

Celebrating 10 years! Help fund the next 10

DONATE NOW

CAMPAIGN UPDATE: A challenging year for women, families, and services

2021 has been a difficult year for many women, families, and services working hard to provide perinatal mental health (PMH) care. Thank you to Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) members, supporters, champions, and professionals for making PMH a priority despite challenging circumstances.

In 2022, the MMHA will launch new resources to help us continue to create change for women and families. First up is an independent evaluation of the **Everyone's Business campaign**, followed by new economic research which assesses the benefits of increasing access to treatment for women with common PMH problems.

We look forward to working with you to make a difference in 2022 and beyond!



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

- Find updates on all the key PMH developments across the UK.
- Learn about new funding for PMH in this year's Spending Review.
- Hear some of the challenges that PMH services faced this year and opportunities for 2022.
- Discover free resources, articles, and news from the MMHA.



Suicide remains a leading cause of maternal death

We were deeply saddened by the findings of **MBRRACE-UK's latest Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths (2017-19)**, which once again highlights worrying health inequalities.

Lessons must be learnt from every life lost and their memory honoured by urgently implementing **the recommendations** made. Essential changes and investment are needed to ensure **ALL** women have access to the right PMH care before, during and after pregnancy.

As this report shows, the cost of inaction is tragically too great.

KEY STATISTICS

- Almost a quarter of deaths were from mental health-related causes.
- Improvements in care might have changed the outcome for 67% of women who died by suicide.
- Maternal mortality was more than 4x higher for Black women, 2x higher for mixed ethnicity women and almost 2x as high for Asian women.



Making all care count in 2021 and beyond

We asked MMHA members who represent some of the essential services supporting women and families dealing with PMH problems to reflect on this year's challenges and their hopes for 2022.



Specialist PMH services

Dr Cressida Manning, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist

The pandemic has continued to impact on the work and wellbeing of specialist PMH teams and the women and families they support. Teams remain under unprecedented pressure, during a time of planned service expansion.

COVID-19 has continued to affect barriers to care, affecting disproportionately women and families already disadvantaged with a history of mental disorder, poor social support, loneliness, domestic abuse, and other social disadvantage.

As we emerge, it will be important to remove remaining barriers to care that the pandemic has enforced. PMH teams should continue to build on what has worked well, with some remote working and groups, but acknowledging the importance of face-to-face assessments. Delivery of care should be tailored to the needs of the individual woman and their family.



Health visiting

Melita Walker, Head of Mental Health

Even before the pandemic, there were many challenges to ensuring all families had access to the **right care at the right time**. We pay tribute to all the health visitors who have worked hard in some very challenging circumstances. Despite this, research has shown increased mental health problems for those who became a parent during the pandemic.

Health visitors are key to supporting good family mental health. The time is now right to focus on the unique leadership role of Specialist Health Visitors in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (PIMH) to ensure that health visiting, as part of the wider system of care, can contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of new parents and babies.

Going forward we need to do three things:

1. Build back our health visitor numbers
2. Ensure they have appropriate capacity and training
3. Have a Specialist PIMH Health Visitor supporting families in every community.



Voluntary and community sector

Celia Suppiah, CEO

Like many of our voluntary and community sector (VCS) peers, we are extremely proud of our rapid response to unprecedented PMH needs in local communities. Quickly moving to remote working, we have embraced innovative solutions to overcome technical barriers and rapidly developed new remote working skills. Alongside challenges came new blended models, and efficiencies. The VCS has been a lifeline for women and families due to vastly reduced statutory services. However, the most digitally deprived parents remain the biggest concern. How do we know who and where they are? How do we communicate with them? Holistic approaches and partnership working remain critical.

Without continued investment, many families will miss out on valuable community support. We want to see far greater recognition and investment in VCS initiatives to sustain quality, grassroots PMH peer support. The VCS has a vital and unique contribution to make to maternal mental health outcomes. Every parent, baby and family deserves the best possible start.

All women and families in the UK need equitable access to comprehensive, high-quality PMH care, including and beyond specialist services. Help us 'Make all care count' →

NORTHERN IRELAND: Update on the rollout of specialist PMH services

Next year is set to be an exciting one for Northern Ireland, with specialist PMH teams in each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts due to be operational by early 2022. Welcome progress has already been made:



- **Belfast** is expanding their existing team
- **South Eastern** is almost ready to start treating patients
- **Western, Southern** and **Northern** are recruiting and procuring accommodation.

