

# Welcome to the Birth Reflections Clinic

Information for women, birthing people, and birthing partners

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## What is Birth Reflections?

Birth Reflections is a confidential **midwife** and **clinical psychology** run service for people who have been negatively impacted by their experience of birth. The single appointment clinic aims to provide an opportunity for women, birthing people (with their birth partners if helpful), to: talk about their birth experiences; ask questions about what happened; share feelings and check-in on emotional wellbeing; and to reflect on their overall birth experience.

If the birth involved care from the **obstetric consultant** team it may be that instead of a midwifery-led Birth Reflections appointment, a clinical review (sometimes called a "debrief") with the obstetric or medical team would most helpfully answer questions and provide a similar service. The Birth Reflections team routinely review all referrals and redirect to the obstetric team when this is likely to be the best fit. If this outcome is required, the obstetric administrators take forward appointment bookings separately.

## At what stage after my birth can I make a Birth Reflections appointment?

Appointments are held in the postnatal period, after at least 6 weeks. There is no upper limit in terms of time since the birth however, if it has been several years since the birth, it may mean there is a delay while we work out how to organise the session in a way that is most helpful to the individual. Due to likely waiting times this clinic is not suitable for people seeking review before the birth of a next baby if more than 18 weeks gestation on date of referral.

## How long is a Birth Reflections appointment?

Birth Reflections appointments are usually offered as a single appointment which lasts an hour.

## Where do Birth Reflections appointments take place?

**Face-to-Face appointments** take place at Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE), Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) and St John's Hospital (SJH).

Please note that you may not be able to choose the location of the appointment. An appointment can be changed to a video appointment at the time of booking if the location doesn't suit you.

**Video appointments** take place using NHS virtual appointment software 'Near Me'. A leaflet that explains how to use this software will be sent with your video appointment letter.

## **Who can attend a Birth Reflections appointment?**

The woman or birthing person. Birth Partners (or someone other than a birth partner) can attend your appointment with you to support you and/or if they need support from the Birth Reflections team themselves. Due to patient confidentiality, the clinic cannot offer appointments for birthing partners without the birthing person's consent and presence.

## **Is it possible to have a Birth Reflections appointment if my baby was born in a different health board?**

We would recommend people access a review in the health board where they gave birth. The NHS Lothian clinic would not be able to access records from another health board.

## **How can I make an appointment for the Birth Reflections Clinic?**

You can request a referral by speaking with your GP, Health Visitor, maternity care professional, mental health care professional or another health care professional. They will ask you what questions you want to consider with the team, include these on a referral form and send it to the Birth Reflections team email inbox.

After the Birth Reflections team receive your referral, we will get in touch with you about arranging your appointment.

Appointments are organised in four monthly blocks. When the next set of appointments is released you will be offered the first available appointment date. We will give you at least seven days' notice of this appointment. Please consider your appointment carefully. NHS Lothian's guidance states that if you refuse two reasonable offers of appointment, you may need to seek a new referral by going back to the person who referred you to us, e.g. your GP / Health Visitor, and your waiting time may start again.

## **What should I do if I cannot attend or no longer require my appointment?**

Phone and tell us as soon as possible - we can then give that appointment to someone else who needs it. We can arrange a new appointment for you however there is likely to be an additional wait. If you cancel an agreed appointment your waiting time will start again. If you cancel an accepted offer for a third time then your referral will be removed from the waiting list. Rather than book and then cancel, please consider if you need to advise us of a period of unavailability instead.

## **What happens if I do not attend my appointment?**

If you have not told us you cannot attend, you will be removed from the waiting list. A letter will be sent to you and your referrer to explain this. You can seek a new referral from your GP, Health Visitor, Family Nurse, or any health or maternity care professional.

## **What happens after my appointment?**

We aim for the Birth Reflections Clinic experience to be a therapeutic opportunity. If further supports from other services are agreed details of this will be shared in a brief acknowledgement letter that is routinely copied to GP and referrer.

If you had any further questions please feel free to contact the team using the phone number on your letter.