



**Greater Manchester  
Mental Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust

**Mental health support just before and after giving birth**  
**Specialist Perinatal Community Mental Health Team**



# What are perinatal mental health problems?

**Perinatal is a term that refers to the period just before and after giving birth.**

Perinatal mental health problems are those that occur at this time – during pregnancy and the first year or two after the baby is born.

It is not uncommon for people to experience a range of thoughts and feelings about their pregnancy and about becoming a parent. While this can be a time of great joy, it can also be a stressful time and comes with a range of physical and emotional changes. For about 1 in 5 people, this time can be associated with a range of mental health problems, for example: depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress, and symptoms such as hearing or seeing things or having unusual

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beliefs. These problems may have been present at a previous time in your life and may recur in the perinatal period, or it may be that the problems develop for the first time during this period. This leaflet is to tell you about the support that is available from the Specialist Perinatal Community Mental Health Team (CMHT).

## What is the Specialist Perinatal CMHT?

The Specialist Perinatal Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) is a service for women experiencing moderate-severe mental health problems in the perinatal period, and also for those with a past or family history of severe mental health difficulties. Currently the service works with people during pregnancy and up to the first year after the baby is born. From 2021, this will increase to the first two years after baby is born. The service is for people for whom treatment from GP/ primary care services is not helping enough.

Examples of the difficulties we work with include:

- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Psychosis
- Severe depression
- Severe anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder

We can provide written information about each of these mental health problems, and leaflets that you and family members can read about these are also available online: [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health)



## What does the Specialist Perinatal CMHT do?

The aim of the service is to help you stay well during pregnancy and after your baby is born, to support you with any mental health problems that you experience in the perinatal period, to help you to enjoy your baby and develop confidence as a parent, and to make sure that you, your family, and other professionals working with you have the information needed to help you at this time.

Perinatal services can support you with the following:

- Advice about your risk of developing a mental health problem in pregnancy or the postnatal period - and how to reduce this risk.
- Supporting you to manage and recover from mental health difficulties during the perinatal period.
- Helping you to weigh up the risks and benefits of using medication during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Psychological treatments (talking therapies). This can be on an individual basis or in a group.
- Support and advice to help you build both a positive relationship with your baby and a sense of confidence in being a parent.
- Helping you to plan for your care during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.
- Working closely with midwives, health visitors, adult mental health teams and GPs to ensure you get the right help at the right time.
- If you are already working with another mental health service, we can work alongside them to ensure you get specialist advice alongside your existing support.
- Supporting you to access specialist inpatient services (mother and baby unit), if this is required.
- Referring you to other services which offer practical help and support for families. This could be a local voluntary service or charity.

- Giving advice and information about mental health problems to your partner and other family members, if you are OK with this, to help them understand the problems and how best to support you.

## Who we are

We are a range of healthcare professionals who work together to support you at this time, including:

- Psychiatrist – Medical doctors with specialist expertise in perinatal mental health problems and in medication in the perinatal period. They can discuss your diagnosis with you, and tell you what treatments might help. They can help you to decide about using psychiatric medication in pregnancy or when breastfeeding.
- Specialist perinatal mental health nurse – Nurses who specialise in looking after people’s mental health in the perinatal period. They can support you to understand your mental health difficulties, teach you how to cope with any symptoms or worries you may have, and support with medication and improving your mental well-being. They can also help you to develop your relationship and confidence with your baby.
- Occupational therapist – Occupational therapists can provide practical support, information and therapeutic interventions to aid recovery, with the aim of increasing independence and satisfaction in all aspects of life, including mental health and parenting. As above they can help you to manage mental health problems and support you in your relationship with your baby.
- Social worker – Social workers in the team work with families to engage people, address life challenges and enhance well-being. Social workers focus on personalisation and recovery to support people to make positive, self-directed change. As above they can help you to manage mental health problems and support you in your relationship with your baby.

