



Bradford District Care  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Service

Supporting you with your mental  
health, before, during and after  
having your baby.

## **Pregnancy, birth and mental health**

Having a baby is a time of change. You may experience a mixture of emotions and have greater mental health needs during this time. If you've previously experienced severe mental health issues, this may increase your risk during and after pregnancy. Sudden changes in mental state in late pregnancy or after birth should be taken seriously, and advice sought from a health care professional. The Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Service (SMABS) is here to support you during this time.

## **Who is the Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Service for?**

The service is for you if you're experiencing, or have experienced, moderate to severe mental health issues and:

- are considering pregnancy
- are pregnant
- have a baby under one year of age

We support women and other birthing people of all ages in Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven, with a range of mental health issues.

We work with you, your family and other agencies to support your recovery and are available Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm.



## **Partners and family members**

Partners and family members may find it worrying and stressful when loved ones have mental health concerns. Partners and chosen others can be offered individual time with staff to discuss family needs. We aim to support the whole family by assessing their needs and providing advice. If helpful, we provide age-appropriate information for children. Please talk to a member of our team if you would like us to speak with any chosen others.

## **When should you get help?**

We recommend that you contact your supporting health professionals (e.g. midwife, health visitor) to discuss a referral if you have:

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

## **How can you access the service?**

Your GP, midwife, health visitor, mental health practitioner, or other healthcare professionals can refer you. If you're in mental health crisis, call First Response on 0800 952 1181, Bradford's mental health crisis response service. They can also refer to SMABS.

## **What we offer**

We aim to contact you within four weeks of receiving your referral. We offer online and face-to-face appointments.

## **What can I expect?**

A mental health professional will complete an initial assessment with you, usually lasting about 90 minutes. This may take place at home, online, or in a convenient location. This appointment is an opportunity to discuss current difficulties and background, helping us to jointly understand what may support your recovery.

If our team is not the most appropriate service for you, we will suggest other helpful services.

## **Who can I bring?**

You may bring your partner, relative, or friend. We encourage you to bring your baby to appointments. It is often not appropriate to discuss difficult issues around older children, so alternative childcare should be arranged.

## What happens next?

If the SMABS service is right for you, you will be allocated a team member to develop a care plan tailored to your needs. Support options include:

- complete assessments including liaison with other professionals
- preconception counselling
- birth planning to promote wellness and prevent relapse
- care coordination during the perinatal period
- shared development of a care plan
- safety planning
- specialist advice on medication risks and benefits in pregnancy and breastfeeding
- therapeutic interventions, including occupational and psychological therapy
- nursery nurse sessions (baby massage, sensory play)
- support with your transition to parenting and bonding with your baby
- group work
- information about organisations, groups and other help available
- with your consent, involvement of partners or chosen others, including individual partner assessments to signpost support



## What do I need to do next?

Speak to your health professionals and let them know how you're feeling and that you want support. They can refer you to our Specialist Mother and Baby Mental Health Service (SMABS) or to another service more appropriate for your needs.

For more details about SMABS and other useful resources, visit:

[www.bdct.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-services/specialist-mother-baby-mental-health-service/](http://www.bdct.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-services/specialist-mother-baby-mental-health-service/)



We also recommend that all parents take a look at the Ready to Relate website for useful resources:

<https://readytorelate.bdct.nhs.uk>.

This website includes information that supports forming your relationship with baby and taking care of yourself.

