
Six tips for the Perinatal Mental Health Development Fund

30TH AUGUST 2016 | ANNA FRANCE-WILLIAMS



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Last week was an exciting week for the [Mums and Babies in Mind \(MABIM\)](#) team. NHS England launched a [perinatal mental health community service development fund](#). This is the first opportunity for local services to get their hands on a slice of the £365m promised in January by David Cameron to support the development of perinatal mental health services.

The fund is for Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs) and NHS organisations and will enable early investment either:

- for the expansion of existing specialist community teams into a wider geography, or
- to resource small new teams with limited provision to meet the needs of the population more comprehensively.

For more detailed information on how this funding and how it works click [here](#).

This is a wonderful opportunity for local partners to create or develop a specialist community team. More than 40% of areas in the UK have no [specialist community perinatal](#)

[mental health team](#), and those that do often fail to reach accepted standards. In this tight financial climate, additional funding will be the enabler that many keen commissioners and providers need to close the gaps in provision.

There is a short window in which to submit bids: The application process was launched on 19th August and bids must be submitted by **16th September**. We are supporting the four [Mums and Babies in Mind \(MABIM\) sites](#) to develop their bids, and here we've summarised six top tips for others putting together an application.

1. Follow the guidance carefully.

It sounds obvious, but it's important. NHS England published clear guidance for applicants and there are quite precise expectations for the type of service that will be created: the funding must be specialist community perinatal mental health services, meeting national quality standards set out by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and NICE.

2. Consider your reach.

Ideally, to have a population large enough to justify a meaningful team, you'll need a birth population of between 6000 and 15000 births. This is likely to mean that a number of CCGs need to work together and to consider a manageable location and geography for the new service. Eventually, you might expect to see around 300/400 women per 10,000 deliveries, but the service will build up to this gradually so you will need to consider earlier targets (eg. 30% in year 1, 50% in year 2 etc).

3. Work in partnership.

Bids should demonstrate the involvement and agreement from key local partners, including maternity and health visiting services, mental health providers, the local strategic clinical networks and the nearest Mother and Baby Unit. You should also aim to include some service user representatives in the development of your proposal.

4. Consider how to develop specialist expertise.

Newly recruited staff will not necessarily have specialist perinatal skills so consider the time, training and experience they will need. This might involve, for example, two days training with an expert, followed by secondment to a nearby service for four to eight weeks part-time. If your chosen service provider does not already deliver specialist perinatal services, it will be important to identify another provider with a specialist service that can offer training, advice, mentoring and secondment posts and include these costs in the bid.

5. Agree a realistic phased approach to the development of the service.

This might include phased introduction of different staff roles, service functions and/or geographical coverage. We feel that the priority for any new service should be the recruitment of a consultant perinatal psychiatrist, team manager and high quality community mental health nurse. This [guidance from the Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) sets out the staffing required in a team when it is fully up and running.

6. Consider quality.

Your bid should set out how the service will adhere to and audit [NICE guidance](#). The team should also join and actively participate in the [Perinatal Quality Network](#). There will be costs involved in this (eg. Membership fee, travel for staff to attend annual forum and peer reviews), which should be included in your bid. Finally, the bid should also include an annual training budget so all staff can have a mandatory rolling programme of updating and training.

We hope that these tips are helpful for anyone developing an application for the development fund. [The Mums and Babies in Mind team](#) are looking forward to seeing and supporting the creation of important new specialist community teams.



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About Mums and Babies in Mind

[Mums and Babies in Mind](#) supports local leaders in four areas of England to improve care and quality of life for mums with mental health problems during pregnancy and the first year of life, and their babies. Mums and Babies in Mind is a [Maternal Mental Health](#)

[Alliance](#) project, hosted by the [Mental Health Foundation](#) and funded by the [Big Lottery Fund](#). It lasts for three years, until September 2018.

Connect with MABIM

COMING SOON....we will be launching the Mums and Babies online hub in September 2016. This will be hosted on this website and will showcase our work and give local leaders access to tools for improving their perinatal mental health services.

- Email us at mabim@maternalmentalhealthalliance.org to subscribe to our blog and newsletter
- Follow the MMHA on Twitter [@MMHAlliance](https://twitter.com/MMHAlliance) using #MABIM to tweet about your local perinatal mental health services and stories (lessons to share, services developed, stories to tell)

» GET IN TOUCH

We'd love to hear from you. Please email us at mabim@maternalmentalhealthalliance.org if:

- you have developed or improved a local perinatal mental health service
- you have lessons you'd like to share with others
- you are a woman with lived experience who wants to share your story with others