

Evaluation of the Family Action Stockton-on-Tees Perinatal Support Service

About the service

Established in April 2021, the Stockton Perinatal Support Service offers early intervention and support to mothers with diagnosed mental health issues or at risk of developing perinatal mental illness from 16-weeks' pregnancy to the child's second birthday. The service include:



Home visits from a Perinatal Coordinator who will carry out an assessment of need and create a support plan for the family



1:1 support sessions tailored around individual needs



Group sessions to encourage attachment and bonding



Facilitation of the HENRY programme to support positive lifestyle changes, creating healthier and happier home environments



Further support from a Volunteer Befriender

The evaluation

Was carried out by the Institute of Health Visiting and the University of Kent to look at the effectiveness of the service in supporting families and to support future development.

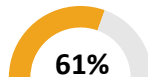
What did the evaluation tell us?

A key strength of the service is that it works with the whole family and offers non-judgemental, tailored support to each individual to meet their needs through working with local services and teams.

Parents feedback following support from the service;



felt more connected to others
"I don't feel isolated anymore"
Parent 3



of parents stated an increase in knowledge of healthy lifestyles
"It was good because we learned about portion size and healthy eating"
Parent 2



felt more confident in their parenting skills
"I think it's probably given me more confidence to know what I'm doing so I'm not having to ask my parents for advice all the time"
Parent 3



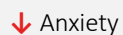
were more aware of local services



increased their knowledge about childhood development milestones

The service helps to improve mothers' mental health and emotional wellbeing.

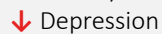
Following support, parents had:



Anxiety



Confidence as a parent



Depression



Self-esteem



If I do ever feel overwhelmed or not quite right, I can reach out and get help. I don't feel anxious about doing that anymore. Parent 2

The service supported bonding between babies and parents.



I feel like I am starting to get a better bond with the baby. It is a lot better. Parent 6

Suggestions for future development

- Continue to build local collaborations and explore options to support referrals from partner agencies.
- Provide more topic-specific group sessions informed by service users' needs.
- Extend informal groups sessions, such as Coffee & Cuddles, to make them longer-term, allowing a consistent space for parents to get together. The location for these could be rotated to allow easier access for certain families.
- Provide more informal group sessions with no specific agenda.
- Incorporate practical support services, such as childcare, to allow parents to complete household chores or work.

