

UK first as perinatal team launches mental health text messaging support service



Specialist NHS advice and information to support the mental health of mothers during pregnancy and baby's first year is now available by confidential text messaging.

The perinatal mental health service at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust has launched the UK's first mental health ChatHealth text messaging service – called Mum's Mind.

The new confidential service supports mothers and their families across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland via a dedicated text line – **07507 330 026**.

Operating from 9am to 4pm on weekdays, the Mum's Mind ChatHealth line can provide advice on a range of issues ranging from sleep problems, anxiety management and panic attacks to depression, psychosis, OCD and medication concerns. The service can signpost service users to other support from GPs, midwives and health visitors, psychological therapies, benefits advisers, social care providers and birth reflections.

And it can also help with practical advice on issues such as mums who may be identifying bonding and attachment issues in pregnancy and after the birth of their baby

The perinatal service offers specialist perinatal mental health care close to home for mothers referred to them with moderate to severe mental illness, and support and advice for their families. The service also provides training for midwives and health visitors to help them identify women who need mental health care

Donna Stafford, the perinatal Team manager, explains: “Every year our team provides support in the community for more than 400 women who experience mental illness during pregnancy and in the months following birth.

“Our ambition has always been to ensure that women who need access to perinatal mental health support or expertise can access it. And with technology such an integral part of day to day life for so many families today, we hope that the launch of the Mum’s Mind Chathealth text messaging service will be a step change in expanding that access.”

Last year LPT secured £460,000 from NHS England to double the size of the perinatal mental health team.

The funding was from the second wave of a £365 million national package of additional funding from NHS England to improve access to mental health care. The additional investment enabled the team to grow from 9.5 to 19.75 full-time roles.

As well as increasing nursery nursing, community mental health nursing and medical staffing, the service introduced occupational therapists and psychologists as part of the team and expanded its peer supporter and recovery worker roles.

ChatHealth is an award-winning service developed by LPT and now used by several NHS Trusts in other parts of the UK.

The Mum’s Mind service is not a crisis service and does not provide general advice on baby care – this is available through LPT’s original ChatHealth service on 07520 615381 (Leicester City) or 07520 615382 (Leicestershire and Rutland)