

Trust Guideline for the Care of Vulnerable Women in Pregnancy

A Clinical Guideline

For Use in:	Maternity Services
By:	Midwives, Obstetricians
For:	Vulnerable Women in Pregnancy
Division responsible for document:	Women and Children's Services
Key words:	Vulnerable women, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, domestic violence, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and learning disabilities
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Assessed and approved by the:	Maternity Guidelines Committee If approved by committee or Governance Lead Chair's Action; tick here <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date of approval:	15/10/2021
Ratified by or reported as approved to (if applicable):	Clinical Safety and Effectiveness Sub-board
To be reviewed before: This document remains current after this date but will be under review	23/07/2024
To be reviewed by:	Specialist Midwives (Skylark Team), Miss Beth Revell
Reference and / or Trust Docs ID No:	10046
Version No:	8.1
Compliance links: (is there any NICE related to guidance)	National Institute for Clinical Excellence, (2010), Pregnancy and Complex Social Factors, London, NICE. CG110
If Yes - does the strategy/policy deviate from the recommendations of NICE? If so why?	No

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Version and Document Control:

Version Number	Date of Update	Change Description	Author
8	23/07/2021	Contacts reviewed, updated and added, flow chart amended, supporting detail and references added.	Kelda Folliard
8.1	15/10/2021	Change to the contact telephone numbers for Skylark Team	

This is a Controlled Document

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Inclusion Criteria:

Vulnerabilities covered in this guideline include:

- **Teenage pregnancy (< 19 years at booking)**
- **Substance misuse (alcohol or drugs)**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Recent Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees**
- **Learning disabilities**

This guideline no longer covers FGM, please see Identification and reporting of women who have reported to or have been identified as having undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Female Genital Mutilation Clinical Policy [Trustdocs Id: 11407](#)

Mental Health

This guideline does not cover the care of women with perinatal mental health issues. For guidance on mental health management and referrals please see Norfolk and Waveney Local Maternity and Neonatal System Guideline for Perinatal Mental Health [Trustdocs Id: 879](#)

Perinatal Mental Health Services include the Kingfisher Mother and Baby Unit (perinatal psychiatric inpatient unit), the community Perinatal Mental Health Team (specialist community mental health services for women with moderate to severe perinatal mental health conditions), the Integrated Perinatal Pathway (triage, assessment and care planning for women referred to cPMHT but not meeting specialist service criteria) and Lotus Team (trauma-informed psychological services for women with history of perinatal loss). **Referrals as per Perinatal Mental Health guideline above.**

Skylark Team

Skylark Team specialist midwives support the maternity team with advice, guidance and training on the coordination and planning of care for women with perinatal mental health needs and complex social factors.

If you require advice or guidance about planning care for a woman, Skylark Team can be contacted on:

01603 289931 Skylarkteam@nnuh.nhs.uk
07385 397965/07385 397964
Mon-Fri office hours

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Quick Reference (See below for contact details for specialist support services)

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Rationale and Objectives

To ensure maternity services address both health and social needs of women and where vulnerabilities are identified facilitate appropriate management and referral to specialist services.

Broad recommendations

The vulnerabilities covered by this guideline can present a variety of risks to both mother and baby. Recognition, care planning and referral should ultimately follow the same overarching process regardless of the issue identified, as follows:

- First contact in pregnancy should identify relevant vulnerabilities in a timely manner.
- The booking appointment should occur before 13 weeks to accommodate this and questions relating to age, substance misuse, domestic violence, residency status and learning disabilities should be asked in a sensitive and woman-centred manner. Mental health history should also be asked and the relevant process followed as per the LMNS guideline for Perinatal Mental Health [Trustdocs Id: 879](#)
- Where the first contact in pregnancy is not a booking appointment, i.e. with a GP, urgent referral for maternity care and appropriate specialist services should be made and the named midwife informed of actions taken.
- Women who fall into the following categories should be referred for Consultant Led antenatal care:
 - Women aged 19 or under at booking
 - Disclosure of substance misuse
 - Disclosure of domestic violence
 - Learning disabilities
 - Recent migrants, asylum seekers and refugees
- The need for antenatal care should be discussed with all women and information relating to the potential risks presented by teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, domestic violence, migrant/asylum or refugee residency status and learning disabilities should be given in a sensitive manner.
- Referral to an appropriate specialist service should be offered and made with the woman's permission. See below for recommended specialist services for each vulnerability related to this guideline.
- The Pre-Birth Protocol should be initiated where vulnerabilities are recognised to help identify any safeguarding concerns. See the SAFE icon on the Trust intranet to access guidance about following the Pre-Birth Protocol and making a referral to Children's Services, and the Trust Guideline for Safeguarding Children [Trustdocs Id:1179](#)
- The community midwife should offer routine antenatal checks as per the Trust Guideline for Antenatal Booking and subsequent Antenatal Appointments and Risk Assessment ([Trustdocs Id:795](#)) as well as a higher level of support and contact where it is deemed appropriate.

