



Southern Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Perinatal Mental Health Service

Hampshire, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Farnham

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**Please contact:  
Communications and Engagement Team  
023 8087 4666**



Southern Health



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SH01425. Communications and Engagement Team.  
Designed by NHS Creative – CS46401



## Who we are?

Hampshire, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Farnham Perinatal Mental Health Service (PMHS) provides a specialist service for the assessment and treatment of women with severe mental health problems in pregnancy and up to one year postnatal.

We are a multidisciplinary team, comprising of Perinatal Specialist Consultant Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, Specialist Mental Health Nurses, Nursery Nurses and the Administration Team. We work together to provide specialist care and interventions, offering a holistic approach to helping women and their families.

The Perinatal Mental Health Service work with women with complex/severe mental health difficulties during the antenatal and postnatal period; we have the expertise to be able to predict and prevent postnatal illness for pregnant women who have a past history of significant mental illness. Care is delivered within the community setting in family homes, but for women requiring acute admission, we have a specialist 10 bed inpatient unit for mothers and their babies, based at Melbury Lodge in Winchester.



## Why have a specialist service?

The antenatal and postnatal period is the most vulnerable time for women in terms of their mental health, more so than at any other time in their lives.

Women can experience a variety of mental health difficulties in the antenatal and postnatal period; more than 1 in 10 women develop a mental illness during pregnancy, or within the first year after having a baby.

The risk of postnatal psychosis is 1 in 4 for women with a pre-existing psychotic/bipolar affective disorder diagnosis. This risk increases to 1 in 2 if the woman's mother/sister has also experienced a previous postnatal psychosis.

Approximately 1-2 in 1000 women without any history of mental health problems can experience postnatal psychosis. Postnatal psychosis is deemed a psychiatric emergency, needing urgent assessment, care and treatment via specialist services often leading to inpatient admission to a Mother and Baby Unit.

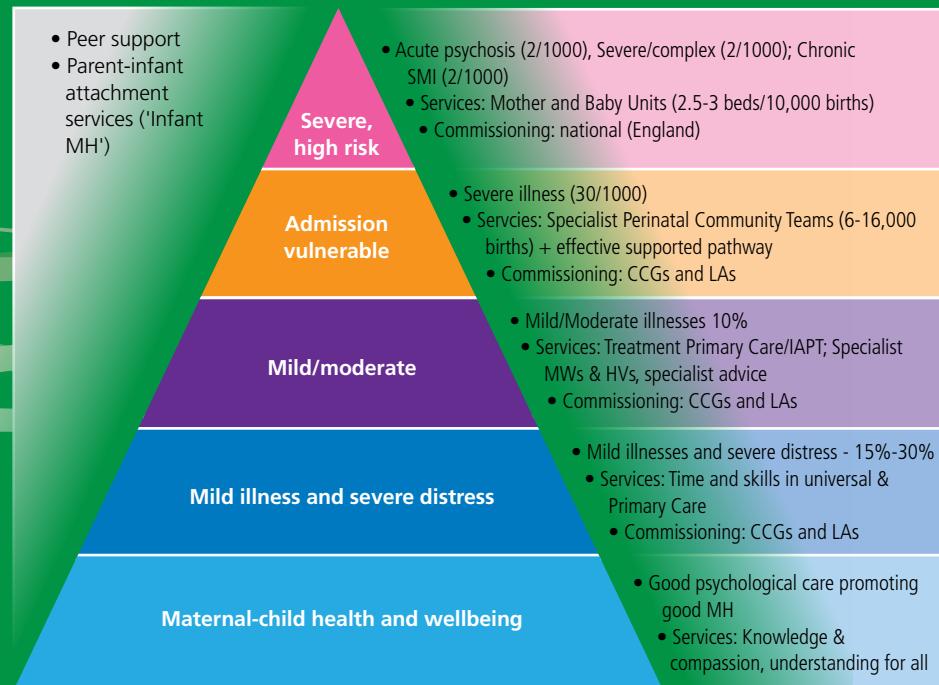
Poor mental health is one of the leading causes of maternal death. Women that complete suicide in the perinatal period tend to have previous significant mental illness (e.g. recurrent depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia).

