

The 'baby blues'

A MOTHER suffering from post-natal depression was told to go home and listen to some relaxing music by the NHS.

Sally Tyrrell, 36, was left too frightened to leave the house after being struck down with debilitating anxiety following the birth of her second child.

But a psychiatrist sent her home with an instruction to find soothing music on a website.

Two weeks later, after confessing to her husband that she was thinking about suicide, she saw a mental health team who offered little help but asked for her height, weight and eye colour in case she 'went missing'.

The desperately ill mother-of-two was then told she could face a five-month wait for counselling, before finding her own help through a charity.

Mrs Tyrrell, from Hamilton, Lanarkshire, has now spoken out about the NHS's failures following the tragic case of another mother with post-natal depression.

Erin Sutherland, 36, was jailed two months ago for smothering her

By **VICTORIA ALLEN**

baby after being refused medical support because her daughter was more than six months old.

Mrs Tyrrell, a campaigner for women suffering from PND, said: 'I don't in any way condone what she did, but Erin was in a terrible mental state, which she should not have been allowed to get into.'

'To not give her any assistance was ridiculous, and this was one of the worst examples of what can happen when the NHS does not do enough.'

In her own case, she at first accepted what she was told by professionals, but is now 'infuriated' by how the health service let her down.

The new mother's symptoms began ten days after giving birth to daughter Molly, when her husband returned to work and she was suddenly gripped with panic about caring for two young children.

From being a working mother who took everything in her stride, the 36-year-old was suddenly terrified

As one woman is advised to try gentle music to help a critical condition, what is the NHS doing to tackle post-natal depression?

to even go to the supermarket and sought help from her GP.

But despite being transferred to a crisis management team, in an appointment through which she cried constantly, she was sent home and told to listen to relaxing music on self-help website Moodjuice.

'I was in such a state I couldn't even tap in the words Moodjuice into my laptop,' she said. 'I didn't do it but I feel sure that listening to some pleasant music would have been no help.'

'Three days later I was sat with my husband and children at home and I remember thinking, I don't want to be here any more. The only way for the pain to go away was to stop living.'

'It all happened so suddenly.' So depressed she was struggling to get out of bed, Mrs Tyrrell was sent to a mental health team two weeks later.

Still waiting for anti-depressants she had been prescribed by the doctor to start working, this only made things worse.

'It was basically a form-filling exercise,' the accounts manager said. 'They asked for my height, weight and eye colour, and I was told it was in case I went missing.'

'Of course that plants a seed where you start thinking, is that something I would do? It felt like another nail in the coffin, that I couldn't get back from this and it was the last thing I needed to hear. I didn't know where to go next. I sat in my car after the appointment and was just in floods of tears.'

The NHS failed Mrs Tyrrell,

who lives with husband Paul, her seven-year-old son Max and two-year-old daughter Molly, over a period of weeks, despite the best efforts of her GP.

The final straw came when she was told she faced a potential wait of 21 weeks for counselling.

Instead, Mrs Tyrrell was able to get the help she needed within a few days instead from Bluebell PND Counselling Service, a Glasgow-based charity offering its services for a fee, or a donation for those in greatest need.

TWO years on, and now running support groups for other mothers in Hamilton and Uddingston, she describes herself as 'recovering' from post-natal depression. She said: 'Since this has happened to me, the NHS has improved and it is not all doom and gloom.'

'But when I was given a 21-week wait for counselling, I didn't think I would still be alive in 21 weeks without professional help.'

'Women need to be protected and helped, no matter what age their baby or their circumstances. I want women who in the future are diagnosed with PND to have all the right support services available to them when they need them.'

Maria Docherty, associate director of mental health nursing at NHS Lanarkshire, said: 'We have a Perinatal Mental Health Liaison Service which has been in

operation since October 2014. It is a community-based service for women of childbearing age with mental health needs and offers assessment, treatment and preconception advice for women considered to be at risk of mental illness.'

'NHS Lanarkshire has always recognised the value of listening to the experience of the people accessing our services as their feedback has allowed us to review and improve the services we provide.'

'As such, when Sally contacted us to say she felt our services could be more responsive and user and family-centred, we invited her to become an integral member of the design team which was put together during the planning stage of the Perinatal Mental Health Liaison Service.'

A Scottish Government spokesman added: 'All pregnant women in Scotland are screened for mental health issues during pregnancy and can be referred to perinatal mental health services if required.'

'All NHS Boards provide perinatal mental health services and support for postnatal depression and we expect access to these services to be based on the clinical needs of the women in that area.'

'We are investing an additional £100million in mental health over the next five years - partly to improve access to services like this. Latest figures show that the average wait for psychological therapies in NHS Lanarkshire is nine weeks, and we are working to bring this down even further.'

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DANGER ON THE SCHOOL RUN

A LEADING sleep doctor has warned that our stressful working lives are putting us in danger during the morning commute.

Checking emails at night, staying up late to finish projects and working full-time while juggling parenthood are all putting drivers at extra risk.

The hours between 5am and 8am, when many people begin their drive to work, are among of the most dangerous on the road, according to Dr Tom Mackay, clinical director of the Department of Sleep Medicine at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

In 2013, almost 40 people died or were seriously injured in car crashes caused by tiredness, with 107 collisions a result of driver fatigue.

Dr Mackay warns the pace of modern working life is making the drive to work more risky.

He said: 'Driver fatigue is a growing problem. People are trying to jam too much into 24 hours because of work pressures and deadlines - they work late and give up sleep to find more time.'

'They are taking iPads to bed to catch up on emails, but the light from these dampens down melatonin, the hormone needed to obtain a deeper sleep and is triggered by darkness.'

A stressful job only makes matters worse after



Concern: Stress can have effect on school run finally getting home, getting into bed and turning out the light.

'If you are stressed,' the sleep expert said, 'It creates chemicals like adrenaline and dopamine. These are driven by stress and should be switched off overnight - if their levels are too high, it affects the rhythm and quality of sleep.'

'During the day, if you have deadlines to