

Celebrating 10 years! Help fund the next 10

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Perinatal mental health referrals at record high

According to research by the Royal College of Psychiatrists:

- A record **93,494** women were referred to perinatal mental health (PMH) services in England alone last year.
- Just **40,411** pregnant women and new mums had contact with PMH services compared to the target of at least 57,000; a **shortfall of over 16,000**.

The events of the last two years have had a huge impact on families and **increased PMH risks** for pregnant women and new mums. At the same time, the health, care and voluntary sector workforce is exhausted and facing increasingly higher demands on already over-stretched services.

It is therefore vital that the true level of demand for services is reassessed in light of the pandemic's impact and the essential services on which women, babies and families depend are adequately funded and resourced.

GLOBAL PMH: The impact of war on women, babies and families



Despite the MMHA's UK focus, with recent news from Ukraine, it is important to acknowledge the issues impacting the PMH of pregnant women and new mothers further afield.

Our thoughts are with families facing trauma which is likely to be felt for generations.

NEW PROJECT:

Listening to and amplifying the voices of seldom-heard mothers to improve PMH care



The MMHA is pleased to have launched the **Amplifying Maternal Voices (AMV) Project** in collaboration with MMHA member, the Mental Health Foundation. The AMV Project will focus on understanding the experiences of new mothers from seldom-heard communities, including young mums and those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Planned AMV Project outputs include a toolkit to help local communities influence service development and a conference. Further details to come.

Together, we will work towards achieving equal PMH care for all women, babies, and families.

“ I didn't have the family support and professionals lacked understanding of refugee experience. I would like my shared experience to help with the development of local services for women who do not have any family support. ”

Fatima, mother and refugee with experience of PMH problems

Please do all you can to 'Make all care count' for women and families across the UK →

IN THIS EDITION
of the Everyone's Business
campaign eBulletin, you'll:

→ Discover the latest independent economic research commissioned by the MMHA.

→ Find updates on the UK perinatal mental health landscape.

→ Hear our new CEO's first impressions of working with the Alliance.

New economic research: addressing gaps in PMH care



Changes to standard care for women experiencing common maternal mental health problems could lead to £52m in NHS savings and quality of life improvements worth £437m over 10 years; a net economic benefit of...

£490,000,000



Improving care for women with common PMH problems

There is a major gap in services that prevents many women with common PMH problems, such as depression and anxiety, from receiving help when and where they need it. The impact of which can be devastating for them and their families.

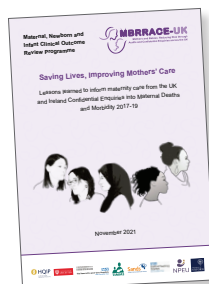
New independent research from the **London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)** finds integrating PMH care into maternity and health visiting services could help improve lives and have a net economic benefit of nearly half a billion pounds.

“ *This report shines a welcome light on the vital role of midwives and health visitors in PMH care. We must make it easier for women to access PMH support during routine contacts.* ”

Luciana Berger, MMHA Chair

Analysis by **Centre for Mental Health** concluded that an ‘integrated model of care’ is the logical and economical next step for PMH care in the UK.

“ *Better communication between all those involved in my care would have made such a difference. I was seen by a range of professionals, yet it appeared that they did not talk to each other about me. Just maybe if they had joined the dots, I might not have become so unwell.* ” Elaine’s story



Getting it right for ALL women

Evidence, including the **latest MBRRACE report**, shows that women of colour and economically disadvantaged women experience poorer outcomes. For any proposed model to be effective, it will be crucial that it addresses existing inequalities in women’s experiences of maternity and PMH care.

Plans to Make All Care Count

The MMHA’s ‘**Make all care count**’ campaign calls for equal access to comprehensive, high-quality PMH care for ALL women and families. Following this report, further resources focused on the important role maternity and health visiting services play within PMH care will be coming soon.



[Read more about the researcher’s findings →](#)

KEY STATISTICS: eating disorders, pregnancy, and early parenthood

The perinatal period presents numerous potential triggers for anybody who has current or historic experience of an eating disorder.



16%

of pregnant women will have experienced an eating disorder at some time in their life



50%

of those women will relapse within the first postnatal year

By improving awareness and increasing knowledge of eating disorders amongst perinatal professionals, more women who are struggling can get the help they need to keep them and their babies safe. Visit MMHA member Wednesday’s Child website for training and resources.

NORTHERN IRELAND: Health Minister: “I want to reiterate my commitment to delivering PMH services”

The MMHA were pleased to hear about the important progress made, despite the pressures of the pandemic, since funding was granted just over a year ago.

A final push to [#TurnTheMapGreen](#) will mean that women and families who are suffering *right now* will finally start to get the long-awaited help they need.



Robin Swann
Health Minister

WATCH: Public Health Agency update on new PMH community teams →

ENGLAND: NHSE announces £127 million for maternity services

This [welcome funding injection](#) must go towards improving PMH care and addressing the critical workforce shortfall, including the 2,000 midwives the Royal College of Midwives estimate are needed.



