

Help us **Make All Care Count** for women, babies and families

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IN THIS EDITION

of the Everyone's Business campaign eBulletin, you'll find:

- A closer look at our new specialist community maps and findings
- Risks and opportunities in the devolved nations
- New resources, including our joint materials with iHV to help support local areas deliver high-quality PMH services



We must continue to make the case for maternal mental health care

Our new maps and report on the state of specialist perinatal mental health (PMH) care in the UK show clear and fantastic progress, which is resulting in more women, babies, and families accessing vital care. However, our research also revealed how fragile this progress is, highlighting risks and uncertainties in each nation.

- In light of high demands on mental health services, continued commitment to PMH is crucial, including adequate funding for specialist, universal *and* voluntary sector services.
- While challenges exist across all four nations, there are also opportunities we must embrace to ensure continued improvement; the upcoming general election is a chance to make sure this issue is on political agendas.
- It is essential that we demonstrate the long-term benefits of investing in PMH, addressing health inequalities and reducing disparities so that ALL women and families can access the care they need now and in the future.
- To make a compelling case for PMH, we must harness the passion and energy of the sector. This means collaborating, sharing success stories, and using data to highlight the positive impact of high-quality PMH support.



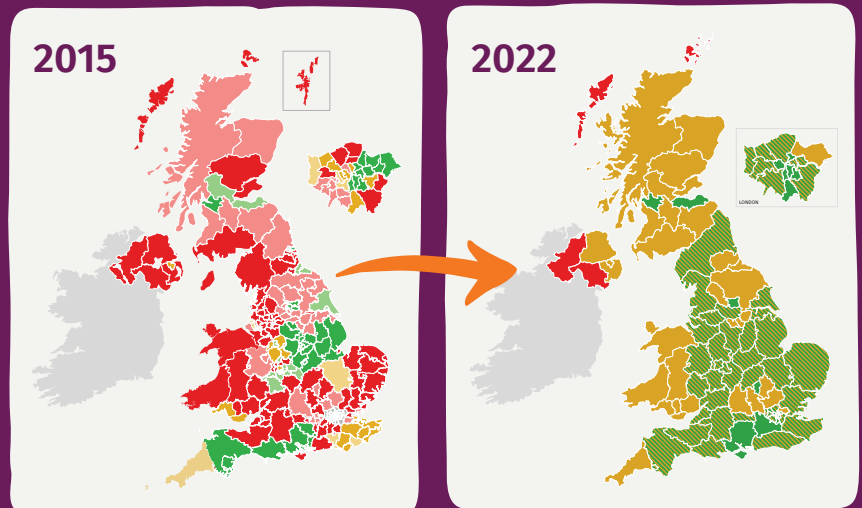
Despite the obstacles, it's crucial that we continue advocating for the cause, together.

New campaign maps showing status of postcode lottery

Our new maps celebrate the advances that have been made in service provision and highlight the challenges women and families continue to face to access lifesaving PMH care in their local area.

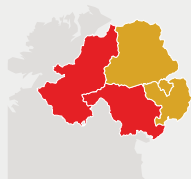
They are intended to help make sure that progress in specialist PMH services is preserved and built upon, rather than risk going backwards.

[Continue reading...](#)

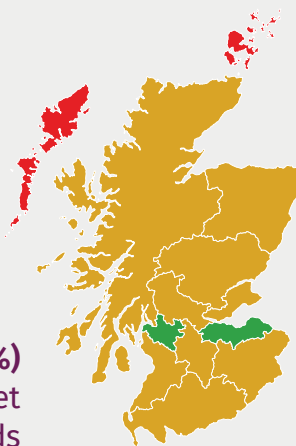


Key statistics

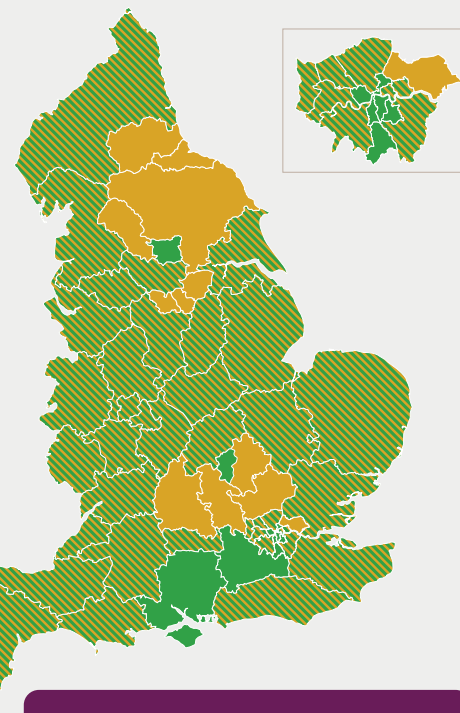
No areas in Northern Ireland or Wales met national quality standards



Two out of 14 (14%) Scottish Health Boards met national quality standards



10 (16%) teams in England met national quality standards and have begun delivering on all four of NHS England's Long Term Plan ambitions for PMH



Our findings

The MMHA's Freedom of Information (FOI) request into budget allocation and spending on services found that although 89% of the 70 areas that responded had seen their budget increase from 2020/1 to 2022/3, 66% indicated there would be an underspend for 2022/3.

Workforce-related issues were the most frequently cited reason for underspending, but many teams provided evidence indicating this was due to unclear or late budget allocation, with no guarantee of continuation.

This is inevitably resulting in women, babies, and families not receiving the care they need.