Antenatal mental health problems can lead to negative outcomes for mother and baby, including a higher risk of postnatal illness.



## Who to refer?

We work with women during the perinatal period who have a pre-existing severe mental health diagnosis, such as a psychotic illness or bipolar affective disorder, even if they are currently well. We also work with women who may be experiencing their first ever presentation of severe mental health difficulties or women who have experienced a previous postnatal psychosis.



Please read in conjunction with our referral guidelines/referral form/referral pathway – if you require this information please contact the team.

We are a small team over a large geographical patch so we cannot therefore provide urgent assessments. However, we would like early discussion and notification of any women presenting in crisis in the perinatal period. Please follow referral guidelines where urgent assessment is required.

## Our interventions

- Telephone advice to professionals when wishing to discuss referral or medication advice (e.g. for GPs or obstetricians).
- Telephone advice to women not meeting face to face criteria:
  - Helping women to make informed choices about medication - specialist medication advice for women who are: considering pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding, being clear about what is and is not safe to take, weighing up the risk vs. benefit of taking medication.
  - Signposting/referring women onto appropriate services, such as IAPT for talking therapies.
- Outpatient consultations in patient homes or other suitable locations.
- Psychological work:
  - Couples sessions
  - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
  - Maternal Emotional Coping Skills Groups
- Nursery Nurse interventions are tailored to the family and assessed regularly, these are strengths based, to enhance bonding, attachment and communication between the mother and baby, including:
  - Antenatal preparation
  - Baby massage - an effective intervention for women struggling with bonding and attachment.
- Modelling and encouragement of age appropriate play and stimulation alongside developmental advice.
- Support and reassurance for women regarding baby care including feeding, sleep, weaning and other milestones.
- Supporting women to get out and about and, when they are ready, to join local community activities.
- Joint specialist birth planning with maternity services, particularly for women with a diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder or other psychotic illness to help manage the high risk perinatal period, and other women with very complex needs.
- Video Interaction Guidance - this is a NICE guideline evidenced based intervention that aims to enhance the relationship and communication between mothers and their baby/child.
- Support to access the specialist Mother and Baby Inpatient Unit where admission is needed. (N.B. direct referral to the unit can be made by other professionals/ mental health teams. Please contact the Mother and Baby Unit on 01962 897711 to discuss their referral process).
- Strong links with Hampshire Lanterns peer support organisation (<http://hampshirelanterns.com>) and Health Visitor led 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' groups.



## Who can refer?

For women that are not previously known to our service, referrals are welcome from all health professionals (GPs, Health Visitors, Midwives, Obstetricians, other Mental Health Teams, Family Nurse Practitioners). Women who have been under the service previously can also self-refer.

## Where do we offer a service?

All of Hampshire county, Portsmouth, Farnham and the Isle of Wight. Service is offered based on the GP surgery that the woman is registered with. We offer a service to any GP surgery within the following CCGs:

- West Hampshire
- North Hampshire
- Fareham and Gosport
- South Eastern Hampshire
- Portsmouth
- Isle of Wight
- North East Hants and Farnham
- Southampton



## Out of Hours support

Mother and Baby Unit:  
**01962 897711**

### Acute Mental Health Teams/Crisis Teams:

East Hampshire Team  
(Elmleigh, Havant)  
**02392 344562**

Isle of Wight  
(Sevenacres, St Marys Hospital)  
**01983 522214**

North Hampshire Team  
(Parklands, Basingstoke)  
**01256 316300/01256 817718**

Portsmouth  
(The Orchards, St James Hospital)  
**0300 1233924**

West Hampshire Team  
(Melbury Lodge, Winchester)  
**01962 897726**

North East Hants and Farnham  
(Aldershot Centre for Health)  
**0300 4568342**

Southampton Team  
(Antelope House, Southampton)  
**02380 835535/02380 835552**

## Contact Us

**Hampshire, Portsmouth,  
Isle of Wight and Farnham  
Perinatal Mental Health Service**

Melbury Lodge, Romsey Road,  
Winchester, SO22 5DG

Tel: 01962 897780

Fax: 01962 897781

Email: [hp-tr.Perinataloutreach@nhs.net](mailto:hp-tr.Perinataloutreach@nhs.net)

