



# Women's Health Counselling Service

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## Information for women, birthing people and their families

East Kent Hospitals offers a counselling service to women, birthing people and their families. The following leaflet outlines:

- the service we provide, and
- how you can be referred, if you think this service would help you.

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please speak to the person referring you.

### What is counselling?

Counselling offers the opportunity to explore issues in private, with someone who has no other role in your life.

Our counsellors are trained practitioners. They will work with you over a short period of time, to help improve and maintain your mental and emotional wellbeing. To help you understand or explore your grief, trauma, or mental wellbeing, the counsellors will use:

- their skills
- Talking Therapy, and
- EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing).

If you need further information on any of the treatments listed above, please speak to your counsellor.

Women's Health have three counsellors. All are Accredited Members of the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapy (BACP). They are bound by the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice and the Professional Conduct procedure within it. This offers a framework for best practice.

### How can I be referred to the counsellors?

Our counsellors will take referrals from staff within:

- the obstetrics and gynaecology wards

- antenatal clinics
- foetal medicine clinics, and
- Emergency Department.

They will also take referrals from community midwives, GPs, health visitors, and other therapists / agencies.

You can also refer yourself (self-refer) using the email address at the back of this leaflet.

### Can anyone be referred?

No. The person or persons referred need to be currently under the care of the Trust or have been so within the last year.

### Is the service confidential?

Yes. Confidentiality is an essential part of the counselling process. No personal information will be shared with anyone outside of this service without your consent. The only exception to this, is if the counsellor believes you or someone else is in danger.

### How much will it cost?

The service is free to NHS patients and their partners who are known to Women's Health.

### What issues will the counsellors deal with?

- Following the loss of a pregnancy at any stage from early pregnancy to after birth.
- Issues relating to body image following gynaecological / obstetric surgery.
- After a traumatic birth experience.
- Issues regarding fertility.
- Issues related to anxiety / depression that have occurred in the short-term or are related to a specific medical issue within Women's Health. This service is not for those who have:
  - long-term panic attacks
  - long-term anxiety, or
  - long-term depression.

These people may be referred to the Mental Health Midwifery Team or to IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme). Please discuss with a member of staff which service would be most helpful for you.

- Relationship issues happening because of a present situation.
- Parents of sick babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU).

- Parents distressed by ultrasound findings, such as foetal abnormalities.
- Before becoming pregnant, patients affected by previous:
  - birth trauma
  - loss of a pregnancy, or
  - stillbirth.

### **How long is each counselling session?**

Each session is normally 50 minutes.

### **Can I bring someone with me to my appointment?**

Yes, but only if you have arranged this with your counsellor before your appointment.

### **What if I still need counselling support after I have completed my sessions with the counsellor?**

If this happens, our counsellors will refer you:

- on to other psychological services, or
- back to your GP to refer you on.

If the issue relates to a previous traumatic birth or the loss of a baby, you may be referred to THRIVE.

### **What if I need to cancel my session?**

Please give us at least 48 hours' notice if you need to cancel your appointment. This gives us enough time to offer your appointment to another patient instead.

### **Who are the counsellors?**

- Lois Mummery (works Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)  
Telephone: 07879 813846 (voicemail available)  
Email (lois.mummery@nhs.net)
- Donna Harrison (works Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday)  
Telephone: 07879 430112 (voicemail available)  
Email (donna.harrison12@nhs.net)
- Angelina Fellowes (works Thursday, Saturday)  
Telephone: 07767 787886 (voicemail available)  
Email (angelinafellowes@nhs.net)
- New referrals email (ekhuft.womenshealthcounsellors@nhs.net)

The counsellors communicate regularly with each other to make sure they offer you the best service, that will fit your needs and lifestyle as much as possible. If you have any questions about the counselling service, please speak to a member of staff or the person referring you.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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