

Perinatal Mental Health and Birch Clinic

Women's Services Patient Information

What is Perinatal Mental Health?

Perinatal refers to the period just before and after giving birth. Perinatal mental health problems are those that occur during pregnancy and the first year or two after your baby is born. These problems can include mental ill health that existed before pregnancy, as well as illnesses that develop for the first time or become worse during the perinatal period.

Emotional wellbeing in pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of physical and emotional change, it is normal to experience a range of thoughts and feelings about your pregnancy and becoming a parent. For some pregnancy is a time of great joy; but you may also feel worried, fearful and stressed. Sometimes these feelings persist and could be a sign of something more serious.

Your midwife or doctor will ask you about your emotional wellbeing at your antenatal and postnatal appointments. This is to make sure that if you do need any extra support we can signpost or refer you for this.

It is important that you tell your midwife at your antenatal booking appointment if you have any pre-existing mental health conditions such as:

- bipolar disorder
- post-partum psychosis
- schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder
- depression or anxiety
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- panic disorders
- birth related post-traumatic stress disorder
- eating disorders
- personality disorders
- Tokophobia (severe fear of pregnancy and childbirth)

Even if you have been well before pregnancy, hormone changes in pregnancy and after birth mean that your mental health symptoms may worsen or come back. It is important to be open and honest about your feelings, as this will enable us to arrange the right support for you, we are here to help.

There is lots of information about emotional wellbeing and mental health during and after pregnancy on the Tommy's website. You can access this using the link below:

<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/mental-wellbeing/mental-health-during-and-after-pregnancy>

Birch clinic

We run a specialist Perinatal Mental Health clinic twice a month in the Antenatal Clinic at Bradford Royal Infirmary. Your midwife or GP will talk to you about referral to this clinic if you are at higher risk of experiencing moderate to severe mental health problems in the perinatal period.

Care is provided by an Obstetrician (Pregnancy Doctor) with a specialist interest in perinatal mental health and a specialist perinatal mental health midwife. They can make referrals to additional specialised support services, such as those listed below. The team work closely with you and mental health services to develop a plan of care to support you during your pregnancy and postnatal period.

Other services we work with

- **Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Team (including Psychiatrists, Perinatal Mental Health Care Coordinators and Psychologists)**

For further information about this service visit their website:

<https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/services/specialist-mother-baby-mental-health-service/>

- **Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)**

For further information about this service visit their website:

<https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/services/community-mental-health-teams-cmhts/>

- **Bradford District and Craven talking therapies**

For further information about this service visit their website:

<https://www.bdctalkingtherapies.nhs.uk/>

- **Little Minds Matter**

For further information about this service visit their website:

<https://www.betterstartbradford.org.uk/project/workforce/little-minds-matter/>

- **Family Action Perinatal Service**

For further information about this service visit their website:

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/bradford/bradford-perinatal-support-service/>

- Health visitors

What to do if you need support for your mental health in an emergency or crisis

- If you live in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale or Craven and you think you need urgent mental health support please contact the First Response Service on 0800 952 1181, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Go to your nearest Emergency Department
- **If you think yours or someone else's life is in immediate danger then please ring 999 and ask for an ambulance**

Accessible Information

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.