



LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON



**PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIPS
AND PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT**



STATISTICS

In 2020, 1 in 4 births in England and Wales were to young people aged 16-24 (Office for National Statistics)

Young mothers aged 25 years and under are at an increased risk of experiencing mental illness during pregnancy and after birth compared to those over 25, with postnatal depression up to twice as prevalent in teenage mothers compared to those over 20 (Public Health)

Suicide remains the leading cause of direct maternal death in the first postnatal year, and between 2018 and 2020, there was an increase in the number of teenage maternal suicides (MBRRACE-UK)

Perinatal mental illnesses can also affect fathers/partners - evidence suggests 10% of fathers experience perinatal mental illness.



PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIPS

Early relationships between babies and their parents are incredibly important for building healthy brains.

Parent-infant relationships are important for the physical, social and emotional development of a child.

Parent-infant interactions also help to develop other skills in children, for example, when parents talk, sing and read books with their children, it supports early language development.

Early traumatic experiences and toxic stress are associated with a wide range of poor outcomes. All children will experience some stress. Toxic stress refers to prolonged high levels of stress that occur in the absence of relationships that can protect the child and buffer the impacts of this stress.

Investing in the emotional wellbeing of our babies is a wonderful way to invest in the future.

Giving children the best start in life.

Improving the mental and physical health of the next generation.

Reducing risky and antisocial behaviour and the costs they bring.

Building a skilled workforce to support a thriving economy.

Creating a compassionate society.

The first 1001 days, from conception to age two, is a period of rapid growth. During this time babies' growing brains are shaped by their experiences, particularly the interactions they have with their parents and other caregivers. What happens during this time lays the foundations for future development.

Early relationships between babies and their parents are incredibly important for building healthy brains.

I need a secure relationship with at least one sensitive, nurturing caregiver who can respond to my needs.

Supporting my parents and other important people in my life to develop this relationship will give me the best start in life.

Stress factors such as domestic abuse and relationship conflict, mental illness, substance misuse, unresolved trauma and poverty can make it harder for my parents to provide me with the care I need. The more adversities that my family experiences, the harder it can be to meet my needs.

Healthy social and emotional development during the first 1001 days:

- Lays the foundations for lifelong mental and physical health.
- Means I feel safe and secure, ready to play, explore and learn.
- Leaves me ready to enjoy and achieve at school, and progress in the workforce.
- Enables me to understand and manage my emotions and behaviours; which means that I can make a positive contribution to my community.
- Gives me skills to form trusting relationships and to be a nurturing parent myself; sowing the seeds for the next generation.

Tackling adversity + supporting early relationships
healthier brains + better futures

References and further information can be found on
<https://1001days.org.uk/resources>



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Perinatal mental health (PMH) problems are those that occur during pregnancy or in the first year following the birth of a child.

Perinatal mental illness affects up to 27% of new and expectant mums and covers a wide range of conditions, including:

- ❖ Perinatal depression
- ❖ Perinatal anxiety
- ❖ Perinatal OCD
- ❖ Postpartum psychosis
- ❖ Postpartum PTSD

If left untreated, mental health issues can have significant and long-lasting effects on the woman, the child, and the wider family.



MERTON HEALTH VISITING TEAM

Merton's health visiting team works with mothers and fathers, their families, and community groups to promote the health and wellbeing of children and reduce inequalities from the antenatal period until a child starts school.

The Team has a specialist health visitor for perinatal and infant mental health who offers specialist support to parents who are struggling with their mental health and parenthood. Also, every Friday (1:30-3pm) there is a postnatal support group for mums with a child under 1 year old. This group is by invitation only and is held at Acacia children's centre.

If parents have concerns about themselves or their baby/child they can contact the Merton 0-19 Integrated Single Point of Access (SPA) and speak to a health professional who will be available to offer help and support.

0330 053 9264 (Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Further information about Merton's 0-19 Offer can be found at:

[Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust](#)
[New baby and parent resources](#)



It is hard for parents and carers to cope with a crying baby. At its very worst, a baby's crying can make a person feel like they are living on a cliff edge and completely out of control. Stress, depression, feelings of helplessness and inadequacy, and the urge to shake a baby may be triggered by crying and it is important to know where to get help in these situations.

