

# HOW COULD YOU NOT LOVE THIS BABY?

It's meant to be love at first sight, but as many as one in five mothers find they cannot bond with their new baby, leading to feelings of shame and inadequacy.

**Eleni Kyriacou** talks to three women about their struggles

When Sarah's son, Joe, was 18 months old she remembers thinking, "I don't know who you are, I don't know what you are and I don't know what to do with you." I'd pick him up if he cried, but I couldn't play with him or interact.'

Despite a planned pregnancy and a happy relationship with her husband, Sarah, an administrator from Oxford, found herself living out the ultimate taboo. She was a new mother who couldn't bond with her child. From the moment that blue line appears on the

pregnancy testing kit, expectant mothers are bombarded with messages all telling the same tale: that as soon as they hold their newborn child they'll experience a deep, unconditional love. So powerful is this love that it will make any monotony, isolation and exhaustion they may encounter on their journey into motherhood worthwhile.

While that love usually does take hold and a deep bond develops between most new mothers and their babies, it is certainly not a given. There are

