



West London
NHS Trust

Perinatal mental health service

Ealing, Hounslow, Hammersmith & Fulham



Promoting hope
and wellbeing
together

Pregnancy and mental health

Pregnancy and the period after childbirth are significant times of change in a woman's life. It is common for women and their partners to experience many different emotions during this time.

Some women have mental health problems in pregnancy or after birth. These can either be illnesses that women have had before or, for some women, it may be the first time they become unwell.

Some women with previous mental illness have a high risk of becoming unwell after birth, even if they have been well for a long time and have no symptoms when they become pregnant. It is important that these women receive advice and specialist care.

Mental health problems are actually more common than physical health problems in pregnancy, and affect up to 20% of women.

We are here to help

We are a specialist team of psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, midwives and obstetricians. We offer assessment, treatment, advice and support for women who have current or previous moderate to severe mental illness.

We work with women to help them stay as well as possible during pregnancy and after birth.

If you do become unwell, we will support you and your family and ensure you have the care and treatment you need to help you recover. We can help to reduce the impact your illness has on your baby and the rest of your family.

You might be referred to our service if:

- You are planning a pregnancy and need advice about your mental health and treatment.
- You are pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months, and have had mental health problems in the past.
- You have a relapse of a previous mental illness in pregnancy or in the first 12 months after birth.
- You have a mental illness for the first time in pregnancy or in the first 12 months after birth.

"I found the appointment very useful and felt reassured."



Women experiencing milder forms of perinatal mental health problems should talk to their GP, midwife or health visitor about other help available through the NHS.

What we offer

We work together with you, your family and the other services involved in your care. These may include: midwives, obstetricians, health visitors, GPs, social care, adult mental health teams and voluntary sector organisations.

We will agree a plan for your care during pregnancy, your admission to the maternity unit for the birth of your baby, and for the postnatal period.

The plan will depend on your mental health problems and the support you and your family need.

We have particular expertise in:

- Advice for women with complex or severe mental health problems who are planning a pregnancy.
- Assessing and caring for women with mental health problems during pregnancy and in the first 12 months after birth.
- Advice on the risks and benefits of using psychiatric medication in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

- Talking therapies for women who are pregnant or have a baby up to 12 months old.
- Advice about the risk of relapse in pregnancy and the postnatal period and how to prevent this.
- Support and advice on the mother and baby relationship.
- Assessment and care of women with mental health problems during admission to the maternity unit.
- Giving advice and information about mental health problems to partners and other family members so they can understand your illness and know how best to support you.
- Training and supervision of midwives and other health professionals so that they have a good understanding of mental health problems and how these can affect women and families.

“This is an essential clinic, as essential as a 12-week scan - and one that makes a huge difference to women undergoing the challenges of another pregnancy after loss or trauma.”

We aim to contact everyone within a week of referral and offer an appointment within three weeks or sooner if it is urgent.

Your appointment

You will be contacted by letter, phone or email to arrange your appointment.

We offer telephone and face to face appointments in a variety of settings, including the maternity unit, children's centres and at home. We will do everything we can to be flexible when agreeing appointment dates and times. You are very welcome to bring your baby and other children with you to your appointment. Some women prefer to arrange for someone else to look after their children while they attend their appointment with us.

You can bring your partner, or another family member or friend, with you if you want to.

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 then decide together what further care and support you need.

“Having a pre-birth mental health plan was like having a walking stick.”



Who can refer into this service?

We accept referrals from any professional including mental health professionals, midwives, obstetricians and GPs.

We are also happy to offer telephone advice to professionals if they have concerns about a woman's mental health.

Speak to your health care professional and they can contact us to request an assessment or ask us for advice.

We listen to you

We welcome feedback from women and families who have used our service and professionals who have referred to us.

If you'd like, you can provide feedback about our service through the national Patient Opinion website:

www.patientopinion.org.uk

We use this feedback to continuously improve our service.



Our aims are:

- To deliver safe and effective care.
- To ensure every woman we see has a positive, respectful and compassionate experience.
- To ensure that women are consulted and involved in planning their care.
- To work collaboratively with other services.
- To ensure good communication between services, women and families.
- To train health professionals so that they have a good understanding of how mental health problems affect women in pregnancy and after birth.
- To raise awareness about mental health problems in pregnancy and after birth.
- To contribute to the advancement of knowledge by participating in research.

Perinatal Helpful Websites

Tommy's

www.tommys.org

The Tommy's website has information about many aspects of pregnancy.

The section on Mental Wellbeing offers:

Information about common emotional changes in pregnancy, a range of mental health conditions, treatment options, women's stories/lived experience and support.

Royal College of Psychiatrists Health Advice

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

The Health and Advice section offers information on various mental health problems, medication and talking therapies including perinatal leaflets

Netmums

www.netmums.com

Information and support on many aspects pregnancy and parenting, local resources and support which includes Parent Supporters who are trained team of parents, available to provide information/support regularly and self help course for depression and anxiety (Netmums Helping With Depression Course).

UK Teratology Information Service: Best Use of Medicines in Pregnancy (BUMPS)

www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/

Information leaflets for women and their partners about use of a medication in pregnancy.

Best Beginnings/ Baby Buddy App

www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/

Baby Buddy App – allows you to create a Bump Buddy avatar to guide you through your pregnancy. Information about many aspects of pregnancy and parenting, including mental wellbeing, in the form of short video clips.

Relate

www.relate.org.uk

Relationship support including couple and family counselling. Face to face, telephone and on-line counselling.

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Helpline: **116 123**

Samaritans is a national organisation who provides telephone support for those in distress or despair. They are opened 24hrs a day, 365days a year and their number is free to call.

The perinatal mental health service is open from 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)

To speak to a member of the team, call:

Hounslow: **020 8483 1525**

Ealing: **020 8354 8180**

Hammersmith & Fulham: **0203 313 3033**

For support outside of these hours,
please call ~~0300 1234 244~~ 0800 328 4444

If you need this information in another format, such as large print, Easy Read or another language, please ask a member of staff.

If you have questions or concerns about any of our services, please contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on **0800 064 3330** or **pals@westlondon.nhs.uk**



Switchboard

020 8354 8354



24 hour patient support line

~~**0300 1234 244**~~ 0800 328 4444



Website

westlondon.nhs.uk



Email

communications@westlondon.nhs.uk