

# Birth trauma and/or birth loss - which services can offer psychological help?



**Services provided by:**

Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust  
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

*Brilliant care through brilliant people*

If someone is experiencing mental health difficulties as a result of birth trauma and / or birth loss, but has not received any help to date, there are a wide range of services that can provide therapies, support and advice to people and their families.

## **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)**

IAPT services are specifically designed to meet the psychological needs of adults within primary care who have mental health issues which may include depression, generalised anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Interventions are generally six to eight sessions; goal driven and intensive. Treatments may include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), telephone sessions, counselling and online support packages. Self-referrals can be made, as well as those via a GP. To find out more please visit: [www.insighthealthcare.org/our-services/talking-therapies/find-a-service/kent](http://www.insighthealthcare.org/our-services/talking-therapies/find-a-service/kent)

## **Kent Psychosexual Therapy Service**

Some people experience a significant psychological and psychosexual impact from pregnancy and birth, including perinatal trauma. This service aims to treat and support people when a psychosexual problem has been identified. These may include severe fear of childbirth, avoidance of sex, difficulty reconnecting to the sexual self post-delivery and adjustment to body changes during pregnancy or in the post-partum period. Following assessment, if the person is suitable for the service, they will be offered a series of 45-minute therapy sessions, with treatment programmes being tailored to individual need. Appointments are spaced appropriately to allow for self-reflection, inter-session work and for change to occur. Anyone requiring the service must be referred by their midwife, GP, consultant or other health professional.

For more information please email: [kcht.pst@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.pst@nhs.net)

You can also contact a clinician directly prior to sending the referral to discuss appropriateness if needed, contact: 07870 831866.

## East Kent Women's Counselling Service

The Women's Health Counselling Service is able to provide counselling (generally between six and eight sessions) following the loss of a pregnancy at any stage from early pregnancy to after birth, counselling following a traumatic birth experience and support to parents of unwell babies within the NICU. It can also offer support with issues as issues relating to anxiety and depression that have occurred in the short term/related to a specific medical issue within women's health. Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy may also be offered. Referrals can be made by staff within obstetrics and gynaecology, including wards, clinics and A&E departments, as well as GPs and health visitors. Self-referrals may also be considered. The person being referred MUST be currently receiving care from EKHUFT or have been receiving care from them within the last year.

To find out more please email:  
[ekhuft.womenshealthcounsellors@nhs.net](mailto:ekhuft.womenshealthcounsellors@nhs.net)

If you have already received care and treatment from the above services but you need additional treatment then a referral to Thrive may be required.

# Thrive – Psychological Support for Birth Trauma and Loss

Thrive is an inclusive, multi-professional service, offering assessment and interventions to those experiencing moderate/severe mental health difficulties as a result of experiences resulting in the perinatal context, such as birth trauma and/or loss.

Presentations may include (but are not limited to):

-  Repeated unsuccessful IVF
-  PTSD following perinatal loss (including early miscarriage, unsuccessful recurrent miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death)
-  PTSD following birth trauma
-  Termination of pregnancy for any reason
-  Parent infant separation at birth (this could be due to a number of reasons including safeguarding concerns or the illness of the parent or baby resulting in prolonged hospitalisation and separation etc.)
-  Tokophobia (severe fear of childbirth)
-  Support and signposting for partners

Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is provided by a clinical psychologist. These are both forms of therapy that can be useful and effective for those who have experienced trauma.

Specialist midwives within the service will provide their clinical expertise and knowledge in relation to birth loss and trauma, and support for future pregnancies.

Additionally, a person working within the service with lived experience of birth loss or birth trauma is available to make contact with each person, to offer support and advice as required. This may include

supporting someone at their assessment, sharing their experience of their recovery journey, or linking in with support groups.

Based on the need of each person, further advice, support and signposting can be offered, for example to reproductive health.

## Referrals to Thrive

Thrive can accept direct referrals from any health or social care professional directly involved in the care of the person, for example a Midwife, Obstetrician, Counsellor, Therapist or GP. Consent must be obtained from the person before a referral is made. **We are not able to accept self-referrals.**

Please note that Thrive is not a crisis/urgent or emergency service. It operates Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Please call the team on 01227 768928 or email on [kmpt.thrivemhsupport@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.thrivemhsupport@nhs.net) if you have any queries before making the referral. The eligibility criteria and referral form can be located on the service website: [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/our-services/thrive-psychological-support-for-birth-trauma-and-loss](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/our-services/thrive-psychological-support-for-birth-trauma-and-loss) or by making contact with the team, as above.