We look forward to women and families being able to access these services, as well as an update on Government plans for an MBU in the new year.

WALES: What funding will be provided to help health boards achieve quality standards for specialist PMH community teams?

This was the theme of Janet Finch-Saunders MS recent question to Welsh Government. We welcomed **the response from Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing**, Lynne Neagle, who confirmed their commitment to improving PMH community teams and providing funding for services.

We know gaps in vital services remain, meaning many women and families are not receiving the support they need, so a clear timeframe for **Turning the Map Green** in Wales is essential.

"We are committed to developing specialist perinatal mental health services in line with the [Royal College of Psychiatrists] quality standards."

Lynne Neagle
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing



ENGLAND: Welcome recognition of PMH in Spending Review

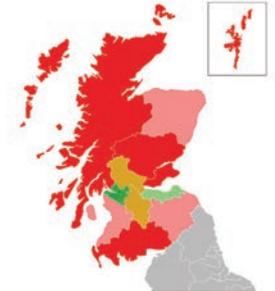


In October, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced £100m for parental mental health as part of the Government's Spending Review. The MMHA welcomes this important acknowledgement of the PMH needs of women and families.

Further details to confirm how funding will be allocated are crucial. **Comprehensive PMH care** for ALL women and families is only possible if each essential area of the system is adequately funded and resourced.

SCOTLAND:

Latest Delivery Plan (2021-22) shows some progress for PMH, but more is needed



The latest **Delivery Plan** from the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board shows some welcome progress across many tiers of PMH service delivery, including specialist PMH service development, training and guidance, and the creation of clinical forums.

However, specialist community services are still only available to women and families in some areas.

A detailed breakdown of each health board's spending, and an evaluation of their impact, is needed to understand how investment is making a meaningful difference. It is vital that barriers to essential PMH care are overcome to ensure equal access for all women and families impacted by PMH problems.

Cabinet reshuffle: new Minister for Care and Mental Health

In October, the MMHA welcomed **Gillian Keegan MP** to her new appointment. We look forward to working with her in this important position to help ensure women and their families across England can access PMH care.



Media moments

"I was very lucky healthcare professionals spotted the signs and I don't doubt for a second this saved my life." Leanne

Mum urges Rishi Sunak: Invest in vital health visitors who saved my life – Daily Express, featuring Everyone's Business Lived Experience Champion

Black and Asian mothers face 'deep inequalities' in postnatal mental healthcare – Metro

Covid: New parents still struggling to access support, MPs say – BBC

Swansea Bay's first PMH midwife offers support at new unit – NHS Wales

MMHA member spotlight

MMHA welcomed the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) as a new member. RCOT represents over 33,000 occupational therapy (OT) staff across the UK.

Royal College of
Occupational
Therapists



RCOT work to ensure the profession's place in health and social care delivery. They do this by promoting the benefits of occupational therapy to the public, commissioners, and government, including the important role OTs play within specialist PMH teams. RCOT also support a Clinical Forum for occupational therapists working in PMH.

To mark Occupational Therapy Week 2021, we asked them about the **role of occupational therapy within PMH care**.



We're hiring!

MMHA is seeking a Membership and Local Voices Officer to play a key part in a new project designed to enable local communities to campaign for positive change in the provision of PMH services.

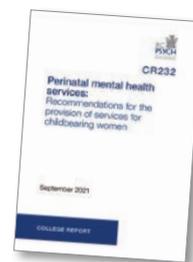
The project will have a particular focus on addressing the PMH experiences and challenges of communities impacted by inequalities.

ESSENTIAL READING

Updated guidance on PMH care from the Royal College of Psychiatrists

The **CR232** report includes:

- latest evidence base
- best practice principles
- guidance on effective interventions
- workforce recommendations.



Echoing MMHA's 'Make all care count' campaign, this report highlights what is needed within specialist PMH teams, whilst recognising the importance of the whole system and a wide range of professionals to deliver high-quality PMH care to women and families.

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

MMHA NEWS

Meet MMHA's new CEO: Laura Seebohm

The Board is delighted to announce the appointment of Laura Seebohm as MMHA's next CEO.

Laura has 25 years' experience in the statutory and voluntary sectors, most recently as Executive Director for External Affairs at **Changing Lives**. Her experience of policy at a local and national level, lived experience inclusion, and system change practices will be of great benefit to MMHA's work.



Please join us in giving Laura a warm welcome to the MMHA when she starts in February 2022.

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.