Suffolk Community Perinatal Service

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

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The Suffolk Community Perinatal Service supports pregnant women in the postnatal period currently experiencing a moderate to severe mental health condition, or have experienced a moderate to severe mental health difficulty in the past which may be impacting upon their current perinatal experience. The service is multi-disciplinary, including psychiatry and psychology, mental health nursing, social work, therapists, nursery nurses and peer support workers.

The service provides timely identification and effective intervention for women at risk of, or presenting with, moderate to severe mental ill health antenatally, at time of birth or during the perinatal period, including pre-conception counselling. The team holds a caseload of more than 200 service users and provides regular education to GPs, midwives, health visitors and other health care professionals. A new pathway provides psychological therapy focusing on grief and trauma for those who were pregnant and experienced a perinatal loss. The team also offers sensory integration assessments, bespoke care plans and education for the neurodevelopmental community which is not routinely offered among other perinatal services.

Each team member works over and above what is expected to provide the best possible care for service users and each member holds a particular passion for perinatal mental health. This means their objectives are always collective and maintain the service user at the heart of what they do. They work creatively to meet the needs of individuals and pride themselves on collaborative working across the Trust, local hospitals, statutory and voluntary services, and neighbouring perinatal services across the border. Promoting early intervention, detection and prevention is a key philosophy for the team.