“ We have not received any further funding since the team was set up with wave 2 funding in December 2019. Referrals have trebled since we started resulting in staff burn out. ”

Healthcare professional

Risks and opportunities

Each nation faces its own specific set of challenges, however some common themes emerged:

- 1 Sustainable funding**
- 2 Workforce gaps and recruitment**
- 3 Inadequate space to provide care**

Mental health-related deaths during pregnancy or up to six weeks after birth are increasing. Together we must #TurnTheMapGreen!

Download our report or executive summary (also available in Welsh) to find out more >



Helping communities commission and maintain high-quality PMH services

Earlier this year we proudly announced the launch of 'Supporting High-Quality Perinatal Mental Health Care'. Created with the Institute of Health Visiting (iHV), this new tool is designed to inform and encourage local systems to have collaborative conversations and embed good PMH practices within services supporting women and families. Please share this resource widely to help us ensure that your local health system and anyone working with families before, during and after pregnancy know about it.

NORTHERN IRELAND: Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) strategic outline delayed

The anticipated MBU strategic outline has been delayed again and is now due “early summer”. After this the full business plan plus funding will also need to be agreed, which may prove challenging in the current political climate.



The commitment to ensuring lived experience will be considered in its planning is welcome. However, confirmation and investment to move plans forward are urgently needed.

Families have already waited too long.

ENGLAND: Maternal mental health briefing for integrated care systems (ICS) coming soon...

ICS have a unique opportunity to ensure that all women who need PMH support get the right help at the right time, close to home. The MMHA has commissioned and is working closely with Centre for Mental Health to develop a briefing which clearly lays out:

- 1** Why PMH matters
- 2** What ICS can do
- 3** Key areas for action

Follow [@MMHAlliance](#) and [@CentreforMH](#) for updates.

The vital role of the voluntary sector

View from an expert by experience:

“Connecting with other women with similar experiences to mine has played a huge part in my recovery. There is no judgement, and you can laugh, cry and giggle with women who know what you’re going through.”

Lynette, mum from Lisburn



WALES: Influencing the next mental health strategy

The MMHA, NSPCC Cymru and the Wales Perinatal Mental Health Network facilitated three workshops to establish high-level priorities for PIMH and develop recommendations for Welsh Government ahead of a new mental health strategy. Our aim is to ensure the new commitments build on the progress made in Wales.

We also welcomed plans for **an MBU in Chester** (due 2024), which means women and families in North Wales finally have a timetable for when they can access lifesaving inpatient treatment closer to home!



SCOTLAND: What’s next after the Programme Board is dissolved?

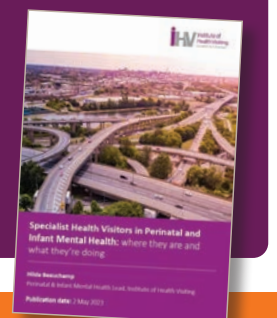


The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (PIMH) Programme Board met for the final time in March. Here, Board leaders stressed “the importance of sustaining and maintaining progress” and offered reassurance that the future of the PIMH workstream “would be linked into the outcomes of the revised [Scottish Government] **mental health strategy**” (published June 2023).

For now, an advisory group will continue the Board’s work until formal governance structures are agreed; the format and timing of which have not yet been announced. With the welcome new strategy in place, having a system that allows for monitoring and scrutiny will be vital to make sure progress for women and families continues.

Specialist health visiting: UK-wide coverage but patchy regional provision

iHV’s new report finds that there are now Specialist Health Visitors in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (Sp HV PIMH) in each UK nation but that regional commissioning arrangements are inconsistent. This evidence further demonstrates why workforce shortages need to be urgently addressed, so that Sp HV PIMH and the wider health visiting workforce can deliver clinically and cost-effective care.



WATCH: **Change The Story: Break The Cycle**



This **documentary training film** about intergenerational trauma from the South East PMH team features MMHA founder Dr Alain Gregoire and colleagues, who explain how a trauma-informed approach would help perinatal services meet the specific needs of women and families in their care.

Media moments

IVF patients need more mental health support – *BBC News*

Peer support is a lifeline for perinatal mothers – *The Scotsman*

MPs condemn failure to tackle 'glaring' racial inequalities in UK maternal health – *The Guardian*, featuring MMHA CEO Laura Seebohm

NHS must 'urgently' publish data on mental health checks for pregnant women – *The Independent*

MMHA staff updates: meet the devolved nation campaign coordinators



To ensure access to services is equitable for every family in the UK, we have campaign coordinators in each region making the case for PMH.

If you'd like to get in touch with Rhonda (Northern Ireland, left), Sarah (Wales, middle) or Annabelle (Scotland, right), or find out more about the Everyone's Business campaign, please email info@everyonesbusiness.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS: **Professor Louise Howard awarded OBE for contributions to PMH**

Professor Howard's research and expertise, both nationally and internationally, have played a crucial role in highlighting areas of PMH policy and practice that require more attention, including **domestic abuse**. We wholeheartedly congratulate her on **this well-deserved recognition**.



ESSENTIAL READING:

> **Talking About Postpartum Psychosis – A Toolkit for Antenatal Educators**

"I had never heard of postpartum psychosis until it happened to me. I went to NHS classes and had read so many books about new motherhood. I could have had help sooner if we had known. Knowing how to spot the signs is so important for helping new mums."
Jessie



This **free toolkit from Action on Postpartum Psychosis (APP)** has been developed to support antenatal class providers educate expectant parents about postpartum psychosis (PP) following YouGov research that discovered **only 6% had heard about PP during their classes**.

> **Saving babies' lives 2023**



Sands & Tommy's Joint Policy Unit's **recent report** brings together data from different sources for the first time to show the extent of pregnancy and baby loss in the UK and provide an understanding of its causes, shine a light on inequalities and disparities in outcomes, and make evidence-based recommendations to shift the dial.

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

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