

London Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services

What is Perinatal Mental Health?

The perinatal period is usually defined as the time between conceiving a baby until the end of the first postnatal year. 20% of women (or 1 in every 5 women) experience mental health problems during this time, making this a relatively common experience. Women may have experienced mental health problems prior to pregnancy and/or develop mental health problems during pregnancy or in the postnatal period.

A wide range of mental health conditions can occur during this time, most commonly depression and anxiety. Research shows that 50% of women with depression go undetected and do not access treatment and support. There are some conditions specific to this time in a woman's life such as tokophobia – a severe fear of child birth, and post-partum psychosis – a severe but treatable illness that occurs after having a baby.

It is not always possible to predict whether or not a woman is likely to experience mental health problems during this time, however, we do know that some groups of women are at much higher risk. For example, 25% (or 1 in 4) women with bipolar affective disorder experience post-partum psychosis.

Why is Perinatal Mental Health so important?

It is vital that women receive treatment and support as early as possible, we know that if left untreated, mental illness can have a significant and long lasting impact on the woman and her family. The perinatal period is often a window of opportunity, treating mental health problems at this time prevents avoidable suffering and isolation, strengthens families, ensures children have a healthy start, has economic benefits and helps to prevent suicide, a leading cause of maternal death in the UK.

What support is available?

Women with mild to moderate mental health problems can be supported by a range of services in primary care such as their GP, mid-wife, health visitor, primary care psychology service – IAPT (Increasing Access to Psychological Treatment) and in places like children's centres. There are many third sector organisations that also provide a range of support services. See our 'How to Get Help' page for further details on the type of support these services can provide.

Women with more severe or complex illnesses, for example, schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder should be seen by a specialist perinatal mental health team. Please see below for more information about these specialist teams.

What are Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services?

Community Perinatal Mental Health Teams

Community Perinatal Mental Health Teams support mothers who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health problems in the perinatal period to recover in the community. They also offer pre-conception advice to women with existing mental health problems who are planning a pregnancy. They are staffed by a range of professionals and offer family focussed interventions. These teams work closely with maternity services, health visitors, IAPT, GPs, other community services and 3rd sector organisations.

Mother and Baby Units

Mother and Baby Units provide specialist care and treatment when a mother is suffering from a mental illness and needs an admission to hospital. Mother and Baby Units enable the mother and her baby to remain together, supporting their attachment and bonding whilst the mother receives the care and treatment she needs to recover from her mental illness. They offer a range of family focussed interventions, with staff including psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, nursery nurses and occupational therapists. Women can be admitted from 30 weeks of pregnancy until the end of the first postnatal year.

Find your local London Community Perinatal Mental Health Service

Borough	Telephone	Website
Barking & Dagenham	0300 555 1119	nelft.nhs.uk/services-bdhvrbwf-ppimhs
Barnet	020 3317 7114	candi.nhs.uk/our-services/north-london-partners-specialist-perinatal-mental-health-service
Bexley	020 3961 3610	oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/perinatal-mental-health-servic/
Brent	020 8869 2308	cnwl.nhs.uk/service/northwick-park-hospital-brent-harrow-perinatal-mental-health-service/
Bromley	020 3961 3610	oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/perinatal-mental-health-servic/
Camden	020 3317 7114	candi.nhs.uk/our-services/north-london-partners-specialist-perinatal-mental-health-service
Croydon	020 3228 0304	national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/perinatal/contact-us-2/
Ealing	020 8354 8180	wlmht.nhs.uk/service/perinatal-mental-health-service/
Enfield	020 3317 7114	candi.nhs.uk/our-services/north-london-partners-specialist-perinatal-mental-health-service
Greenwich	020 3961 3610	oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/perinatal-mental-health-servic/
Hackney	020 8510 8151	elft.nhs.uk/service/218/Perinatal-Service
Hammersmith & Fulham	020 3313 3033	wlmht.nhs.uk/service/perinatal-mental-health-service/
Haringey East / West	020 3317 7114	candi.nhs.uk/our-services/north-london-partners-specialist-perinatal-mental-health-service
Harrow	020 8869 2308	cnwl.nhs.uk/service/northwick-park-hospital-brent-harrow-perinatal-mental-health-service/
Havering	0300 555 1119	nelft.nhs.uk/services-bdhvrbwf-ppimhs
Hillingdon	018 9548 5187	cnwl.nhs.uk/service/hillingdon-hospital-perinatal-mental-health-service/
Hounslow	020 8483 1525	wlmht.nhs.uk/service/perinatal-mental-health-service/
Islington	020 3317 7114	candi.nhs.uk/our-services/north-london-partners-specialist-perinatal-mental-health-service
Kensington & Chelsea	020 3315 8646	cnwl.nhs.uk/service/kensington-chelsea-perinatal-service/
Kingston	020 8266 6984	swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/perinatal-outpatient-unit
Lambeth	020 7188 6001	national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/perinatal/contact-us-2/
Lewisham	020 3228 9354	national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/perinatal/contact-us-2/
Merton	020 8266 6984	swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/perinatal-outpatient-unit
Newham	020 7363 8801	elft.nhs.uk/service/216/Perinatal-Mental-Health-Team
Redbridge	0300 555 1119	nelft.nhs.uk/services-bdhvrbwf-ppimhs
Richmond	020 8266 6984	swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/perinatal-outpatient-unit
Southwark	020 3299 3234	national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/perinatal/contact-us-2/
Sutton	020 8266 6984	swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/perinatal-outpatient-unit
Tower Hamlets	020 8121 5425	elft.nhs.uk/service/217/Perinatal-Psychiatry
Waltham Forest	0300 555 1119	nelft.nhs.uk/services-bdhvrbwf-ppimhs
Wandsworth	020 8266 6984	swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/specialist-services/perinatal-outpatient-unit
Westminster	020 3312 1582	cnwl.nhs.uk/service/st-marys-hospital-perinatal-psychiatry/
Mother and Baby Units		
Homerton MBU	020 8510 8420	mbu.elft.nhs.uk/
Bethlem / South London and Maudsley MBU	020 3228 4265 / 4255	national.slam.nhs.uk/services/adult-services/perinatal/contact-us-2/
Coombe Wood MBU	020 8955 4495	cnwl.nhs.uk/coombe-wood/