

Perinatal Community Mental Health Team

Patient Information Leaflet

Shining a light on the future



What is the Perinatal Community Mental Health Team?

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 and pleasure, tiredness and 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.

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 Community Psychiatric Nurses and a Specialist Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist, as well as administrative support. We are an experienced team, specialising in perinatal mental health. Sometimes junior doctors and student nurses work with us.

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

Who does the team see?

We support women living in Newcastle and North Tyneside 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.

In Northumberland there is access to a specialist psychiatric outpatient clinic only. This is led by our Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist.

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. If you wish, we can

arrange to meet you at a different location, e.g. your doctor's surgery. 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?

If it is decided that the Perinatal Team is the best source of support for you, you will be allocated to one of the nurses or a doctor in the team. This team member will become your Care Co-ordinator. 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 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 01670 501 710.

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 (see numbers below). 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)**
Tel: 020 3322 9900
Email: app@app-network.org ; Website: www.app-network.org
- **Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Service – Newcastle and North Tyneside**
Tel: 0191 219 4646
- **Initial Response Team/Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team – Northumberland**
Tel: 0303 123 1146
- **Maternal OCD Matters** support group: www.maternalocd.org
- **Mental Health Matters Helplines**
 - Newcastle area – 0845 601 2457 (6pm–6am daily)
 - North Tyneside area – 0845 601 2458 (6pm–6am daily)
 - Northumberland area – Talking Matters 0300 3030 7070
www.mentalhealthmatters.com/
- **NHS 111** – 111
- **The Samaritans** – 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org ; Website: www.samaritans.org
Next Generation Text (NGT) Service (for the deaf and hard of hearing): also via 116 123
- **SANEline**
Tel: 0300 304 7000 (6pm–11pm daily)
Website: www.sane.org.uk

Interpreters

Staff can arrange an interpreter if you need one.

Travel information

Contact Traveline Tel: 0871 200 22 33. Website: www.traveline.info/

If you are in receipt of certain benefits or named on an NHS Low Income Scheme Certificate HC2 or HC3 then you might be able to claim a refund for the cost of travelling to outpatient appointments under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme. Please don't hesitate to give us a ring for more information before your appointment.

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 (2015). Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust. www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/

What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?

If you want to make a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint you can:

- talk to the people directly involved in your care
- ask a member of staff for a feedback form, or complete a form on the Trust website www.ntw.nhs.uk (click on the 'Contact Us' tab)
- telephone the Complaints Department Tel: 0191 245 6672
- We are always looking at ways to improve services. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you bring to our attention.
 - **Points of You** - available from staff.
 - **Friends and Family Test** - available from staff or online at www.ntw.nhs.uk/fft

Contact details

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Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the Patient Information Centre.

This information can be made available in a range of formats on request (eg Braille, audio, larger print, easy read, BSL or other languages). Please contact the Patient Information Centre Tel: 0191 223 2545

Published by the Patient Information Centre

2015 Copyright, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Ref, PIC/367/1115 November 2015 V4

www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic Tel: 0191 223 2545

Review date 2018



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