



Perinatal Mental Health Service

**Mother & Baby Unit**

**NHS**  
SCOTLAND

*“Throughout my illness I was treated with great care and respect by all the staff. We cannot thank you enough for your professionalism and compassion at such a difficult time. It is no exaggeration to say that you helped to give us our lives back.”*



Perinatal Mental Health Service  
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**NHS**  
Lothian

**Information leaflet  
for relatives and friends**



## Introduction

The **Mental Health Mother and Baby unit** has six beds and six cots and admits mother and baby together where the child is under one year old. This means that women can receive appropriate care and treatment for their mental illness, while being able to maintain and develop their parenting role and relationship with their infant.

## Visiting

Visitors are welcome each day between 2pm and 4pm and 6.30pm and 8pm. Children and toddlers are also welcome to visit, but do require to be supervised during visits. More flexible arrangements can be made for dads/partners, and visitors travelling from a distance (outwith the Lothian region). These can be discussed and negotiated with staff on an individual basis.

## During inpatient stay

There are no payphone facilities within the Mother and Baby Unit, and women are generally permitted to use mobile phones within the area. The main direct line can be used to communicate where mobile phone use is limited or unavailable.

A multi-disciplinary team of staff will care for women and babies throughout their stay, comprising medical and nursing staff and various allied health professionals. The MBU staff team are interested in supporting your role in the family during admission, and are happy to answer any queries at any time. Staff may be approached via telephone, or directly, during visiting. Again, staff recognise the importance of maintaining family time during this period of separation, and support and encourage family members to be involved in the care of infants during visits to the unit.

Visitors are asked to respect the needs of all women and babies in the unit. Therefore we ask that the sitting room is used only by women and babies and not by visitors, unless agreement is sought in advance.

On admission to the unit there is usually a period of assessment over the first 48-72 hours. Women usually require a settling-in period to become familiar with the unit environment, expectations of admission, and the staff team. The staff team will also need some time to get to know women, babies and family members. Observation levels and their meaning, and any restrictions, will be discussed and explained to you whilst visiting your family. Throughout admission, should there be any issues or concerns, these should be raised in the first instance with the 'nurse-in-charge'.

## Access

As we are a regional service, families often require to travel a distance. The following can be accessed:

- The hospital restaurant and coffee lounge are on the second floor. Vending machines are also available in the coffee lounge. Staff can give a "discount" voucher on request.
- For families, relatives and friends travelling from outwith Lothian, staff may be able to advise on available accommodation sources in the local area, e.g. B&B's, hotels. There is no access to onsite residential provision for families.
- Families who may have practical or financial concerns regarding travel for visiting purposes may be able to seek support/resources via their Local Authority, dependent on individual circumstances.

## Preparing for discharge

As a family member you may be involved in the planning process for passes and discharge home, and any meetings required. A feedback questionnaire on your experience as a family member during this time will be sought after discharge – this gives us valuable feedback, to maintain quality in our service.

### Things your family member may need when admitted

- A few changes of comfortable clothes, shoes, coat or jacket
- Nightwear, dressing gown, slippers
- Toiletries
- Telephone numbers and contacts, mobile phone and charger
- Current medication

### Things to bring for the baby

- Nappies, nappy sacks and wipes
- Preferred breast pump
- Bottles and teats
- Day/night clothes and coat
- Red book
- Baby toiletries
- Formula milk
- Dummies and soothers
- Preferred blanket & toys
- Current medication