It is imperative that a parent/carer does not shake a baby when they feel they are living on a cliff edge. This can lead to something called Abusive Head Trauma that can do catastrophic damage to a baby's brain.

ICON is a simple message that has been designed for parents to work through a baby's crying and to offer specific advice on what to do if a baby's crying is getting too much.

A baby's crying will normally hit its peak at around 6-8 weeks:



ICON



Babies Cry, You Can Cope!

I

Infant crying is normal and it will stop!

Babies start to cry more frequently from around 2 weeks of age.

The crying may get more frequent and last longer.

After about 8 weeks of age babies start to cry less each week.

C


Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop.

Think about are they:

- hungry
- tired
- in need of a nappy change

Try simple calming techniques such as singing to the baby or going for a walk.



It's k to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you.

After a few minutes when you are feeling calm, go back and check on the baby.

N

Never, ever shake or hurt a baby.

It can cause lasting brain damage or death.

If you are worried that your baby is unwell contact your GP or call NHS 111.

RESOURCES

Perinatal Positivity uses the real voices and experiences of women and men who have had mental wellbeing difficulties around the time of pregnancy, childbirth and beyond.

Getting to Know Your Baby Videos by The Association for Infant Mental Health have been designed to help parents, caregivers, and health professionals to know how to support the development of a baby's emotional wellbeing.

Listening to Your Baby's Voice videos by Brazelton Centre UK have been designed to help parents learn about their newborn baby's communication and cues



PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT



[Antenatal Classes](#)

Antenatal classes help parents prepare for their baby's birth along with giving them confidence and information. Parents will learn how to look after, interact and feed their baby, stay healthy during pregnancy and make a birth plan.



[Family support and parenting](#)

Merton children's Centres offer a range of programmes and meet-ups to provide support for families around language and communication, learning, behaviour and emotional wellbeing, including for families with children with SEND. Programmes and meet up's also give parents a chance to meet other parents and discuss any issues with a children centre practitioner.



[Merton Libraries Events](#)

Merton libraries have events for children under 5, including SEND activities, story time, rhyme time and stay & plays. These sessions support parent-infant relationships. All events can be booked via the library website.



[FISH](#)

Family Information Support Hub (FISH) sessions provide parents the opportunity to gain information, advice and guidance on any family issue including child development. Sessions take place Monday – Friday with face-to-face and virtual appointments available.



PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT



A drop-in play session for parents aged under 21 years old with a child under the age of 5 years. Lots of opportunities for babies and children to play and meet other children and for parents and carers to meet new people and make friends. Staff can provide information and advice on child's learning and development.



[Emmanuel Wimbledon](#)

Emmanuel Wimbledon offers a variety of activities for children 0-5, including Mum and Tots (0-3yrs – Wednesdays 10-11:15am), Dads and Tots (0-3yrs - Saturdays once a month), Rabbits and Robins (18 months – 3yrs – Sundays 10:30 – 11:45am). These activities support parent-infant relationships and child development. 020 8879 7400 / hello@emmanuelwimbledon.org.uk



[Lantern Arts Centre](#)

The Lantern Arts Centre runs Once Upon a Story which supports parent-infant relationships through stories, songs and rhymes (Mondays term time, 10am – 10:35am. Sessions cost £6). amy.phillips@lanternarts.org

The centre also runs Play Zone which offers play time, refreshments and singing (Fridays term time, 10am – 11:45am. Session cost £2).



PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT



[Salvation Army](#)

Baby Song run by the Salvation Army is a drop-in session where parents and carers can bond with their little ones (0-3yrs), by gently singing and playing together in a guided group. Sessions cost £2. Wednesdays term-time, 10-11.30am. familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk



[Hartbeeps](#)

Hartbeeps runs classes from different locations within Merton. The classes on offer are Baby Bells - highly interactive classes for sitting babies (1 month - 8 months), Baby Beeps - highly interactive classes for sitting babies and toddlers (8 months - 18 months) and Happy House - highly interactive classes for toddlers and pre-schoolers (18 months - 4 years). £10.50 per session (when booking a term), £13.50 per drop in session. kimmy@hartbeeps.com



[Merton Mencap](#)

Merton Mencap supports people with a learning disability and/or autism, and their parents and carers. Merton Mencap offers forums, workshops and parent groups. 020 3963 0598 / info.merton@mertonmencap.org.uk



[Me, You & Baby Too](#)

Me, You and Baby Too is an online resource for expectant and new parents to help them think about how their relationship will change and be different and how they can support each other around those changes.



