

October is the month that highlights World Mental Health Day, and at Home-Start it's something that not only are we proud to support, but we're also keen to highlight how mental health in pregnant women needs addressing.

1 in 6 pregnant women are affected by mental distress.....These mental health issues, if not dealt with early, can affect the relationship between mother and child and impact on a child's long term development, the effects of which can last a lifetime.

The prevalence of perinatal mental health problems is high with estimates suggesting that around a fifth of women experience ante-natal anxiety and or depression, and even higher numbers of women experience postnatal anxiety/depression.

We at Home-Start know that the needs of local pregnant women who are experiencing poor mental health is high, and we know that in many cases it's charities, like Home-Start who are offering crucial support.

Experience has taught us that by placing a Home-Start volunteer with the family before the birth or as soon as possible after delivery, a trusting and enabling relationship can develop and help alleviate or prevent lower levels of mental health issues.

We'd encourage all pregnant women to come forward at an early stage, when they are beginning to feel low, and ask for some emotional support.

Leaving it can sometimes make things worse and it's always good to know there's someone there to listen, no matter how small their worries are.

One mum supported by Home-Start said: "I'd suffered severe post natal depression with my first child, and I was so scared it would happen to me again during my second pregnancy. I contacted my local Home-Start and shared my concerns with them. I was offered a Home-Start volunteer and in those last days of my pregnancy, she came out once a week, she just listened, she never judged, and never thought I was being over anxious! I cannot thank Home-Start enough, what they do so well, is provide you with some solid foundations, to help you be the best mum you can be for your baby."

If you'd like to find out more about Home-Start, or to volunteer for one of the seven Home-Starts across Greater Manchester, visit- www.gmhomestarts.org.uk