

# Press Release

5<sup>th</sup> January 2017

## Mental health help for new mums

The birth of a baby is often said to be the happiest time of your life. For some new mums, however, the reality is quite different. For those with mental health disorders such as Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety, Antenatal and Postnatal Depression, this can be the most worrying time of all.

In Worcestershire, the Perinatal Psychiatry team work with women from conception to one year postnatal, this is referred to as the 'perinatal period'.

This Countywide, community-based service, provided by Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, works closely with GPs, Midwives and Health Visitors to identify women who may be at risk of developing or who are already living with a mental illness.

The Perinatal team have antenatal mental health clinics for pregnant women who are at risk of developing a mental health problem either during pregnancy or after birth. Women who develop mental illness in the perinatal period, can be referred to the service either by health care professionals.

The team are able to support women in a variety of ways; providing holistic assessments, psychological therapies, baby massage, prescribing of medication as well as advice and support. The team also provide pre-conceptual counselling to women who have a mental illness and are concerned about issues relating to pregnancy.

One patient, who wishes to remain anonymous, has said: *"Thank you so much to the team for everything they did. I hugely appreciate all the support they gave me through one of my hardest times! Without that support I probably wouldn't be where I am now. I am finally at the best point in my life and I can honestly say without the team I wouldn't be the person I am today!"*

Another lady said, *"My husband is always mentioned and is able to be involved in my treatment – he has even been to some of the sessions with me. It's been brilliant to have somebody to listen to what I want and discuss medication with. The skills I have learnt have been really useful and invaluable to me."*

Sian Westaway, Clinical Lead with Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Perinatal team said, *"We are currently supporting around 200 women in the County in the perinatal period, who have a wide range of mental health conditions including women who are currently well but have an increased risk of postnatal illness, specifically postpartum psychosis."*

For more information about the perinatal psychiatry team please visit <http://www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/perinatal-psychiatry/> or speak to your GP.

**Notes to Editors:**

**Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist, Dr H Kapadia** will be available for interviews on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan from 2pm – 4pm.

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