

PAGE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Starting well – Pregnancy and preconception – Perinatal mental health

Also cross-link with Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Perinatal mental health issues complicating pregnancy and the first postpartum year are common, with 10-20% of women developing mental ill health during this period. It is a significant public health issue and if left untreated, can have a devastating impact not only on the woman affected but also on her family unit.

The ‘perinatal period’ is the name given to the period during pregnancy and up to one year after birth.

There is a spectrum of ill health, with symptoms ranging from mild to moderate low mood/ anxiety through to more serious illnesses such as post-partum psychosis. The majority of women detected will experience mild to moderate symptoms and can be helped with increased support from family, maternity services, health visitors and primary care services, including GPs.

Who is this page for

- Pregnant women
- Fathers and partners
- Families and carers
- Healthcare professionals

Key information and when to seek help

- Perinatal mental health covers a range of conditions during pregnancy and the first year after birth.
- Depression and anxiety are the most common conditions - approximately 10-20% of women and up to 10% of fathers or partners, will experience a perinatal mental health problem.
- Early support is important and if you are concerned, speak to your midwife, GP or obstetrician during your appointments to ensure you get the support you need.

Who can develop a perinatal mental health problem?

Women can develop perinatal mental health problems at any time, no matter what age you are or how many pregnancies you have had.

The majority of women are managed by their GP, health visitor and/or midwife, including those with mild to moderate depression, anxiety and other conditions. They may not require medication and will often respond to psychological and/or social support. Women with more significant illness may require medication only or medication with the addition of psychological and social support.

HSC Perinatal Mental Health Teams

There are Perinatal Mental Health Teams in each HSC Trust area and there are two groups of women who would be referred to their local Perinatal Mental Health Team for support:

- **Women with a pre-existing mental health problem (such as bipolar disorder or previous postpartum psychosis).** These women, although currently well, are considered to be at risk of relapse or recurrence of their illness in pregnancy or, more commonly, the postnatal period.
- **Women who develop a significant episode of illness in association with the perinatal period.** A number of these women may present with rapidly deteriorating illness, requiring urgent assessment by mental health services, particularly if they present within the first six weeks postnatal.

This is also available in an Easy Read format:

For women who are experiencing mild symptoms of mental health problems and do not fall under the above criteria of women referred to HSC Trust Peri-natal mental health Teams other support is available which may involve:

- Onward referral to other mental health services
- Specialist midwifery clinic for enhanced care
- Psychology referral
- Health visitor (if more than 24 weeks gestation)
- Community and voluntary sector

- Self-help resources

Perinatal mental health services available across HSC Trusts and regionally can be accessed below:

Perinatal mental health services

Having a child is a big life event, and it's natural to experience a range of emotions and reactions during and after your pregnancy. But if these emotions start to have a negative impact on your daily life, you might be experiencing a perinatal mental health problem. If this happens to you there is help available.

You can [download a leaflet here](#) or a list of community and voluntary services is below:

Belfast Trust

- Maternal Advocacy & Support Project (Mas)
- www.wrda.net/projects/maternal-advocacy-and-support-project
- Windsor Women's Centre Mas - 02890 235451 windsorwomenscentre.com/
- Falls Women's Centre Mas - 02890 327672 www.fallswomenscentre.org/
- Ballybeen Women's Centre Mas - 02890 481632
www.ballybeenwomenscentre.org/
- Ballybeen Women's Centre Young Mums Mas (age 16-25)
- The Parent Rooms - 0289538 0404 hello@theparentrooms.co.uk
- www.theparentrooms.co.uk/

South Eastern Trust

- Atlas Centre Mas www.atlaswomenscentre.co.uk/
- 02892 605806
- Atlas Centre, Young Mums Mas (age 16-25)

Northern Trust

- Mums the Word – Glenravel Community Hub mumsttheword2024@hotmail.com
- (affiliated with Mas)
- Dads Voice
028 25648229
info@turningpointni.co.uk

