

## Call to ACT

The Maternal Mental Health Alliance's (MMHA) Everyone's Business campaign is calling for all women throughout the UK with perinatal mental health conditions to receive the treatment they need, where and when they need it, as outlined in numerous national guidelines.

# Take Action

## Making maternal mental health Everyone's Business in 2020

### Campaign update

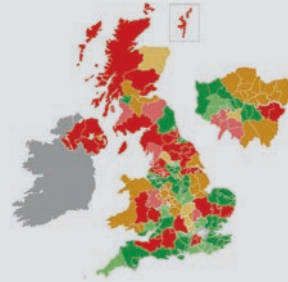
A big thank you to **Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA)** members and supporters for their patience and encouragement in 2019.

It was an important year of consolidation and planning, laying essential groundwork to ensure the longevity of MMHA's work.

Securing sustainable funding as well as ensuring MMHA is on a sound footing as an independent charity with its committed Board of trustees were key priorities. A fuller update on funding and next steps coming soon!

### New year, new campaign maps

This year we have exciting plans to deliver new and refreshed tools to support collective campaigning efforts for better perinatal mental health (PMH) care.



This will include an updated version of our **specialist PMH community services map**, which the team is busy collating data for right now. We eagerly await to see the status of the postcode lottery for women and families.

### Northern Ireland Executive reinstated



**"One of my key priorities and that of my Department is to address mental health and indeed perinatal mental health."** Robin Swann MLA (UUP)

Last year, all Parties, including the newly appointed Minister of Health, Robin Swann, signed a **Consensus Statement**, acknowledging the need for PMH services and pledging investment.

With the Stormont Executive now restored, and a Health Minister in post who has vocalised his commitment to PMH, we are keen to see urgent positive action.

The All Party Group on Mental Health have **written to Robin Swann** to ask how the PMH business case (delivered summer 2019) will be funded and implemented.

It will be the Health Minister's responsibility to progress plans and oversee implementation of the specialist services, which women and families urgently need. We offer our full support.

### Government promise to make UK best place to give birth

**"We will make the NHS the best place in the world to give birth through personalised, high-quality support."** **Conservative Manifesto 2019**

With a new Government now elected it is essential that commitments turn into action. The MMHA will continue to speak loudly, with one voice, to ensure PMH remains a priority.

As work takes place to progress the PMH goals within the **Long Term Plan**, we urge the new Government to indicate how they will tackle the **workforce challenge**, not only in the NHS but across health and social care, including health visitors.

Women and families accessing support for PMH problems need well trained professionals and an **integrated pathway of care across services**.



## Scotland

### Concerns over sustainable PMH investment

We welcome the **draft proposals** for specialist community services from the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board, and their attention to the recommendations in the Managed Clinical Network's '**Delivering Effective Services**' report.



However, we continue to be concerned that the proposals offer only time-limited funding for the establishment of community PMH services and none after 2021. We will continue to work alongside colleagues and decision-makers in Scotland to clarify next steps.

### New role to help ensure voices of women and families are heard

A new **Participation Officer role** – funded by the Scottish Government – is now up and running.



Officially employed by MMHA member **Maternal Mental Health Scotland**, Clare Thompson (former Scotland Everyone's Business Campaign Coordinator) will be working with the Programme Board to ensure the voices of lived experience are heard and the **pledged £52 million** is well spent.

We wish Clare well and are encouraged to see the Scottish Government actively seeking the views of women and families.

## Wales

### Progress in training but urgent service gaps remain



*iHV perinatal and infant mental health training day*

Additional funding has been secured from the Welsh Government to facilitate specialist PMH training. This year, 60 practitioners will be offered the **iHV two-day course on perinatal and infant mental health**, and a one-day **course on postpartum psychosis**, delivered by **Action on Postpartum Psychosis**.

This is a positive step towards ensuring all professionals involved in the care of women in the perinatal period receive dedicated high-quality PMH training. It is important that work is progressed **to develop an integrated training and competency framework**, so that all staff have sufficient knowledge and skills to support new mothers and their families.

Alongside securing specialist training for the whole pathway, a key component of our **Campaign Call to ACT**, current gaps in Welsh service provision and the perinatal workforce must be addressed. We continue to call for a **green specialist PMH community map** and a **Mother and Baby Unit in Wales**. **Women and families in Wales deserve no less.**

### New survey reveals gaps in PMH support

According to the **Care Quality Commission's 2019 maternity survey**, a fifth of new mothers were not told who to go to for advice about changes to their mental health after birth.

This must be remedied as we know **more than 1 in 10 women will experience PMH problems**.

