

# Perinatal Community Mental Health Service

## What is the Perinatal Community Mental Health Team?



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The Perinatal Team provides a community service to support women experiencing mental health difficulties related to pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood. We also work to minimise the risk of relapse in those women who are currently well but who have a history of severe mental illness.

### **Why do we need a Perinatal Community Mental Health Team?**

It is very normal for 50-80% of women to experience the 'Baby Blues' at around 3-5 days following delivery. This often resolves quickly and without support or help from professional services.

Approximately 10%-15% of women suffer from postnatal depression which often starts within the first three months after they have given birth. Postnatal anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) are also extremely common. Some of the most common symptoms are low mood and sadness, loss of interest, pleasure, tiredness, low energy, poor sleep, appetite and concentration as well as guilt or self-blame.

Without support and treatment these symptoms can worsen or fail to improve. This can impact on the woman's confidence with childcare, daily functioning and relationships within the family. Many of the women who experience these illnesses can be successfully treated by their local Primary Care or Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services, however, those women whose level of illness is causing a significant reduction in their level of functioning or are experiencing suicidal thoughts may need to be supported within our service. This is something we will look at together at your assessment.

Just 1-2 women in every 1,000 deliveries experience a more serious condition called postnatal psychosis which often, but not always, requires hospitalisation.

### **Who works in the team?**

The service is currently delivered by a range of community professionals including; Perinatal Psychiatric Nurses, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist as well as administrative support. We are an experienced team, specialising in perinatal mental health. Sometimes we have students from a range of differing mental health backgrounds working with us.

The team is available Monday – Friday, 9am–5pm, except bank holidays.

### **Who does the team see?**

We support women living in North Cumbria who are either pregnant or up to one year postnatal and who have been suffering from depression and/or anxiety or other significant mental health difficulties as a direct result of their current or previous pregnancy or pregnancy loss.



## **What will happen when I am referred?**

Your doctor, health visitor, midwife or other professional who works with you may have suggested that the team could provide specialist help and have referred you to our service.

Most commonly, a Community Psychiatric Nurse will phone you to arrange a convenient appointment. If we are unable to contact you we will send you out an appointment in the post. In some cases it may be felt more appropriate for an initial assessment to be made by a Psychiatrist and you will be sent an appointment at an outpatient clinic.

If you feel you no longer require this appointment it would be really helpful if you would let us know so that we can offer your appointment to somebody else. This appointment will last about an hour and is an opportunity for you to discuss your current difficulties. If you feel it would be helpful a friend or relative can be with you for this appointment.

At this first appointment we will gather information about what your current difficulties are, along with some background information in order to come to a joint understanding of what may help you recover.

## **How can the team help me?**

You will be part of any discussions we make as to what type of support is best for you. If it is decided that the Perinatal Team is the best source of support for you, we will arrange for a worker to be allocated to work with you. This team member will become your Care Coordinator.

They will offer you a further appointment and work with you to agree a care plan to help meet your individual needs. We hope to help you understand your current mental health difficulties and find solutions to support you on your road to recovery. Your Care Co-ordinator will also keep in contact with other professionals involved in your care.

## **Will everything I say be kept confidential?**

Everything you tell the team member and the information we keep about you is kept confidential within the team of professionals caring for you. The only exception to this would be if we felt there was a risk to yourself or to others, but we would discuss this with you.

You have a statutory right to see any records we keep about you including the information on computer. Please speak to a team member about this as there is a standard procedure which needs to be followed and please feel free to ask if you have any concerns at all.

At your first appointment you will be given the choice of receiving copies of letters written by healthcare professionals about your care and we will ask you to sign a consent form for sharing information.

## **Can my family and friends who support me get involved in my care?**

With your permission as part of our care we would like to offer an initial visit to get to know your partner and/or family and friends who are involved in supporting you to see if we can answer any questions or queries they may have about our service or your care. We will discuss this with you at your initial assessment appointment.

**What should I do if I don't understand or have a problem – or perhaps I have missed an appointment?**

Please don't be afraid to give us a ring on 01228 602099

**What if I need help out of hours?**

If you need help urgently outside the hours of the Perinatal Community Mental Health Team please call your doctor or your local Crisis Team on 0300 123 9015. Your Care Co-ordinator will complete a contingency plan around any difficulties you may experience out of hours.

**There are some helplines and organisations that can give you advice and support:**

Action on Postpartum Psychosis (APP) – 0203 322 9900

Email: [app@app-network.org](mailto:app@app-network.org) Website: [www.app-network.org](http://www.app-network.org)

Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Service – 0303 123 1146

Maternal OCD Matters support group: [www.maternalocd.org](http://www.maternalocd.org)

The Samaritans – 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Next Generation Text (NGT) Service (for the deaf and hard of hearing): also via 116 123

NHS 111 – 111

SANEline – 0300 304 7000 (6pm–11pm daily) Website: [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

**References**

Antenatal and postnatal mental health: clinical management and service guidance. NICE Clinical Guideline CG192 (2014) National Institute for Clinical Excellence: London.

Postnatal Depression: A Survival Guide for Dads (2014). Acacia Family Support.

Postnatal Depression – A self help guide (2016). Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust. [www.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp)

## Confidentiality

**‘The Trust’s vision is to keep your information safe in our hands.’**

We promise to use your information fairly and legally, and in-line with local and national policies. You have a right to understand how your information is used and you can request a copy of the information we hold about you at any time.

For further information contact the Information Governance Team on 01228 608998 or email [Information.Governance@cumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:Information.Governance@cumbria.nhs.uk)

## Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the Patient Experience Team.

Email: [PET@cumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:PET@cumbria.nhs.uk) Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 5547

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call: **01228 603890**

E: [communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk)

Or write to Engagement and Communications  
Voreda House | Portland Place | Penrith | CA11 7QQ



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