

Infant Mental Health Service



Leeds Community
Healthcare
NHS Trust

Resources to support families during pregnancy and beyond



The first 1001 days, from conception to age two, is an important and influential time in a baby's life. What happens during this period lays the foundation for every baby's future health, wellbeing and learning. Early, sensitive, and nurturing relationships are particularly important and can have a positive and lasting impact on your baby's development. There are lots of things you can do build a strong relationship with your baby, however we recognise that becoming and being a parent isn't easy and may bring up a range of emotions for you, including feeling anxious and stressed. While these experiences are normal, it's important to remember that babies are likely to pick up on stress and tension, so finding ways to look after yourself is a vital part of caring for babies and children.

Here are a few things to try and remember during pregnancy and beyond:

- Many of us are returning to our pre-pandemic routines and activities. However, it's good to hold in mind that having a slower pace of life can benefit babies. Taking the time to follow your baby's lead and think about their needs and feelings can help you to feel more connected to your baby and help them to feel safer and more secure.
- We know caring for babies and children can feel really tough at times. Remember if you feel very overwhelmed, stressed or angry it is better to put your baby down somewhere safe and take a few minutes to calm yourself before attempting to soothe your baby. Remember never shake a baby.
- AND finally please remember there is no such thing as a perfect parent. It's ok not to always get it right, what's important is that your baby knows you are there and are doing your best to soothe and reassure them. If you can stay calm, your baby is more likely to feel calm too and this will feel better for both of you.

If you are struggling, you are not on your own. We hope the following links and contacts can offer some support at this time:



Parent and Child Resources

Playing and interacting with your infant and responding to their needs sensitively will help them feel safe and secure and promote healthy brain development, use the following websites to find out more:

Understanding Your Baby films:

- <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/babybuddy>

Understanding Your Baby booklet:

- <https://www.startingwell.org.uk/media/125033/understanding-your-baby.pdf>

Information on supporting your infant's emotional wellbeing:

- <https://aimh.org.uk/helpful-resources/>
- <https://tinyurl.com/ybcfh49p>

Parenting, play and development support:

- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus-parental>
- <https://ihv.org.uk/ParentingCOVID19>
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFCBC4068C817CE60>
- <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>

Pregnancy Wellbeing

Pregnancy and becoming a parent can be a period of change and uncertainty, and it is normal for Mums, Dads and partners to experience worries during this period. If you have any concerns about yourself or your pregnancy at any time, it is important that you contact your midwife or GP:

- <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/>
- <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/antenatal-care-resources/>
- https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2010/11/otbs_leaflet.pdf

Resources for Young People

If you are a young person or have a young person in your household, these services can help you understand how you are feeling and help you get the right advice and support:

- Mindmate
<https://www.mindmate.org.uk/>
- The Market Place
<https://www.themarketplaceleeds.org.uk/services/useful-links/>
- Childline
<https://www.childline.org.uk>
Tel: 0800 1111
- NSPCC
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk>

Bereavement and Loss

Experiencing loss and grief before, during and after pregnancy can be extremely difficult for Mums, Dads and partners. The following organisations can help:

- Tommy's
<https://www.tommys.org/baby-loss-support>
- Cruse Bereavement Care
<https://www.cruse.org.uk>
Tel: 0113 234 4150
- Winston's Wish
<https://www.winstonswish.org/>
- Grief Encounter
<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk>



Parental Mental Health and Wellbeing

Looking after your own emotional wellbeing and managing any increased stress during or after pregnancy is important and will help you to feel ready to address your infant's needs with sensitivity and consistency. You may find the following resources helpful:

- <https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home/>
- <https://leeds.omnitherapy.org/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- <https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/home/information-on-coronavirus>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/managing-coronavirus-anxiety-4798909>

Mums, Dads and partners may feel isolated and lonely during pregnancy and beyond, which may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Use the following links if you need to speak to someone urgently or you feel in distress:

- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
<https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/>
- Leeds Crisis Assessment Service
Tel: 0300 300 1485
- Samaritans
<https://www.samaritans.org>
Tel: 116 123
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>
Tel: 0800 2000 247

Dads have a huge influence on their child's health and wellbeing. If you are a Dad or are going to be a Dad, it's important that you look after your own wellbeing and access support to help you develop a strong and positive relationship with your baby. Here are some services that offer support to Dads:

- Andy's Man Club – A voluntary organisation that offers local and national talking groups for men who have either been through a storm, are currently going through a storm or have a storm brewing in life.
<https://andysmanclub.co.uk>
info@andysmanclub.co.uk
- Campaign Against Living Miserably - CALM offer free, confidential support to any man who is down or in crisis online, over the phone, or on webchat.
<https://www.thecalmzone.net/get-support>
0800 585858
- Dad Matters – Peer support for Dads and Dads to be, to help build successful relationships and support with mental health difficulties.
DadMatters@homestarthost.org.uk
0161 344 0669
- DadPad - An essential guide for new dads, developed with the NHS
<https://thedadpad.co.uk/get-dadpad/>
- Fatherhood Institute
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>
- Leeds Dads - A voluntary organisation that brings dads in Leeds together. Leeds Dads hosts playgroups for dads and kids, organises social events and provides information and expert parenting support.
<https://leedsdads.org/membership/>
07562 646 603
- PANDAS Dads - A private Facebook support group to help dads going through and anxiety and/or those who are supporting their partner with perinatal mental illness.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/367885373581814/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE

Leeds Infant Mental Health Service promotes the emotional wellbeing of infants and the relationships that nurture them. If you are pregnant or have an infant under the age of 2 years and are experiencing increased difficulties in the attachment relationship between you and your baby, the service can support you. For further information contact your midwife or health visitor, telephone **0113 843 0841** or visit

www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/imhs

**Please remember you are not alone:
reach out and talk to someone**