## What will happen if the referral to Thrive is accepted?

If it is determined that Thrive is the most suitable service to offer support and/or treatment to the person, a joint assessment including a risk assessment with the clinical psychologist and specialist mental health midwife will be offered, following which a plan of care will be formulated with each person, based on their needs.

Initial assessments will take place either face to face or online as appropriate. Four community venues are available in East Kent for face to face appointments to take place.

## How can I find out more about the service?

For more information, contact the team administrator on 01227 768928. They can also put someone in touch with a clinician for advice on the referral, if appropriate.

There are a range of charities that can help to provide someone with support and advice:

### **Abigail's Footsteps**

Abigail's Footsteps are a baby loss charity providing support and counselling for bereaved parents and families as well as specialist bereavement training for midwives and healthcare professionals. Since 2010, they have worked to improve the way bereaved parents are cared for by hospitals and to better educate midwives on how to care for grieving parents.

For information, please visit: [www.abigailsfootsteps.co.uk](http://www.abigailsfootsteps.co.uk)

### **Birth Trauma Association (BTA)**

The Birth Trauma Association are a charity that supports women who suffer birth trauma. Some also refer to this as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after birth.

For information, please visit: [www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk](http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk)

Specific support for partners can be located here:  
[www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/for-parents/fathers-partners-page](http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/for-parents/fathers-partners-page)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

Child Bereavement UK help children and young people (up to age 25), parents and families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They also provide training to professionals, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families.

For information, please visit: [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

### **Dads in Mind**

Dads in Mind offer both group and 1:1 support to dads supporting their partners with mental health during pregnancy and after birth and/or experiencing depression/anxiety related to their own new role as a parent. All their support workers have lived experience of managing mental ill health and/or supporting their partner and are keen to give partners the opportunity to have their voices heard too.

For more information, please visit: [www.dadsinmind.org](http://www.dadsinmind.org)

## **Make Birth Better**

A collective of experts who bring together lived experience and extensive professional knowledge of birth trauma and vicarious trauma. Make Birth Better raise awareness of traumatic birth, offer training and support, undertake research and have an Expert Voices Group that share their insights and advice on birth trauma.

For information, please visit: [www.makebirthbetter.org](http://www.makebirthbetter.org)

Specific support for partners can be located here:  
[www.makebirthbetter.org/support-for-partners](http://www.makebirthbetter.org/support-for-partners)

## **Making Miracles**

Making Miracles was founded in 2014 after its founder experienced a traumatic high risk pregnancy and the near loss of life of her daughter. They offer professional counselling, baby trauma and bereavement care and also support and advice via one to one discussion or group forums. Making Miracles is open to all the family including parents, grandparents and siblings.

For information, please visit: <https://makingmiracles.org.uk>

## **MIND**

MIND provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

For more information, please visit: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## **Sands**

Sands is a UK stillbirth and neonatal death charity. Their aim is to help reduce the number of babies who lose their life, and to ensure that anyone affected by the death of a baby receives the best possible care and support for as long as they need it. Sands provides bereavement support services, both nationally through its freephone helpline, mobile app, online community and resources, and locally through a UK-wide network of around 100 regional support groups.

For information, please visit: [www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

# Give us your feedback

There are many ways you can let us have your feedback. Each of our wards and services have PREM cards at their reception for you to complete. This card asks you specific questions about your care and we review each comment to enable us to continually review and improve our services. You can also do this online at [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/prem](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/prem)

## Compliments and concerns

Our staff are also at hand to listen to your comments. If you feel unable to speak with the team providing your care and would rather speak to the PALS and complaints team, please contact us and we will support you through the process.

All complaints will be carefully listened to and thoroughly investigated.

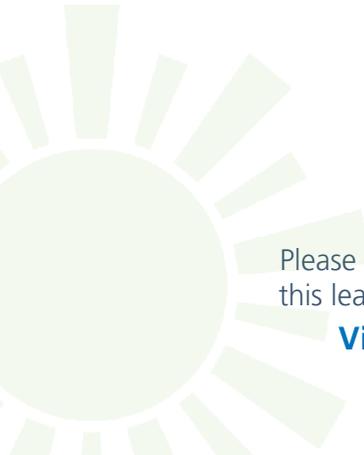
If you have something positive to say about our service, we would love to hear from you. Please speak to staff or log your compliment at [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/feedback)

**East Kent: 0800 783 9972**

**West Kent and Medway: 0800 587 6757**

**Email: [kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net)**

PALS and Complaints Team, Eastern and Coastal Area Offices  
St Martins Hospital, Littlebourne Road  
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1AZ



Please call **01622 724131** if you would like this leaflet in a different language or format.

**Visit us at [www.kmpt.nhs.uk](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk)**

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