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- All women with needs falling under this guideline should receive a joint visit with a named health visitor to introduce this service and to assess support mechanisms, safeguarding concerns and the need for multi-agency involvement.
- Where multi-agency involvement occurs, good lines of communication between agencies, specialist services, maternity services and the woman should be maintained and communication in a sensitive and confidential manner should always be upheld.
- Postnatally all agencies and specialist services involved in the woman's care should be informed of the delivery. Continued assessment and support can be provided by the community midwife up to 28 days where appropriate.
- Notification of discharge from maternity services should be made to all relevant agencies and services, in particular the named health visitor, to ensure ongoing support and assessment for the woman and her baby. See Trust Guideline for Transfer of Care from Midwives to other Health Professionals [Trustdocs Id:819](#)
- Throughout pregnancy and the postnatal period the woman should be aware of all contact numbers she may need, i.e. Medicom, Delivery Suite/MAU, GP, Health Visitors, Out-Of-Hours services. The importance of informing health care professionals of a change of address and contact details should be emphasised to allow continued contact and support.
- For women who do not wish to continue with the pregnancy, referral to GP/local termination of pregnancy service should be made.
- Where a woman is undecided about continuing the pregnancy, referral to BPAS for advice and counselling may be appropriate.

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)	Support for pregnancy decisions, advice and guidance in making choices, and termination of pregnancy care
	Main Entrance A. Turnstone Court, Norwich Community Hospital, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich NR2 3TU 0345 730 4030 www.bpas.org

Background and support organisations by vulnerability

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Specialist services currently available in Norfolk in June 2021 (subject to change)

Teenage pregnancy

The UK has highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe and 70% of teenage pregnancies are unplanned. Around 1 in 20 births in the UK are to women under the age of 20. Women giving birth in their teenage years are at higher risk of adverse birth outcomes including stillbirth, perinatal death and neonatal death (Nuffield Trust, 2021). Young parents are disproportionately more likely to have experienced poverty, poor housing and educational under-achievement.

	Organisation	Type of support	Contact
Teenage pregnancy/ young parents	Teenage Parent Pathway including Family Nurse Partnership (Cambridgeshire Community Services)	Healthcare and support service provided by specialist nurses for women with their first pregnancy aged <20 years.	Suite 3, Cringleford Business Centre, Intwood Road, Cringleford, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 6AU 0300 300 0123 https://www.heron.nhs.uk/heron/organisationdetails.aspx?id=22453 https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/ https://www.map.uk.net/
	Mancroft Advice Project	Practical and social support for young people age 16-24, including help with housing and debt. Also young parents workers and groups.	01603 766994 info@map.uk.net
Family Support	Early Childhood and Family Service	Support for 0-5 year olds and their families	https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-childhood-and-family-service
	Children and Young People's Health Services	Just One Norfolk - website for information, signposting and resources including resources in other languages.	https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/

Substance misuse

Use of drugs and alcohol in pregnancy carries greater risk of maternal death, miscarriage, stillbirth, low birthweight, prematurity, physical malformations and neurological damage. Women with addictions can experience impaired emotional and social functioning. There are between 250,000-350,000 children living with a parent who uses drugs and 1.3million with a parent who uses alcohol (Manning et al, 2009).

There is a direct adverse impact on the physical, mental and emotional development of the children of parents with addictions. Women with addictions will face many barriers to accessing care and may have additional needs including being at risk of exploitation, poor sexual health and homelessness.

Substance misuse	Change, Grow, Live	Norfolk Alcohol and Drug Behaviour Change Service is a free and confidential service for adults (including offenders), families, carers and affected others.	Change, Grow, Live - Adobe House, 5 Barton Way Norwich 01603 514 096 https://www.changegrowlive.org/alcohol-drug-behaviour-change-norfolk Referrals to Thinkfamily.norfolk@cgl.org.uk . Please copy in Mat Armitage, Complex Needs Team Leader Matthew.Armitage@cgl.org.uk
	The Matthew Project	Specialist support for young people under the age of 18 who are using substances – the 'Unity' service.	https://www.matthewproject.org/ 0800 970 4866 / 07797 800966 unity@matthewproject.org

