

Celebrating 10 years! Help fund the next 10

DONATE NOW

In this edition of the MMHA Everyone's Business campaign eBulletin, you'll:

- Learn about our new campaign phase: 'Make all care count'
- Find updates on the UK perinatal mental health (PMH) landscape
- Discover new research into Black, Asian and minority ethnic women's unequal access to PMH care
- Meet MMHA's new interim CEO, Justin Irwin.

The difference comprehensive care can make to women and families

“ I pretended to the world that I was fine and enjoying motherhood. But in reality, I was confused and depressed. This was eventually picked up by a midwife who referred me to my local perinatal mental health team ”
LEANNE

MAKE ALL CARE COUNT

MMHA calls for essential perinatal mental health care for all women and families in the UK

Launched in June, **Make all care count**, a new phase of the MMHA's **Everyone's Business campaign**, identifies and defines the essential service areas that can play a crucial role in improving outcomes for women with, or at risk of, poor perinatal mental health (PMH), and their families.

In the UK, mental health problems in women before, during and after pregnancy too often go unrecognised, undiagnosed, and untreated.

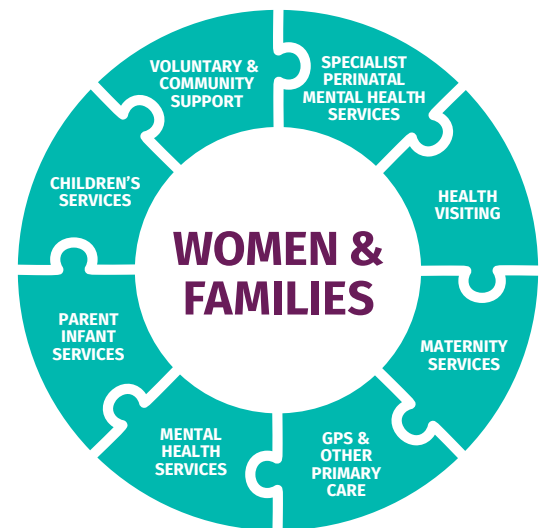
What is the MMHA calling for?

All women and families across the UK need equitable access to comprehensive, high-quality PMH care, including and beyond **specialist services**.

This includes:

- 1 A confident, well-equipped **workforce** delivering excellent, safe PMH care and support.
- 2 Care for **all** women, including those impacted by **inequalities**.
- 3 Specialist PMH services that meet **national standards** and act as a catalyst for change within the wider system of care.

What are the vital services that make up essential perinatal mental health care?



What do women and families need?

Currently, access to comprehensive perinatal mental health (PMH) care is not equal for all women and families. **Action is needed to ensure these crucial services are commissioned, funded, and resourced.**

The MMHA will develop resources to identify the gaps in these vital services and show the impact this could have on women and families.

Please do all you can to #MakeAllCareCount for women and families across the UK →



16,000 women were unable to access essential PMH care due to the pandemic

According to research by MMHA member, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, only 31,261 women managed to get PMH support, rather than the 47,000 who were expected to access specialist PMH services in England in 2020/21.



"Funding for mental health facilities is long overdue but is more urgent in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic"

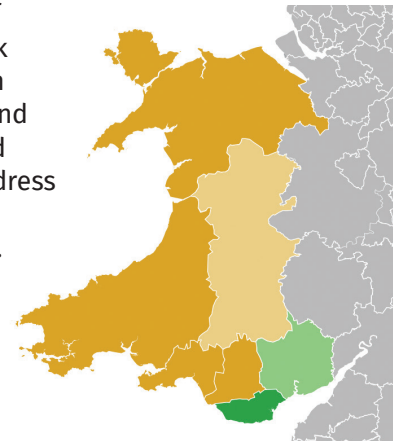
Dr Trudi Seneviratne
Registrar of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

The College is calling for funding for PMH facilities in the next Government spending review, and on local health bosses to put an end to **the postcode lottery in maternal mental health** by addressing longstanding funding issues. PMH services have endured a challenging 18 months and worked hard to care for women and families. Now more than ever, they need to be protected and enhanced.