“ *This new funding will be vital in providing [midwives] with a continuous improvement process that supports them personally and professionally, to enhance the quality of care for women and families.* ”

Professor Jaqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE, NHS England Chief Midwifery Officer

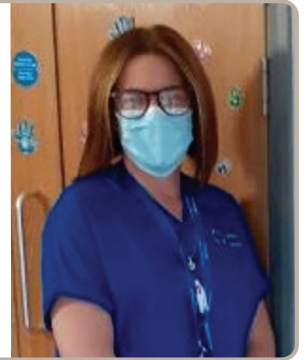
Government reveals pilot sites for family hubs

As part of funding announced for the Start for Life programme in last year's spending review, [75 local authority areas](#) have now been identified as pilot sites for family hubs. Around 1/3 of the funding will go towards much-needed parent-infant relationship and PMH support for women, babies and families.

WALES: Swansea Bay University Health Board appoints first specialist PMH midwife

“ *One of my main roles is to bridge the gap between mental health services and maternity services and make it more seamless for the women and their families.* ”

Anne-Marie Thomas,
Specialist PMH Midwife



The creation of this role is an important step forward for women and families in Wales. Continued efforts are needed to fund these vital roles, as well as addressing the gaps within specialist community services and inpatient mother and baby (MBU) provision. Women and families across Wales deserve nothing less.

SCOTLAND: PMH debate: “High-quality PMH services should be available throughout Scotland”

The MMHA welcomes recommendations published in the [Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's PMH inquiry paper](#), which were also met with cross-party support at the recent [PMH debate](#). Particularly noteworthy is the Committee's call on the Scottish Government to set out how it will ensure current and future funding and service provision delivers equity of access to specialist PMH services across Scotland.

The debate coincided with the launch of a specialist [PMH community service in NHS Grampian](#), which should go some way towards ensuring women and families in the north east of Scotland get the help they need. However, access to specialist inpatient MBU treatment remains a concern.



Have your say on the location of four new MBU beds and help end the postcode lottery in Scotland →

Media moments

Record demand for mental health services as new mothers are left 'isolated' in pandemic – Independent, featuring MMHA CEO, Laura Seebohm and one mum's experience of having a baby during lockdown:

"I just thought, 'Oh God, my recovery is going to stop. How am I going to get better now when I've got no support? I'm on my own with it!'" Leanne

Better maternal health training needed for health visitors and midwives, say experts – Nursing in Practice

Amplifying the voices of seldom heard women and families in maternal mental health care – Sky News Radio

MMHA staff update

"I met some of our members virtually when chairing the March members' meeting, and the passion literally shone through the screen! I feel extremely lucky to start my new role with this inspiring experience..."

Laura Seebohm, Chief Executive of the MMHA



[Read more about Laura's first six weeks →](#)

In other staffing news, Sian Drinkwater's successful application to work on the brand new AMV Project means she has left her role as **Senior Campaign Assistant**. Sian's successor will be joining us later this Spring.

The team sadly bid farewell to Sharon McPherson, who has done a fantastic job of supporting our **lived experience Champions**. Recruitment for her replacement is underway.

Finally, the **MMHA Board** are in the middle of electing three new trustees. Their aim is to diversify the voices and experiences around the table and fill gaps in knowledge and skill.

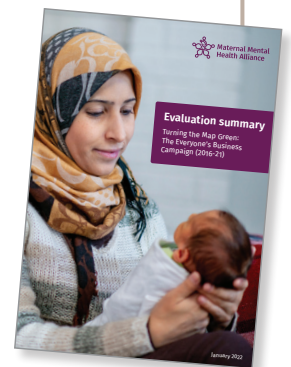
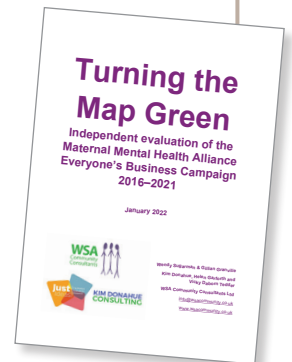
We look forward to introducing some new faces very soon.

ESSENTIAL READING: **Lessons and recommendations from five years of the MMHA's Everyone's Business Campaign**

An independent evaluation by WSA Community Consultants found that through focused, collaborative campaigning and by combining real life experiences and clinical expertise, the MMHA's Everyone's Business campaign has kept the need for improved PMH care on the political agenda for the past five years.

HAVE A READ TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- 1 the main changes in PMH from the last five years
- 2 the driving force(s) behind them
- 3 recommendations for future campaigning.



[Visit the MMHA Resource Hub for more →](#)

MMHA member spotlight

Over 3.5 million people in the UK go through fertility challenges each year, affecting around one in six couples. **Research conducted by Fertility Network UK and Middlesex University** showed that **90%** of people facing long-term infertility had experienced depression, and an alarming **42%** reported feeling suicidal.



Fertility Network UK provides free and impartial support, information and understanding for anyone affected by fertility issues.



Read more about the maternal mental health implications of infertility and treatment, and what good care looks like in a guest blog by Regional Organiser, Anya Sizer.

Maternal Mental Health Alliance is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in England and Wales (no. 1178152).

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