Sex work/sexual health	The Magdalene Group Doorway Women's Services	Empowering women experiencing sexual exploitation, trafficking and coercion. Support to address their individual needs, such as isolation, mental health, offending, substance misuse and homelessness. Offering free, confidential support.	61 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH 0808 800 1030 https://magdalenegroup.org/doorway/support@magdalenegroup.org
	iCaSH - Integrated contraception and sexual health advice	Integrated contraception and sexual health (iCaSH) provides free and confidential advice and sexual health services.	https://www.icash.nhs.uk/where-to-go/icash-norfolk 0300 300 3030
	Terrance Higgins Trust	For women who may need help concerning HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).	0300 300 3030 norfolksexualhealth@tth.org.uk www.tth.org.uk
Homelessness	One Norwich Practices Vulnerable Adults Service	Service supporting vulnerable individuals including homeless people and asylum seekers – specialist GPs and nurses can provide advice for people who are vulnerable in Norwich.	01603 649641 One.norwich@nhs.net
	Shelter	Shelter is a UK charity which provides free, confidential advice to people with housing problems.	Whitefriars House, 50 Fishergate, Norwich, NR3 1SE (Mon–Fri 10am – 4pm) 0344 515 1860 https://england.shelter.org.uk/legal/homelessness_applications/priority_need/pregnant_women

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is “Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”. 25% of women have experienced partner abuse, and for 40-60% of women abuse continues during pregnancy. Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, financial and emotional and includes coercive control (Home Office 2012). There is an increased risk of preterm birth, low birthweight babies and SFGA babies associated with domestic abuse in pregnancy (Donovan et al 2016).

Domestic Abuse	Leeway	Domestic violence and abuse support service based in Norfolk and Suffolk. Advice for women and men experiencing domestic abuse, can support with safety plans, places of refuge.	11 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1BD 0300 561 0077 adviceandsupport@leewaynwa.org.uk www.leewaynsupport.org
	Norwich Connect - Spurgeons	Domestic abuse service run by Spurgeons Childrens’ Charity. Support groups, allocation of an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) and counselling.	http://spurgeons.org/norwichconnect/ 01603 628122 norwichconnect@spurgeons.org
	Daisy Programme and Rowan Project	Support for people experiencing domestic abuse (in the Breckland area) – including safety planning, advocacy, practical support and counselling.	www.daisyprogramme.org.uk help@daisyprogramme.org.uk 01953 880903
	Women’s Aid	National domestic abuse charity – website with useful resources.	https://www.womensaid.org.uk/
	Refuge	National domestic abuse charity for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.	https://www.refuge.org.uk/
	National Domestic Abuse Helpline	24 hour helpline support.	https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ 0808 2000 247

Survivors of sexual abuse	Sue Lambert Trust	One to one counselling, support and group work for people who have ever experienced sexual abuse.	www.suelambertrust.org 01603 622406 info@suelambertrust.org
	Harbour Centre	Sexual Assault Referral Centre offering practical advice and support to make choices about what to do next – whether historical or recent sexual assault.	www.theharbourcentre.co.uk 01603 276381 contact@theharbourcentre.co.uk

Recent Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Women who are recent migrants, asylum seekers or refugees are at a higher risk of poor birth outcomes, particularly when there are language barriers. Key issues for these women can include poor physical and mental health, medical conditions, FGM, trauma, fears about immigration status, exploitation and language difficulties (NICE 2010). Women who are new to this country and in difficult circumstances, may have poor understanding of the healthcare system and how to access care and services.

Interpretation services such as INTRAN should be used to ensure good lines of communication throughout pregnancy, labour and the postnatal period. It is best practice for all women with language barriers to have access to an independent translator for all episodes of care.

Migrants, Asylum Seekers or Refugees	Red Cross	Support for refugees offering emergency provisions and accommodation for those facing severe deprivation. Help to build support networks and orientation to new local area.	11 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1BD 01603 623041 RSenquiriesNorwich@redcross.org.uk
	New Routes Integration	Support for refugees, asylum seekers and isolated migrants – promotion of cross-cultural integration, focus on skill building and wellbeing.	01603 662648 info@newroutes.org.uk
	People from Abroad Team	Specialist social work service to help support assessments in relation to people who are citizens of other countries. Focus on addressing social needs.	01603 222111 nrpf@norfolk.gov.uk

Learning disabilities

Women with learning disabilities can parent successfully and confidently with the right support; care should be planned to enable them to have an equal chance to do so. Barriers to women with learning disabilities receiving care equal to that of women without include inadequate diagnosis and identification of learning needs, and a lack of effective multidisciplinary working (Malouf et al 2017b). Women with learning disabilities feel less confidence in maternity staff and perceive that their concerns will be taken less seriously compared to women without a learning disability; a comprehensive assessment of needs early in pregnancy is needed (Malouf et al 2017a).

Women with learning disabilities are more likely to have their child taken into care, usually due to other social complexities, however there is no clear evidence linking intellectual ability with parenting competence, and there is evidence that robust support can lead to positive parenting outcomes for these women.