WALES: MMHA calls on new Government to make PMH a core focus

Following the results of May's elections, we look forward to working with the new Government, and Members of the Senedd (MS), to continue to address the **gaps that remain** in vital specialist services.

Welcome letters were sent to all MSs, which included the MMHA's three **calls on the new Government**:



- 1 Sufficiently resource all health boards to **turn the map of specialist services green in Wales**.
- 2 Establish a **permanent mother and baby unit (MBU)** in South Wales, and a clear and accessible option for women in North Wales.
- 3 Provide **PMH training** for all professionals involved in the care of women during pregnancy and the first year after birth.

Why specialist support is vital for women with complex PMH needs



The MBU staff were incredibly patient and supportive, and it was through working with the unit's child psychologist that I finally started to see my son as a little person and a future where everything was going to be OK .



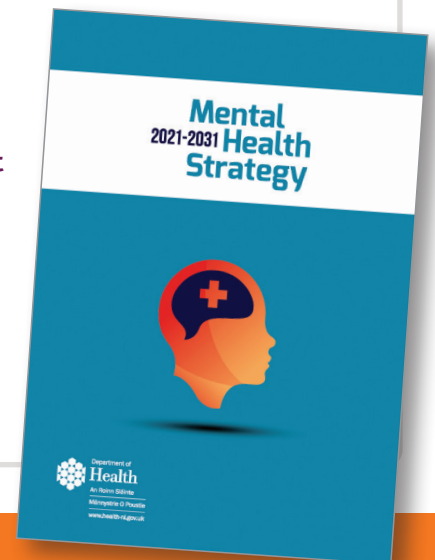
KATHRYN

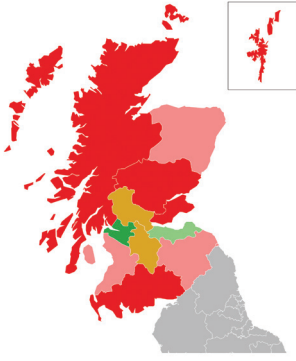
NORTHERN IRELAND: PMH a key priority in new 10-year Mental Health Strategy

The MMHA was delighted to see the commitment to improving access to community and inpatient PMH services within the Department of Health's (DoH) 10-year **Mental Health Strategy (2021-31)**.

"Northern Ireland currently lags behind the rest of the UK in relation to specialist perinatal mental health care... For mothers requiring inpatient mental health care, there is no MBU in Northern Ireland... We will continue to roll out specialist perinatal mental health services, including in-patient services." (Points 195-196)

The MMHA are grateful for the immense effort being taken to see that specialist PMH community services are operational in all trusts by early 2022. We continue to work collaboratively with members, campaigners, and the DoH to secure a timeline and funding for an MBU ASAP.





SCOTLAND: Scottish Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathways launched

The MMHA welcome the development of the **Scottish PMH Care Pathways**, which define the ideal routes through the healthcare system depending on the woman's individual PMH needs. We eagerly await the **Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Programme Board's** Delivery Plan (2021-22) – due imminently – to understand how Health Boards will be sustainably funded and resourced to **fill the existing gaps**, deliver the high-standard of PMH care outlined in the pathways, and provide the care that women and families need.



MMHA members call for health visiting cuts to be reconsidered

The Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Sands, and the National Childbirth Trust have added their voices to concerns raised by the Institute of Health Visiting and **cautioned Hampshire County Council** that budget cut proposals would introduce “unacceptable risks” for women before, during and after pregnancy, and their babies and “set a dangerous precedent for other councils facing similar budget challenges.”

Health visiting is a part of essential PMH care. As their letter states “cuts in one part of the health care system will inevitably have a significant knock-on impact on other parts of the system, including maternity services... health visitors do not work in isolation and are an essential part of a much **wider system** of professionals working at the level of individuals, families, and communities.”



"Supporting pregnant women, new mums and babies isn't a luxury - it's a vital investment!"

