatal Clinic, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 314333 ext. 4070
Antenatal Appointments	☎ 01438 286031
Consultant Led Unit, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 284124 (24 hours)
Midwifery Led Unit, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 286197 (24 hours)
Birth Afterthoughts Appointments	☎ 01438 286079

Useful websites for more information

- **NHS website** - www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/
- **National Library of Medicine** - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4346072/>
- **Science Direct** - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0005796787901112?via%3Dihub>

Further reading

There are other maternity information leaflets you may wish to read. These are available on our East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust website: www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/patient-information/