

# NCT Parents in Mind

- Parents in Mind is a project running in Halton and St Helens (with a skeletal service now also available in Warrington) to provide perinatal mental health peer support to local mums, and partners (in St Helens only)
- We train local mums/dads/co-parents to provide sensitive peer support, in one to one and group settings
- The support is talk based; focused on reducing the stigma around mental health issues, normalising difficult parenting experiences & building confidence and social connections. Attending allows clients to see the value in (and be encouraged to prioritise) their own wellbeing, to help facilitate a more fulfilling relationship with their child.



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## How does peer support work?

- Peer support has been shown to lead to significant improvements in wellbeing, including improved quality of life, confidence, mental and physical health.
- Parents in this early postnatal period are incredibly vulnerable, and feel that they are 'uniquely failing' at something they hold most dear, questioning their ability to parent. Peer support normalises parental challenges and the emotional difficulties that come with them.
- Shared experiences and backgrounds disrupts normal service provider/user dynamic and fosters a non-judgemental environment and supportive space to share.
- Peer support training instigates investment in the local community, and the provision is a cost effective preventative method to help avoid escalation into clinical services/medication, can offer speedy support and is also able to fast track referrals into clinical care for those who deteriorate.

[Granada Reports Fathers' Mental Health](#) ← click link



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## *Volunteers...*

- ✓ Have lived experience of perinatal mental health difficulties/have closely supported another who has
- ✓ Undertake 24 hours of DCN accredited face-to-face training
- ✓ Receive safeguarding, GDPR training and enhanced DBS checks
- ✓ Receive regular reflective and clinical support from a psychotherapist
- ✓ Provide one-to-one and group-based support for women (partner service also available) in community settings, or via phone/structured WhatsApp sessions
- ✓ Offer local and national signposting and liaison with local PiM staff who will co-ordinate parallel/more suitable referrals where appropriate

## *Service Users...*

- ✓ Are referred by a health professional or can self-refer
- ✓ Are pregnant or have a child under two
- ✓ Have a wide range of mental health difficulties and needs, but are experiencing a mild-moderate compromise to wellbeing due to the birth of a baby
- ✓ Are actively keen to participate (attendance cannot be part of a compulsory social services plan)
- ✓ Those supported by social services at L3/L4, or parents aged 16-17, will be supported on a case by case basis, dependent on case complexity.
- ✓ Type, frequency and duration of peer support is flexible – remote and face-to-face/1-1 and group support available
- ✓ Reviewed every 8 weeks
- ✓ Are signposted to other services alongside PiM where beneficial



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## Cohesive Support

Effective partnership work between clinical and community services can achieve fantastic outcomes; the family truly at the centre of joined up provision when communication is well managed.

Referrals between services may run parallel, with a 'two pronged attack' on perinatal mental health support sometimes yielding the best rewards, whilst for other families, community support following on from clinical intervention is the most beneficial.

Parents in Mind have been able to cultivate a productive referral pathway between itself and SPS/Heath Visiting/Midwifery, with PiM clients whose presentation has deteriorated being referral for clinical support quickly picked up, and women - whilst working with (or at exiting) the SPS -regularly referred into PiM.

A presentation of clinical need can often be well complemented by social and emotional connections with other local parents and partner community services, to aid confidence and build resilience and self acceptance.



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## PiM Impact\*



- 92.1% feeling that they have someone to talk to who understands them
- 88.3% feeling less lonely or isolated
- 87.8% feeling more informed about where to get help
- 81.4% feeling more confident about accessing services if they needed to

A statistically significant improvement to beneficiaries' mental health scores using a validated measure (HADS) – *'clinical caseness' is indicated by a score over 7/21*

- |                               |                |                   |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| • Average HADS score (entry)  | Anxiety = 14   | Depression = 11.6 |
| • Average HADS score (review) | Anxiety = 10.9 | Depression = 7.8  |
| • Average HADS score (exit)   | Anxiety = 8.5  | Depression = 5.8  |

*\*based on Halton and St Helens combined averages, Q4 20-21*



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## What do you value most about the support you've had from PiM?

'Being able to discuss emotional well being with no judgement. I have felt that midwives were not interested/did not make the time to discuss and support. But my first [referral] telephone call, it straight away helped me feel not alone in my thoughts and helped me not to place judgement on myself.'

'How above and beyond the volunteers go to help me. Introducing me to different groups and venues of things that might help me.'

'I can't praise this initiative enough. Early stages of parenthood can be really tough. Hence, having such wonderful, positive support group available makes life and death difference for mums who struggle on daily basis. I wish more parents had access to this service and would feel brave enough to ask for help.'

'The honest, no judgement ethos. Feeling like someone cares. You get that nowhere else...They gave me a space that was just for me, where nothing is too shocking or worrying. A place to talk and feel like myself again.'



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# NCT Parents in Mind

Thank you for your interest in Parents in Mind – for more information, please contact us via the details below:

- Catherine Briars, Regional Project Manager (all project queries)  
catherine.briars@nct.org.uk – 07702 900894
- Holly Flynn, Local Support Co-ordinator (all new/potential referral and current client enquiries)  
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[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)



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