

# Conceptual framework on barriers and facilitators to implementing perinatal mental health care and treatment for women: the MATRIx evidence synthesis

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## Plain language summary

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## Plain language summary

**M**ental health problems affect one in five women during pregnancy and the first year after birth (the perinatal period). These include anxiety, depression and stress-related conditions. Mental health problems can have a negative effect on women, their partners and their children. They are also a leading cause of maternal death. It is therefore important that women who experience mental health problems get the care and treatment they need. However, only about half of women with perinatal mental health problems are identified by health services and even fewer receive treatment.

This research aimed to understand what factors help or prevent women getting care or treatment for perinatal mental health problems. We did this by pulling together the findings from existing research in three phases. In phase 1 we reviewed the evidence from research studies to understand why it has been difficult for health services to assess, care for and treat women with perinatal mental health problems. In phase 2 we reviewed evidence from women's perspectives on all of the factors that prevent women from being able to get the care and treatment they need. In phase 3 we worked with a panel of women, health professionals (such as general practitioners and midwives) and health service managers to look at the findings from phases 1 and 2. We then developed frameworks that give a clear overview of factors that help or prevent women getting care and treatment. These frameworks show 39 factors that help women access services, and 66 factors that prevent access.

Based on these results we have developed guidance for government, NHS service managers and health professionals, such as general practitioners, midwives, health visitors, nurses and wider teams such as receptionists. This will be shared widely with health services and professionals who support women during pregnancy and after birth to improve perinatal mental health services so that care meets women's needs.



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