

## Perinatal Mental Health Service

### North West Surrey & South West Surrey

#### 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 during pregnancy and after birth. These can range from love and pride, to worry, sadness and frustration. It is natural to feel stressed or anxious at times during pregnancy - or when you have a new baby. These emotions are quite normal.

Up to **1 in 5** women have mental health problems in pregnancy or after birth, ranging from mild to quite severe. You may:

- Already have a mental illness when you get pregnant.
- Be worried because you have had such problems in the past – this will make it more likely that you will become unwell during your pregnancy, especially after the birth. However, with the right help, this can often be prevented.
- Develop a mental health problem for the first time in pregnancy or after birth.

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

#### Who are we?

We are a specialist mental health service for women who are planning a pregnancy, pregnant or who have a baby up to one year old. We are made of up of a range of different professionals, including psychiatrists, mental health nurses, psychologists and allied health professionals. 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.

- Give the best possible care, treatment, help and support to you and your family.
- Help you to enjoy having your baby, and to 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.

#### Our service users

Not every woman with a mental health problem during pregnancy, or after their baby is born, will need a perinatal mental health service. GPs provide good care for many women with mild to moderate mental health problems in pregnancy and after birth. Other services that can help are listed at the end of this leaflet.

Perinatal mental health services usually care for women who have more serious or complex mental health problems. They also see women who do not respond to treatment started by their GP. 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?

The service is made up of two teams. These are:

- The South West Perinatal Mental Health Team which covers Guildford & Waverley, Surrey Downs and Surrey Heath - based in Leatherhead
- North West Perinatal Mental Health Team which covers North West Surrey - based in Chertsey

We hold regular clinics at Epsom General Hospital, Royal Surrey County Hospital and St Peter's Hospital as well as in children's centres in Woking, Epsom and Camberley. We are also able

to offer home visits, especially in the first weeks once your baby is born.

### Which other people do we work with?

We work with maternity units, departments of obstetrics, 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 suffer with moderate to serious mental illness, including psychosis, bipolar disorder and severe depression. Women on mood stabilisers or several different psychiatric medications at once may particularly benefit from this service. During this appointment you will receive advice about using psychiatric medications in pregnancy and helping you decide the best course of treatment for you as and when you decide to try for a baby.

#### **Antenatal and postnatal support**

The team provides specialist advice, care and treatment for women with a wide range of mental health problems during pregnancy and up to 1 year after your baby is born. This may include:

- Advice about your risk of developing a mental health problem in pregnancy or the postnatal period - and how to reduce this risk.
- Helping you to weigh up the risks and benefits of using medication during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Psychological treatments (talking therapies). These vary between services. Some offer group therapies as well as individual treatment. Talking therapy may be focussed on your past or how to cope with a current problem. It can help you to develop new ways to manage your symptoms. Some services offer "parent-infant" therapies to help bonding.

- Support and advice to help you develop a positive relationship with your baby and confidence in being a mum.
- Working closely with other professionals involved in your care, including midwives, health visitors, general adult mental health teams and GPs.
- Referring you to other services which offer practical help and support for families. This may be a local voluntary service or charity.
- 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 other family members. They will want to understand your illness, your risk of becoming unwell, and now how best to support you.
- Arranging admission to a Mother & Baby Unit.
- Providing support for women discharged from a Mother & Baby Unit.
- Teaching and providing specialist advice to GPs, midwives and other professionals. This helps them provide better care - and also makes sure that the right women are referred to the perinatal mental health service.

#### **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 can be difficult to talk about how you are both feeling. It is often hard to balance all aspects of life – work, home, new baby, other children, finances, and this can become particularly stressful for both of you.

If you notice signs of perinatal mental health issues emerging, offering the right support to each other can be challenging. It can be tough to know how to help your partner, and you may feel that whatever you say or do is not helping. If your partner is not already doing so, it helps to

encourage them to seek professional advice as soon as possible.

### 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 to our service, so if you have concerns or worries about your mental health during pregnancy or after giving birth, please speak with your GP, midwife or health visitor in the first instance, and they can make a referral if appropriate.

### How to contact us

Our service is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). To speak to a member of the team, please get in touch:

**Tel: 01372 216348**  
**Email: [rxx.sabp.perinatal@nhs.net](mailto:rxx.sabp.perinatal@nhs.net)**  
**Post: Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust**  
**Room F18, Trust Headquarters**  
**Mole Business Park**  
**Leatherhead**  
**KT22 7AD**

### Further information/online resources

1. **Tommy's** - [www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing](http://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing)  
Mental wellbeing in pregnancy – patient information written by midwives
2. **Action on Postpartum Psychosis** - [www.app-network.org/](http://www.app-network.org/)  
A national charity for women and families affected by postpartum psychosis. Provides information and peer support, including online forums and workshops
3. **Beating Bipolar** - [www.beatingbipolar.org](http://www.beatingbipolar.org)  
An interactive internet based programme that aims to improve understanding of the condition. It includes video of professionals and people with lived experience of bipolar disorder, and a module about pregnancy for women with Bipolar Disorder:  
[www.beatingbipolar.org/women\\_and\\_bipolar/](http://www.beatingbipolar.org/women_and_bipolar/)
4. **Best Beginnings** - [www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/](http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/)  
[Baby Buddy App – allows you to create a Bump Buddy avatar to guide you through your pregnancy. Provides information about many aspects of pregnancy and parenting, including mental wellbeing, in the form of short video clips](#)
5. **Best Use of Medicines in Pregnancy (BUMPS)** - [www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/](http://www.medicinesinpregnancy.org/)  
Information leaflets for women and their partners about use of a medication in pregnancy
6. **Maternal OCD** - [www.maternalocd.org/](http://www.maternalocd.org/)  
Support and Information for women with Perinatal Obsessive Compulsive Disorder  
Twitter support group: #Bumpsandmumsocdhr
7. **Netmums** - [www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com)  
Information and support on many aspects pregnancy and parenting, including local resources
8. **PANDAS** - [www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk)  
Antenatal and postnatal depression information and support for women and families. Support groups and helpline
9. **PND and Me** - [www.pndandme.co.uk/](http://www.pndandme.co.uk/)  
Website and online support group for sufferers of perinatal mental illness with links to information and a range of resources around this topic. Set up by a mum who had postnatal depression. Includes peer support through Twitter: #PNDHour & #PNDChat