Referral to the Acute Liaison Leads for learning disabilities should occur (see below) and a 'Hospital Passport' or 'My Health Record' should be commenced if the woman does not already have one. Where possible the Acute Liaison Leads for learning disabilities should be informed of any antenatal clinic appointments to allow them to attend with and support the woman.

Learning Disabilities	NNUH Learning Disability Liaison Team	Acute Liaison Leads for learning disabilities at the NNUH - provide support for women with learning disabilities including advice about continuing/starting a 'Hospital passport' or 'My Health Record' to allow continued communication and assessment of needs.	01603 286286 x7994 Bleep 0753
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	Norfolk Learning Disability Community Service	Can link midwives with named community LD nurses, arrange assessments and named nurses can provide additional one to one support during pregnancy.	https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/learning-disabilities/norfolk-learning-disability-service 0344 8008020 – Social Care Centre of Expertise – can direct you to the relevant local community LD team
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Other support organisations:

(includes mental health support but please refer to Norfolk and Waveney Local Maternity and Neonatal System Guideline for Perinatal Mental Health [Trustdocs Id: 879](#) for processes regarding mental health management and referral).

Action on Postpartum Psychosis	Information for women who have experienced PP and their families, via the website and Insider Guides. Peer support for families affected by PP through their forum, one to one support and workshops.	www.app-network.org
Association for Postnatal Illness	Website with information leaflets about postnatal mental illness and a network of volunteers with lived experience offering telephone and post support.	www.apni.org Helpline: 020 7386 0868
Baby Bank Norfolk	Charity that collects equipment, toys, clothes and other baby essentials to donate to families in need.	https://babybanknorfolk.org.uk/
Best Beginnings	Charity supporting families to give children the best start to life	www.bestbeginnings.org.uk

	possible. Includes website with evidence-based resources and the 'Baby Buddy' app.	
Choices and Medication	Website containing useful information about medications in pregnancy and while breastfeeding.	www.choicesandmedication.org/nsft
Get Me Out The Four Walls	Local maternal mental health charity that offers support and regular 1-2-1 and small group meet ups for parents and parents to-be.	www.getmeout.org.uk
Home Start	Practical and emotional support for families with children under 5.	https://www.home-start.org.uk/
MUSH	A free app to meet local mums.	www.letsmush.com

National Childbirth Trust	For advice, support and counselling on all aspects of childbirth and early parenthood.	0300 330 0772 www.nct.org.uk
Netmums	Website offering support and information on pregnancy and parenting, including local forums, resources and support groups.	www.netmums.com
PANDAS	A national charity with a helpline, online groups, face-to-face peer support groups, helpful information for any parent experiencing a perinatal mental illness.	www.pandasfoundation.org.uk
Royal College of Psychiatrists	Provide leaflets on maternal mental health including postnatal psychosis and depression.	https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/Search/
Samaritans	Samaritans is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.	www.samaritans.org Freephone from landlines and mobiles: 116 123.
TIME Norfolk	Free confidential help and support to anyone who has experienced pregnancy loss.	70 Catton Grove Road, Norwich, NR3 3NT 01603 927487 www.timenorfolk.org.uk info@timenorfolk.org.uk
Tommy's	Website and helplines to support families to have healthy pregnancies and childbirths and through pregnancy loss, stillbirth and premature birth. Website has lots of evidence-based information about pregnancy and childbirth, alongside real life stories.	www.tommys.org 0800 014 7800 midwife@tommys.org

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Approved by: MGC

Date approved: 15/10/2021

Review date: 23/07/2024

Available via Trust Docs

Version: 8.1

Trust Docs ID: 10046

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Summary of development and consultation process undertaken before registration and dissemination

The author listed above drafted this guideline on behalf of the obstetrics guidelines committee who has agreed the final content. During its development it has been circulated for comment to Beth Revell, lead obstetrician for vulnerable women; Alison Bailey NNUH Named Midwife for Safeguarding Children and members of the Maternity Guideline Committee.

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Element to be monitored	Lead Responsible for monitoring	Monitoring Tool / Method of monitoring	Frequency of monitoring	Lead Responsible for developing action plan and acting on recommendations	R a
1. All vulnerable women are referred for consultant led care at booking	Clinical audit lead	A formalised audit with reference to CNST requirements	3 yearly audit or when clinical risk identified regarding failure to follow guidance	Clinical Governance Lead	D C

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2. Evidence of pre-birth protocol being followed where safeguarding concerns identified	Clinical audit lead	A formalised audit with reference to CNST requirements	3 yearly audit or when clinical risk identified regarding failure to follow guidance	Clinical Governance Lead	D G
3. Evidence that referral to specialist services has been offered and documented	Clinical audit lead	A formalised audit with reference to CNST requirements	3 yearly audit or when clinical risk identified regarding failure to follow guidance	Clinical Governance Lead	D G