



**We're in!**

the mental health challenge

local councils championing mental health

## Briefing for Member Champions

# Perinatal mental health

### What is perinatal mental health?

Perinatal mental health refers to a woman's mental health during pregnancy and the first year after giving birth. Perinatal mental health problems include those that existed before pregnancy, as well as illnesses that develop for the first time, or are greatly exacerbated in the perinatal period. Examples of perinatal mental illness include antenatal and postnatal depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, postpartum psychosis, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and experiences of trauma. These illnesses can be mild, moderate or severe, requiring different kinds of care or treatment.

If untreated, these perinatal mental illnesses can have a devastating impact on the women affected and their families. In the UK, they all too often go unrecognised, undiagnosed and untreated.

1. More than 1 in 10 women develop a mental illness during pregnancy or within the first year after having a baby (NSPCC, 2013)
2. 7 in 10 women will hide or underplay the severity of their perinatal mental illness (Boots Family Trust Alliance, 2013)
3. Suicide is a leading cause of death for women during pregnancy and one year after birth (MBRRACE-UK, 2016)
4. If untreated, perinatal mental illnesses can have a devastating impact on the women affected and their families (Centre for Mental Health and London School of Economics, 2014)
5. The cost to society of perinatal mental illness in the UK is £8.1bn per annual cohort of births, with nearly three quarters of the costs due to the impact on children. (Centre for Mental Health and London School of Economics, 2014)
6. In the UK, mental illness in pregnant and postnatal women often goes unrecognised, undiagnosed and untreated. (Centre for Mental Health and London School of Economics, 2014)

### What is the Maternal Mental Health Alliance's Everyone's Business campaign?

The Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) is a coalition of over 85 national organisations with a vision to see all women across the UK get consistent, accessible and quality care and support for their mental health during pregnancy and in the year after giving birth.

The MMHA's Everyone's Business campaign is calling for all women throughout the UK who experience a perinatal mental health problem to receive the care they and their families need, wherever and whenever they need it.

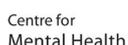
Everyone's Business campaign maps show just how patchy the current provision of specialist perinatal mental health services is. Women and their families still face a tragic postcode lottery. Despite recent additional funding pledged in England and Wales, many areas in the UK still have no specialist perinatal mental health services meeting national standards.

### What are perinatal mental health specialist services?

The term 'specialist perinatal mental health services' refers to both specialist perinatal mental health community teams, as well as inpatient mother and baby units where mum and baby are cared for together when a hospital admission is required.

Specialist perinatal mental health services save lives; they provide specialist treatment and can also act as a catalyst for change across the whole pathway, including for women who do not meet the threshold for referral. Many share expertise and deliver training with a range of health and social care professionals including GPs, health visitors and midwives.

The Mental Health Challenge is supported by:



Mental Health Foundation



National Survivor User Network





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## New investment in your local area

All areas in England will receive recurring investment for specialist perinatal mental health services by 2019, and the good news is that this investment is enough to fund specialist services in every area.

But there is no legal obligation for CCGs in England to spend these funds on the specialist perinatal mental health services they are intended for. This is why each CCG needs to plan how it will spend its money and sustain services now.

How prepared is your locality to use this funding to plan and deliver specialist services? What commitment does your area have to ensure the money is used effectively and sustainably for the long-term benefit of women and families in your area?

The campaign can support you to prepare your locality for this investment, for example mapping the service gaps and connecting with experts by experience.

## What can member Champions do to help?

To help further the improvement of specialist perinatal mental health services in your area, the MMHA's Everyone's Business campaign team can support you to:

1. Understand your local service provision:
  - a. Become familiar with the level of specialist perinatal mental health services available to mothers in each of your CCG areas: [http://everyonesbusiness.org.uk/?page\\_id=349](http://everyonesbusiness.org.uk/?page_id=349)
  - b. Read about the statistics that highlight why this is important.
  - c. Speak with local Everyone's Business champions who have lived experience: contact [info@everyonesbusiness.org.uk](mailto:info@everyonesbusiness.org.uk) to arrange.
2. Share the case for change:
  - a. Raise the issue of perinatal mental health with local and regional NHS bodies, including CCGs and Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships.

- b. Share this briefing paper with council colleagues, especially Health and Wellbeing Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and executive members for health.
- c. Invite the Everyone's Business team to deliver presentations along with lived experience champions in your area.

## Further information

For further information about the MMHA Everyone's Business campaign please visit

<https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/campaign/>

## References

Prevention in Mind – All Babies Count: Spotlight on Perinatal Mental Health NSPCC 2013 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/all-babies-count-spotlight-perinatal-mental-health.pdf>

Perinatal Mental Health experiences of women and health professionals 2013 -Boots Family Trust Alliance <https://www.tommys.org/our-organisation/what-we-do/our-pregnancy-information-service/tommys-work-mental-health-pregnancy>

Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Death - MBRRACE saving lives, Improving Mothers' Care 2016 <https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports>

The Costs of Perinatal Mental Health Problems - London School of Economics and Centre for Mental Health 2014 <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/costs-of-perinatal-mh-problems>

## To find out more about the Mental Health Challenge:

Emma Bailey - Mental Health Challenge Coordinator

 [www.mentalhealthchallenge.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthchallenge.org.uk)

 [emma.bailey@centreformentalhealth.org.uk](mailto:emma.bailey@centreformentalhealth.org.uk)

 [@MH\\_Challenge](https://twitter.com/MH_Challenge)

 Centre for Mental Health

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