Perinatal Mental Health Service

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# Perinatal Mental Health Service

For a better life

# Pregnancy and mental health

Most of us expect to feel happy, excited and positive during pregnancy and when our baby is born, but it doesn't always happen like this. You can feel many different emotions, including love and pride, but it is natural to also feel stressed and anxious. This is normal.

Up to 1 in 5 women experience mild to severe mental ill-health in pregnancy or after birth. You may:

- Already have a mental illness when you get pregnant
- Be worried because you have had mental health problems before. This may make it more likely that you will become unwell but, with the right help, this can often be prevented
- Develop a mental health problem for the first time.

It is important that you get the right support if you have, or are at risk of developing, mental health problems during pregnancy or in the first year after the birth.

## Who are we?

We are a specialist mental health service for women who are planning a pregnancy, are pregnant or have a baby up to 12 months old. We are made up of different professionals including psychiatrists, mental health nurses, psychologists and allied health professionals such as occupational therapists.

Our aim is to:

- Help you stay as well as possible during pregnancy and after your baby is born
- Make sure that you, your family and other professionals can recognise any signs that you are becoming unwell as early as possible
- Help you enjoy having your baby and develop confidence in being a mum
- Make sure that you, your partner and family have the information you need and can get advice about mental health problems and treatments
- Work together with you, your partner and family, and the other professionals involved in your care.

## Who are we for?

Not every woman with a mental health problem during pregnancy, or after their baby is born, will need a perinatal mental health service. This service cares for women with more serious or complex mental health needs. Even if you are currently working with a community mental health team, you should still be referred to a perinatal service for expert advice and support.

## Where are we based?

Our service is made up of two teams:

- South West team covering Guildford and Waverley and Surrey Downs, based in Leatherhead
- North West team covering North West Surrey and Surrey Heath based in Chertsey.

We hold regular clinics at Epsom General, Royal Surrey, Frimley Park and St Peter's Hospitals, and in family centres across Surrey. We hold regular clinics in antenatal and other baby-friendly outpatient settings as well as undertaking home visits, especially in the immediate postnatal period.

## Who else do we work with?

We work with maternity and obstetrics teams, specialist midwives and psychiatric liaison services in the four local acute hospitals: Royal Surrey, St Peter's, Epsom General and Frimley Park. In the community, we work with GPs, community midwives and health visitors.

## What we offer

### Preconception advice

We offer a psychiatric consultation to women who are trying to conceive and are known to have moderate to serious mental illness, including psychosis, bipolar disorder and severe depression. Women on mood stabilisers or several different psychiatric medications at the same time may particularly benefit from this service.

### Antenatal and postnatal support

The team provides advice, care and treatment for women with a wide range of mental health problems during pregnancy and up to one year after your baby is born. This may include:

- Advice about reducing your risk of developing a mental health problem in pregnancy or the postnatal period
- Helping you weigh up the risks and benefits of using medication during pregnancy and breastfeeding

- Psychological treatments such as talking therapies
- Helping you make a plan for your care during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period
- Giving advice and information about mental health problems to partners and family members to help them understand your risk of becoming unwell and how to support you
- Arranging admission to a mother and baby unit if needed
- Providing support for women discharged from a mother and baby unit
- Teaching and providing specialist advice to healthcare professionals to help them provide better care.

## Dads and partners

Only mothers can be formally diagnosed with a perinatal mental health problem. However, studies suggest that fathers can also experience mental ill health in the perinatal period. It is often hard to balance all aspects of life – work, home, new baby, other children, finances – and this can be become stressful for both of you.

If you notice signs of mental health problems emerging it can be tough to know how to support your partner, and you may feel that whatever you say or do is not helping. If your partner is not already doing so, encourage them to seek professional advice or to speak to a member of our team.

## How to access our service

We accept referrals from health and social care professionals, including GPs, obstetricians, midwives, health visitors, and any mental health professional who has reviewed you.

It is not possible to self-refer so if you have concerns please speak with your GP, midwife or health visitor who will make a referral if appropriate.

## How to contact us

Our service is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). If you would like to speak to a member of the team, our contact details are as follows:

### South West Surrey Team

Tel: 01372 216348
Post: Room F18,
Trust Headquarters,
18 Mole Business Park,
Leatherhead KT22 7AD

### North West Surrey Team

Tel: 01932 587079
Post: Unither House,
Curfew Bell Road,
Chertsey KT16 9FG

Email for both teams: rxx.sabp.perinatal@nhs.net

### Mental Health Crisis Helpline

In times of crisis or distress please call: 0800 915 4644
Textphone Next Generation Text Service for people with speech or hearing difficulties, dial: 18001 0800 915 4644. Open 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you would like this information in another format or another language:

Call: 01372 216285
Email: leaflets@sabp.nhs.uk

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18 Mole Business Park, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7AD

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