Southern Trust

- Centred Soul, Newry info@centredsoul.co.uk
- www.centredsoul.co.uk/
- Chrysalis Women’s Centre, Mas 028 82622177 (affiliated with Mas)
- Homestart Newry & Mourne, 028 3026 6139 (affiliated with Mas)
- Recovery college SHSCT
- <https://southerntrust.hscni.net/service/support-and-recovery/>
- <https://mymentalhealthrecovery.com/>
- SHSCT self-help guides
<https://selfhelp.cntw.nhs.uk/organisation/southern-health-and-social-care-trust>
<https://verve-network.co.uk/> Verve SHSCT
www.stepni.org/ STEP Dungannon
<https://viawings.co.uk/> community support for social isolated/ counselling and wellbeing services

Western Trust

- Women Centre Derry, Mas – 028 71267672 www.thewomenscentre.co.uk/
- Strathfoyle Women’s Activity Group, Mas – 028 71860733
- Minding Mum, Waterside
- Christine McBride
- Minding Mum Project Administrator
Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership
Shared Future Centre
Derry Londonderry
BT4 72D
T:02871342959
- Minding Mammy Mental Health Programme, Derry Well Women – 028 71360777 www.derrywellwoman.org/

- Support2gether, Omagh <https://support2gether.com/>
028 8262217
- Mindwise Mums Wellness Project – Enniskillen
Fermanagh House, Broadmeadow Place, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, BT74 7HR
Rosie Keaney
Wellness Development Manager
07773 220818
Rosie.keaney@mindwisenv.org

Regional

- www.links counselling.com/ Links counselling service (Northern & Western HSC Trust Areas)
- www.app-network.org/ Action on Postpartum psychosis. There is a monthly online peer support group; email: app@app-network.org or reserve your place here.
- <https://aware-ni.org/> AWARE NI
- www.cause.org.uk/ Cause carers support
- www.birthwise.org.uk/
- <https://cypsp.hscni.net/family-support-hubs/> Family support hubs
- <https://cypsp.hscni.net/ebpp/> CYPSP parent support
- www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/sure-start-services
- www.home-start.org.uk/pages/category/home-start-northern-ireland
- <https://baby-basics.org.uk/locations> practical support for baby and toddler items.
- **[Perinatal Mental Health Symptom Checker](#)** - a resource designed to help new and expectant parents, and those around them, identify the signs of common and lesser-known perinatal mental health conditions.
- **[MMHA Information Centre](#)** - online hub for parents, families, and friends which offers:
 - Clear, reliable information about perinatal mental health
 - Bitesize videos from Tessa van der Vord (@**mentalhealth_midwife**)
 - Signposting to NHS and MMHA member support services.

All content has been developed with invaluable input from women with lived experience and clinical experts.

[Useful resources](#)

- **Perinatal mental health services and support near you**

Support available through regional and community and voluntary services:

include the document

(The above information in the above attached pdf needs to be placed at the following link:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/perinatal-mental-health-services>

As the QR code in the above booklet, and wallet cards have been printed with a QR code on it to this link to direct people to the information in the attached pdf.)

[Perinatal Mental Health Card.pdf](#)

All content has been developed with invaluable input from women with lived experience and clinical experts.

For further information, please visit the resources below;

- [Aware - Mood Matters Parent and Baby](#)
- [Aware - Guide to looking after the mental health of you and your baby](#)
- [Sources of help for fathers - Fatherhood Institute](#)
- [National Childbirth Trust - Life as a parent](#)
- [Perinatal Mental Health Symptom Checker](#) - a resource designed to help new and expectant parents, and those around them, identify the signs of common and lesser-known perinatal mental health conditions.
- [MMHA Information Centre](#) - online hub for parents, families, and friends which offers:

Clear, reliable information about perinatal mental health

Bitesize videos from Tessa van der Vord (@[mentalhealth_midwife](#))

[Information for health professionals](#)

This section is for healthcare professionals, service leads.

The Regional Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathway (for Healthcare Professionals) describes the functions of the Perinatal Mental Health Teams in more detail and can be found here:

[Regional Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathway | HSC Public Health Agency](#) - an information booklet for women and families on Perinatal Mental Health is available as follows:

[Perinatal mental health: Information for women and families | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

Services and programme information

- Overview of perinatal mental health services across Northern Ireland.
- Development of specialist perinatal mental health teams across HSC Trusts

Guidance and resources

- Clinical guidance and best practice
- Screening and referral pathways
- Public health resources and reports
- Training and development

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