- Clinical psychologist – The psychology staff can offer psychological treatments (talking therapies). These usually focus on how your mental health and pregnancy/parenthood affect each other. They can help you to work out ways to manage your difficulties. Talking therapy can look at your past or how to cope with a current problem. It can help you to develop new ways to understand and manage your symptoms and can also support you with your relationship with your baby.

### How do we work with families?

If you are referred to our service we will work with you and other staff involved with you to decide if we are the best service to support you at this time. If so, we will contact you by letter or by phone to arrange an appointment. We see people in various places including antenatal clinics, children's centres and at home. We will do our best to be flexible with appointment dates and times. Your first appointment will last for about an hour. We will ask you about any current symptoms and difficulties. We will also ask questions about your past. We will give you information and advice about any risk you may have of becoming unwell and the treatments that can help you. We will agree a plan with you for your care and treatment in the short and long term.

We would like you to bring your baby to your appointment and you are welcome to bring other children with you if needed. You may also want to consider bringing your partner or another family member or a friend with you, if you want to. If you require an interpreter this can be arranged.



## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Everyone referred to Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Trust has an electronic health record set up. This is confidential and can only be accessed by professionals who are involved in your care. Your health record contains basic details such as your address and date of birth. It also has contact details for your GP and other professionals involved in your care. Information about your appointments, care and treatment is recorded. Any letters we send or receive about you are also added to your health record. Doctors, nurses, therapists and other health professionals use this information to make sure that you receive the best possible care.

After your first appointment, and at other times during your care, the professional who sees you will usually write a letter. This will detail the discussion you have had including any advice and the plan you agree for your care. Letters and copies of our assessments are usually shared with your GP and other mental health professionals. You will also be given copies of all letters written about you, unless you say that you don't want these. Please let the professional who sees you know if there is any information you don't want to share. .

It is important that we share information with the other professionals involved in your care, including your midwife, obstetrician and health visitor. Some women would prefer these professionals to have as much detail as possible so that these clinicians understand them well and so you don't have to keep repeating information. Other women prefer only a small amount of information to be shared – such as your diagnosis, the main concerns and the plan for your care. Please talk to any of the professionals from the perinatal mental health service about the information you are happy to share.

## What happens at discharge?

We will work with you to decide on the right time for you to be discharged from the service. We will provide you with a written summary of the support and advice we have given. If any further support is required, for you or your family, we will ensure that you are referred to the best service to continue working with you on any ongoing mental health needs.

## How can I give feedback to the service?

You can give feed-back throughout your involvement with the service by speaking to any of the professionals involved with you, or by asking to speak to the team leader. Once your treatment is complete, you will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire to provide your feed-back on the service. If you have any issues with your care please speak to the staff member or manager direct, or if this is difficult you can contact the Customer Care team on: Telephone: 0800 587 4793(freephone) or email: [customer care@gmmh.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@gmmh.nhs.uk).





## How can people be referred to the specialist perinatal CMHT?

You can usually be referred by any professional involved in your care, such as:

- GP
- Midwife
- Health Visitor
- Obstetrician
- Psychiatrist
- Care co-ordinator (community mental health team)

They will be required to complete a referral form, which is available online: [www.gmmh.nhs.uk/perinatal-community](http://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/perinatal-community)

## Other services we work with:

- **Specialist mental health midwife** – offers support for milder symptoms of anxiety or low mood, particularly when these are related to pregnancy or anxiety about birth. They also act as the link between perinatal mental health and maternity services.
- **Primary Care Psychology/ Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)** – offers short-term talking therapies. These can include guided self-help sessions with a therapist, cognitive behaviour therapy, couples' therapy, counselling, individual or group therapies. If you are pregnant, or have recently had a baby, you would usually be given priority. You can often bring your baby to appointments. Some IAPT services also have groups just for women who are pregnant or for new mums. You can refer yourself to your local IAPT service – or your GP, midwife or health visitor can do this for you.
- **GP** – looking after your health, which can include diagnosing a mental health problem, prescribing medication if you need it and referring you to other services.