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



[Good Thinking](#)

Good Thinking is an online service that helps Londoners look after their mental health and wellbeing in a way that works for them.



[Home-Start Merton](#)

Home-Start Merton offers mental health support to parents from Pregnancy to 5 years old. Perinatal service (Bumps to babies) is for families who are currently supported by the specialist Perinatal Teams at St Georges' Hospital, St Helier Hospital and Springfield hospital and Health Visitors. For pregnant and new parents with low level mental ill health. Counselling is also offered to parents currently supported by Home-Start Merton. Parents struggling with their wellbeing are offered one-hour weekly sessions for 8 weeks. Self-referrals are accepted by calling 0208 646 6044 or referrals from professionals via the Referral Form



[Merton Uplift](#)

Merton Uplift is an integrated Primary Care Mental Health service accessible to anyone living in Merton or registered with a Merton GP who is 18 years and over. They offer support to anyone who has a mental health or wellbeing need, whether this is due to emotional difficulties or life stressors. They also offer support under the 'Getting more help'. Self-referrals accepted. 020 3513 5888 / Mertonupliftreferrals@swlstg.nhs.uk



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Tommy's

[Tommy's](#)

Tommy's has a pregnancy hub that covers everything parents need to know about having a safe and healthy pregnancy, from conception to birth. Tommy's also provides information for fathers/partners on looking after their mental health and where to access support. 0800 014 7800 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) / midwife@tommys.org



[PANDAS](#)

Postnatal Depression and Awareness Support (PANDAS) is a community offering peer-to-peer support to parents, their family and network. PANDAS offers support via their FREE helpline, email, Whatsapp, social media and support groups. 0808 1961 776 (Monday- Friday 10am – 5pm) / info@pandasfoundation.org.uk



[Best Beginnings](#)

Best Beginnings informs and empowers parents who want to maximise their children's long-term development and wellbeing. Best Beginnings provides lots of helpful information and tips including on mental health and where to seek support. Best Beginnings also has an app, Baby Buddy which provides trusted, evidence-based information and self-care tools, based on the latest research and is NHS-approved. 020 7443 7895



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Social Prescribing supports adults over the age of 18 with accessing support within the community to improve their health and wellbeing, helping to address needs in a more holistic way. Referral must be completed by a GP.



Mushkil Aasaan

Mushkil Aasaan provides counselling for Muslim women who are struggling with their wellbeing and need support. Mushkil Aasaan also run a variety of weekly support groups to support wellbeing. No referral forms are required. 020 8672 6581 / mushkil@mushkilaasaan.com



Merton Adult
SPA

Merton's case management model has a team of clinical and non-clinical case managers and care navigators, including a pharmacist, working together to meet the complex and multiple needs of adult patients in Merton. 0333 004 7555 / clcht.mertonspa@nhs.net



Perinatal mental
health service

Perinatal mental health service provides support to women who are over the age of 18 with a severe and enduring mental illness or at risk of developing one, who are either pregnant or in their first postnatal year. Professional referrals accepted.
020 3513 5000 / perinatalreferrals@swlstg.nhs.uk



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Recovery Café

The South West London Recovery Café offers a safe, inclusive and welcoming space for all adults living in South West London who are struggling with their mental health during the evening and weekends. Volunteers and staff can support to develop a safety plan and talk through resilience and coping mechanisms. Open Monday – Friday 6pm-11pm and Saturday – Sunday 12pm-11pm. No appointment required. 020 8767 8426 / Recovery.Cafe@hestia.org



Sunshine Recovery Café

Sunshine Recovery café based in Wimbledon offers crisis support to adults in Merton who are struggling with their mental health during the evening and weekends. Staff will complete a mental health assessment and provide a plan of care and support. Open Monday – Friday 6pm – 11pm and Saturday and Sundays 12pm-11pm. 07908 436617 / info@cdars.org.uk



Recovery Teams

Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon Recovery and Support Teams provide support within the community to adults with a diagnosis of severe depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, mood disorders, personality and behaviour disorders. Referrals are accepted through services including Merton Assessment Team, Home Treatment Team and inpatient services.



