

Bexley Bromley and Greenwich Perinatal Mental Health Team
Queen Mary's Hospital, Frogna Avenue, Sidcup DA14 6LT
Phone: 02039613610

Guide for Referrers

About the Service

We are a specialist community perinatal mental health service, based across the boroughs of Bromley, Greenwich and Bexley, offering assessment and treatment to women with severe and complex mental illness during their pregnancy and up to 12 months post natal.

The team consists of consultant psychiatrists, psychologists, specialist nurses, nursery nurses, social worker, occupational therapist and administrators working jointly with midwives and obstetricians.

We work closely with women and their families to maintain their mental wellbeing through the perinatal period.

The service offers a range of therapeutic interventions to women as well as advice and guidance around the use of psychotropic medications in pregnancy.

For women with existing severe mental illness who are planning a pregnancy, we offer preconception counselling to provide specialist advice and management to ensure a woman stays as well as possible during pregnancy and after birth.

We encourage referral early in pregnancy for women with severe or complex pre-existing mental illness, which places them at high risk of relapse during the perinatal period. This allows time to consider the treatment and support options available. The Perinatal Mental Health Service works collaboratively with women, their families and other professionals, to plan care for pregnancy and the postpartum period. The service works in partnership with maternity services, children and families social services, primary care and with other mental health services, and third sector organisations.

Referral Guidance

1. You can refer any woman registered with a GP in Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich or resident in the three boroughs.
2. Women can be referred from preconception until 9 months post natal, the service will decide on referrals between 9-12months post natal on a case by case basis.
3. Referrals are **essential** for women with current or previous:
 - Bipolar Affective Disorder
 - Schizophrenia / Schizoaffective disorder
 - Previous Postpartum Psychosis
 - Severe Depression / Psychotic Depression
 - Other psychotic illness
 - Family History of Postpartum Psychosis

These women should be referred even if they are currently well

4. Referrals are also accepted for women with other **severe or complex mental illness**. Such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Severe Anxiety Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Personality Disorder.
5. If a woman is prescribed a mood stabiliser, please state this in the referral so that these women can be prioritised and urgent advice given regarding medication.
6. The service only works with women who cannot effectively be managed within primary care.
7. The service will work jointly with the CMHT in cases where the woman is open to such team. The CMHT will hold Primary responsibility for care coordination and psychological intervention. Roles and responsibilities including responsible clinician, prescribing and crisis management will be clarified following assessment.
8. If the woman is a psychiatric inpatient during pregnancy or the postnatal period, she should be referred so that the Perinatal Mental Health Service can see her during admission, ensure she has antenatal care if she is pregnant and that she is followed up on discharge from the inpatient unit.
9. If substance misuse is the primary problem, please refer to local Drug and Alcohol misuse services. We can work jointly with substance misuse services if the woman also has a severe mental illness.
10. For women with primary Eating Disorder diagnosis, please refer to the SLAM Eating Disorder service however, we will joint work if there's a co-morbid severe mental illness.
11. Women under 18 years old can be referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Perinatal Mental Health Service will provide advice to CAMHS.
12. The service does not routinely see women who have lost the pregnancy. However if they are already known to the perinatal team and have severe mental illness, we will continue to support them and signpost to an appropriate service.

How to Refer or Obtain Advice

The completed referral form should be sent by email to:

oxl-tr.oxleasperinatalmentalhealthservice@nhs.net

The Perinatal Mental Health Service is open from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

Clinical staff are available for telephone advice during these hours to discuss and advise on:

- potential new referrals
- women known to the Perinatal Mental Health Service

Please note we do not offer an emergency or urgent service.

Once the referral has been accepted, the woman will receive a letter with the outcome of the acceptance within **2 weeks**. This will be an outpatient appointment with one of our clinicians. A copy of the letter will be sent to the referrer and any other relevant professional involved in the patient's care and treatment. If assessment is not considered necessary, referrers will be offered advice and directed to other appropriate services.

Please note that consent must be obtained before a referral is made, as the service is unable to work with women who have not consented.

For urgent referrals outside these hours:

- *Urgent referrals* for maternity inpatients - contact the liaison psychiatry team.
- *Urgent referrals* for women in the community - contact the GP or ask the woman to attend the A&E department.

If there is significant concern about a woman who does not wish to be referred she can be discussed anonymously for advice.