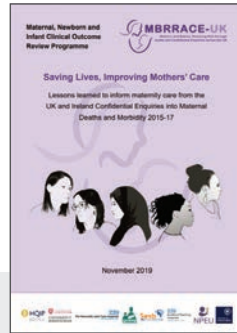


## Maternal suicide still the leading cause of death in first postnatal year

In December 2019, MBRRACE-UK published their latest

### Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths in the UK and Ireland (2015-17).

Once again, the statistics make for sobering reading.



### Key statistics about maternal suicide

1. Still the leading cause of direct deaths occurring within a year after the end of pregnancy
2. Second largest cause of direct maternal deaths occurring during or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy
3. Remains the fifth most common cause of women's deaths during pregnancy and its immediate aftermath.



**"We must remember the individual women and families behind the devastating numbers in this MBRRACE report and seek to honour their memory by urgently addressing gaps in perinatal mental health care. In order to save precious lives, we must ensure every woman has access to essential care and support, when and where she needs it."** Emily Slater, Director of the MMHA

### \*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\*

As we went to print, MMHA heard exciting news from Alliance member **NCT** that NHS England have agreed to fund a **dedicated postnatal check for mums** in the next GP contract.

More information in the next eBulletin, but we congratulate NCT and all **Hidden Half** campaigners for raising awareness of new mothers' needs and achieving this result!

## New principles show what good peer support for mums looks like



We are excited to share that the **Perinatal Peer Support Principles** – developed by people with lived experience, and MMHA members Mind and the McPin Foundation – are now available!

**"I hope that these principles will make safe, welcoming, nurturing peer support accessible to more mums who need it."** **Laura Wood**, Lived Experience Facilitator and Everyone's Business Champion

Facilitators Laura, Nisba and Katy will tour the UK in early 2020 to educate organisations about the principles and their importance in delivering quality peer support for maternal mental health.

**Download the principles now** and email **LivedExp@mind.org.uk** to subscribe to a mailing list for news about upcoming workshops and presentations.

### Media moments

**Losing It: Living with Postpartum Psychosis – Channel 4**



**Mental health: Mothers in Wales 'suffering' without unit – BBC Wales, featuring MMHA's Dr Sarah Witcombe-Hayes**

**Dads in the Delivery Room: birth trauma and fathers – BBC Radio 4 documentary, featuring MMHA supporter Mark Williams**

**Women face "unacceptable barriers" to essential health care services – BBC Woman's Hour**

**What it's like to suffer with OCD throughout pregnancy – Metro UK**

## Member spotlight



The MMHA has **over 90 national members** working together to make PMH Everyone's Business. This quarter, we focus on Birth Companions.

The current circumstances and past experiences of the women **Birth Companions** supports can make the birth of their baby a time of anxiety and hardship. This might include being in prison, immigration issues, homelessness, mental illness, involvement with social services or a history of abuse.

Their **frontline services** in prisons and communities have demonstrated that the right support can help give mothers and their babies the best start possible, no matter what their situation.

**Evidence** shows that maternity and other professionals can and must do more to understand and meet the needs of women with multiple disadvantages. Therefore Birth Companions continues to lead and support **research**, and influence policies that have a direct impact on mums and babies.

### Staff news

**We have two new team members, please welcome them to the MMHA!**

Sian Drinkwater, Campaign Assistant, brings 10 years of campaigning experience and has spent time as a Voluntary Perinatal Befriender.



Zoe Hughes, Operations and Team Assistant, is new to the charity sector and brings a wealth of project and operations management experience.

## Latest resource: Perinatal women in the criminal justice system

Following **last year's tragic events** at HMP Bronzefield, the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) **launched a Position Statement on 'Perinatal women in the criminal justice system'**.

Like the MMHA, the RCM want all women to receive equivalent maternity care, regardless of where they live.



**In 2020, The Ministry of Justice intends to publish the results of their review of units within prisons for mother and baby.**

**Their aim is to "ensure that the existing provision responds to need and offers the best support to women and their children."**

**Visit our Resource Hub for the RCM statement and more PMH reports, guidance and training!**

## Recruiting the next MMHA Chair



**"After a wonderful 10 years as a founder and Chair of the MMHA, the time has come for me to step down. I am very proud of what the Alliance has collectively achieved in improving specialist services and raising awareness of the importance of maternal mental health. I look forward to seeing where my successor**

**steers the charity next and witnessing the changes you'll all make to the lives of women and families across the UK."** Dr Alain Gregoire, Chair of the MMHA

We are hugely grateful for Alain's passionate leadership and guidance over the last decade. He will remain fully on board during the recruitment and settling in of the next chair!

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

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