Traumatic Stress Service

Traumatic Stress Service is an outpatient psychotherapy service for adults, specialising in the assessment and treatment of post traumatic stress disorder. The service accepts referrals from local Talking Therapies teams (IAPT), secondary care (RST) and specialist mental health services. 0203 513 4304 / traumaticstress@swlstg.nhs.uk



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Mental health
crisis line

The Mental Health Crisis Line offers emotional support and advice to Merton residents who are affected by urgent mental health issues, at any time of the day or night. It is open to everyone: both children and adults of all ages, and to people who haven't previously accessed mental health services. 0800 028 8000



Mental Health
Learning Disability
Team

Merton's Mental Health Learning Disability Team support adults over the age of 18 who have a formal diagnosis of a Learning Disability or Intellectual Disability and need support with their mental health. Referrals accepted from GP/health professionals.
020 3513 5000 / Sutton&MertonMHLD@swlstg.nhs.uk



Home Treatment
Team

Merton Home Treatment Team provides crisis and home treatment support to Adults aged 18 - 75 years of age who are experiencing a Mental Health Crisis and have increased risks. They aim to provide assessment and treatment in the community as an alternative to hospital admission. The team initially see people on a daily basis then depending on progress the frequency of visits may be adjusted whilst gradually working towards a discharge plan. Referrals accepted from health professionals. 020 3513 5000 / MertonHomeTreatmentGroup@swlstg.nhs.uk




MERTON LOCAL DIRECTORIES

Merton Local Directories are great resources to keep up to date with activities and services available for children, young people and adults in Merton.

[Merton Local Directories](#)

Welcome to Merton Local Directories

Support, services, advice and things to do



Family Services Directory

Support and information for expectant parents and families with children and young people aged 0-19.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Childcare and education](#)
- [Community groups and places](#)
- [Family support and parenting](#)
- [Health and wellbeing](#)
- [Information, advice and support](#)

[See more](#)




SEND Local Offer

Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Education and childcare](#)
- [Employment and training](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Preparing for adulthood](#)
- [Social care](#)

[See more](#)




Young Merton

Support for care leavers moving into adulthood and independent living aged 16-25.

- [Education and learning](#)
- [Have a say. Get involved](#)
- [Keeping safe and healthy](#)
- [Local offer for care leavers](#)
- [Things to do](#)
- [Work, money and living](#)

[See more](#)




Adult Support Services Directory

Support for adults on employment, education, health, housing, financial advice and things to do in the community.

- [Activities and leisure](#)
- [Health and wellbeing](#)
- [Housing matters](#)
- [How to access help](#)
- [Keeping safe](#)
- [Money matters](#)

[See more](#)



Family Hubs Directory

Connecting families and young people with access to help, when and where they need it.

- [Family Voice](#)
- [Home life, finances and staying safe](#)
- [Keeping your family healthy](#)
- [Play, youth and family learning](#)
- [SEND support \(Special educational needs and disabilities\)](#)
- [Start for Life](#)

[See more](#)






ACTIVITY FINDER



Merton's Activity Finder is a great resource to keep up to date with all sporting activities available for children, young people and adults in Merton.

There are hundreds of free or low-cost activities in Merton to choose from.

[Activity finder](#)

 <p>Free</p>	2.9km away Premier League Kicks - Free Football Session 📍 Plough Lane Stadium, Plough Ln, London SW17 0NR, UK 📅 Thu 30th Nov at 16:30pm
 <p>£2.20</p>	3.5km away Indoor Soft Play 📍 David Weir Leisure Centre, Middleton Road, Carshalton, Greater London, SM5 1... 📅 Fri 24th Nov at 16:30pm
 <p>£2.20</p>	3.5km away Indoor Soft Play 📍 David Weir Leisure Centre, Middleton Road, Carshalton, Greater London, SM5 1... 📅 Fri 24th Nov at 17:30pm



MERTON FAMILY HUB FACEBOOK

Merton Family Hub's Facebook page is also a great place to keep up to date with information and services available.

[Merton Family Hub Facebook](#)

Follow us!