- **Parent-infant mental health services** – A specialist service that works with parents to promote their developing role and to strengthen the parent-infant relationship. Each borough of Greater Manchester will have a parent-infant mental health team and the Perinatal CMHTs work very closely together with them. If you would like support with your relationship with your baby, during pregnancy or in the early years, then you can request a referral to your local parent-infant mental health service from the Perinatal CMHT or any health professional involved in your care (e.g. midwife, health visitor, GP).
- **Health visitor** - provides advice and support about caring for your new baby and other children. Health visitors work with families to promote children’s health and development and support parenting relationships. They can offer listening visits if you have mental health or emotional difficulties.
- **Children’s centres** - offer advice, practical and social support. They run mother and baby groups and drop-in sessions. You can meet other new parents and develop your confidence as a mum.
- **Online resources** – there are lots of websites which provide information and support for women with mental health problems during pregnancy and beyond. Some of these are listed below:

<p><b>Tommy’s</b> Mental wellbeing in pregnancy, patient information written by midwives.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing">www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing</a></p>
<p><b>Action on Postpartum Psychosis</b> A national charity for women and families affected by post-partum psychosis.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.app-network.org/">www.app-network.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Beating Bipolar</b> An internet based programme that aims to improve understanding of the condition.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.beatingbipolar.org">www.beatingbipolar.org</a></p>

<p><b>Best Beginnings</b> An app that guides you through your pregnancy.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk">www.bestbeginnings.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Mother To Baby</b> Information leaflets for women and their partners about use of medication in pregnancy and when breastfeeding.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.mothertobaby.org">www.mothertobaby.org</a></p>
<p><b>Maternal OCD</b> Support and Information for women with Perinatal Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.maternalocd.org">www.maternalocd.org</a></p>
<p><b>PANDAS</b> Antenatal and postnatal depression information and support for women and families.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk">www.pandasfoundation.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>PND and Me</b> Website and online support group for sufferers of perinatal mental illness.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.pndandme.co.uk">www.pndandme.co.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Maternal Mental Health Alliance</b> Information, advice and support about maternal mental health</p>	<p><a href="http://www.maternalmentalhealthalliance.org">www.maternalmentalhealthalliance.org</a></p>
<p><b>Family Action</b> Information, advice and support for families</p>	<p><a href="http://www.family-action.org.uk">www.family-action.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Family Lives</b> Help and support for any families who are struggling</p>	<p><a href="http://www.familylives.org.uk">www.familylives.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Dad Matters</b> Supporting fathers in Greater Manchester</p>	<p><a href="http://www.dadmatters.org.uk">www.dadmatters.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Proud 2 Be Parents</b> A service for LGBT+ parents and parents-to-be</p>	<p><a href="http://www.proud2bparents.co.uk">www.proud2bparents.co.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Gingerbread</b> National charity for single-parent families</p>	<p><a href="http://www.gingerbread.org.uk">www.gingerbread.org.uk</a></p>

## Contact Information

### **Central and South Manchester, Stockport and Trafford**

Laureate House, Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Road,  
Manchester M23 9LT

### **Bury, Bolton, Salford and Wigan**

Old Trust HQ, Prestwich Hospital, Bury New Road, Manchester  
M25 3BL

### **North Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Glossop**

Hexagon Tower, Crumpsall Vale, Manchester M9 8GQ

Telephone: 0161 271 0188

## Help in a Crisis

You can call the office in working hours (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm): 0161 271 0188

Outside of these hours, you can access out of hours support for the following areas:

- City of Manchester: 0161 271 0450
- Bolton, Salford and Trafford: 01204 483071

If you are concerned about an immediate risk of harm to yourself or someone else, call 999 or attend A&E. If it is not an emergency but you require urgent advice, call 111.

This information can be provided in different languages, Braille, large print, interpretations, text only, and audio formats on request, please telephone 0161 358 1644.