Gill Walton
Chief Executive of the
Royal College of Midwives

KEY STATISTICS:

Black, Asian and minority ethnic women's unequal access to PMH services



Dr Elaine Amoah's recent research highlights inequalities in accessing PMH care for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women:



98% of women surveyed were willing to receive treatment for their mental health, but...



32% had not received treatment, including talking therapies such as CBT and counselling.



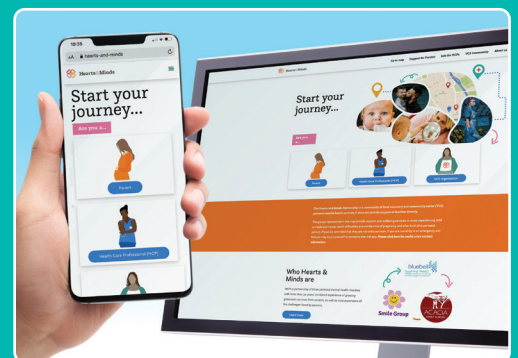
Nearly a third of women (30%) believed that receiving treatment for emotional or mental health problems carries social stigma.

Please join the conversation during and beyond Black Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week (coordinated by MMHA member **The Motherhood Group** with support from the **Mental Health Foundation**), raise awareness, and encourage women and families of colour to get the help they need and deserve.



NEW MAP: grassroots perinatal support services in England

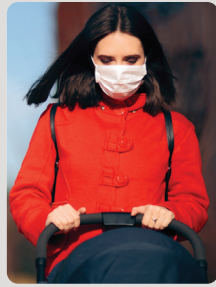
MMHA member the **Hearts and Minds Partnership** has launched an **interactive map** of grassroots PMH services in England. Voluntary and community organisations are encouraged to **complete the self-assessment**, so parents and professionals can access resources and signposting to safe, high-quality support in their local area.



Media moments

Pregnant women in England denied mental health help because of Covid – The Guardian

Struggling mental health of new mothers in pandemic ‘could cost extra £17.5 billion’ – The Independent



Mental health in north Wales: Calls for unit for mums and babies – BBC News

Public Health England calls for closer working between midwives and health visitors – Nursing Times

Lack of support after miscarriage is causing a mental health crisis say charities – ITV News

NEW RESOURCES: Involving and supporting partners and family in specialist PMH care

The MMHA welcomes NHS England’s **good practice guide** and animation, developed to help commissioners and specialist PMH services provide women and their families with a positive experience of joined-up care and improve outcomes for all family members.

Following suit, newly updated **NICE guidelines** also consider the **role of partners and family in antenatal care**.



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

MMHA member spotlight

Refugee Women Connect (RWC) supports women asylum-seekers, refugees, and survivors of trafficking to build a safe life in the UK.

Refugee Women Connect

RWC’s dedicated **mental health team** provides support to women who are pregnant or have children up to 1 year old, offering a mixture of one-to-one sessions, phone check-ins and follow-up assistance.

To mark Refugee Week 2021, we asked RWC about the **biggest maternal mental health challenges facing refugee and asylum-seeking mothers**.



MMHA welcomes Justin Irwin as interim CEO

At the end of July, the MMHA said goodbye to Co-Founder and CEO, Emily Slater. Emily has been with the Alliance since its first meeting in 2011 and leaves behind an enormous body of work and an impressive legacy.



We wish her all the very best and thank Emily for her compassionate leadership and determination to improve the lives of women and families affected by PMH problems.

Justin brings a wealth of charity experience including from the mental health and early years sectors. He has held interim CEO positions at the Parent-Infant Foundation, Bliss, Bipolar UK, and The Family and Childcare Trust, and senior roles with Childline, SANE and the Young Women’s Trust, amongst others.



Justin has taken the helm on an interim basis and recruitment for our next permanent CEO is **now live**.

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

Subscribe to the Everyone’s Business eBulletin at www.maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/campaign



Printed on sustainable paper – please recycle.