

Take Action



MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE
everyone's business

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.

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#EveryonesBusiness

Making maternal mental health Everyone's Business during a pandemic

COVID-19 has presented immense emotional and practical challenges, especially for new and expectant mums, their families, and the healthcare professionals and charities supporting them.

An enormous thank you to **Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) members**, supporters, friends, and perinatal services who have continued to make maternal mental health a priority, despite the vastly changed world we find ourselves in.

This summer, we dedicate the first half of the MMHA Everyone's Business eBulletin to newly adapted campaign

calls in light of the new context – **our Plea to PLAN** – and remind everyone that Mother and Baby Units (MBUs), specialist perinatal mental health (PMH) and maternity services are all very much open. Help may look a little different, but it is still available.

Please support us to make sure these messages reach those who need to see and hear them most.

The second half will focus on important campaign developments, including **exciting news from Northern Ireland**, which is guaranteed to raise the spirits of anyone with a passion for PMH.



Midwives Vanessa, Sophie and Patricia, postnatal ward at University Hospital Lewisham

MMHA Plea to PLAN throughout COVID-19 and beyond

In these uncertain times, three things remain clear regarding the mental health of pregnant women, new mums, and their families:

- 1** **Perinatal stress** and mental health needs are **increased** from an already high level
- 2** **If left untreated**, mental illness during pregnancy or in the first year after birth will continue to have a devastating impact during and beyond the pandemic
- 3** Perceived and real **access to care** at every level is reduced, and a proactive approach is needed to overcome these barriers

- P** **Protect** the perinatal mental health workforce and plans through and beyond this crisis
- L** **Link-up** the mental health care and support available for women and families during this time
- A** **Acknowledge** the impact of the crisis on perinatal mental health and its potential long-term consequences
- N** **Navigate** the crisis while prioritising the perinatal mental health needs of women and families and proactively encouraging them to seek help early

To ensure new and expectant mums receive the care they need now, and in the future, we urge national and local decision makers to PLAN with the mental as well as physical health needs of mothers and their families in mind. **Please share and support the above Plea.**

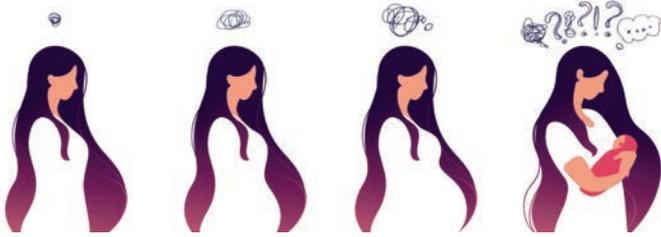
Subscribe to the Everyone's Business eBulletin at
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Specialist perinatal mental health services and MBUs are “very much open”

MMHA COVID-19 maternal mental health guidance and bespoke support



MMHA members, experts by experience and clinicians have collaborated to help women and families look after their mental health during pregnancy and postnatally through this pandemic and beyond.

The guidance can be found on our [COVID-19 hub](#), and includes:

- [Maternal mental wellbeing tips](#)
- [What to do if someone may be unwell with a PMH problem](#)
- [Guidelines for healthcare professionals](#)
- [Signposting to support – provided by MMHA members – for women and families.](#)

Duchess of Cambridge highlights importance of PMH in lockdown



“As organisations you’re playing such a vital role giving key information. You’re hugely trusted by the public and therefore the information you provide is a lifeline to a lot of people.”

At a virtual roundtable, organised by [the Royal Foundation](#) and chaired by MMHA’s Dr Alain Gregoire, The Duchess of Cambridge praised resources developed by key institutions providing support to women and families at this time, including many [MMHA members](#).

MBUs continue to provide care throughout the crisis

During the pandemic, [MBUs in England and Scotland](#) have remained open to provide urgent – often lifesaving – care to new mums experiencing severe perinatal mental illness.

[We continue to push for equal MBU access](#) for all women and families across the UK who require specialist inpatient treatment. Northern Ireland and Wales are still without an MBU, which is especially alarming during this pandemic.



Specialist MBU staff at Jasmine Lodge

Experts urge women and families to seek support for mental health if they need it

In response to concerns about referral figures, clinicians, Everyone’s Business champions and MMHA members created [a short film to let mums know that PMH services are still open](#), and urge them to reach out if needed.

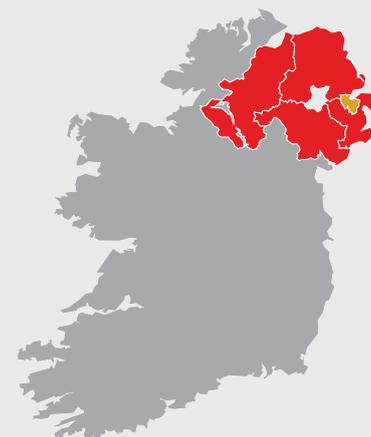
“Please remember we’re still here and haven’t gone anywhere!” Sarah Chitongo, midwife and mum, London

Thanks to [Best Beginnings](#) for working with us to edit this film and share these vital messages with parents via the [Baby Buddy app](#).



Historic breakthrough for women and families in Northern Ireland!

Following sustained and passionate efforts in Northern Ireland, we are delighted to share that **plans to develop specialist PMH community services in each of the five health trusts** have, at last, been announced in the Minister for Health's [Mental Health Action Plan](#). Initial and recurrent funds have been allocated and an agreement on a new service model is due to be confirmed by September 2020.



Objective 9.1, page 21

Measures	Outcomes	Resource implications
Agreement on new service model for specialist perinatal mental health services by September 2020.	Better services for those suffering from PMH needs which will also improve the child's health and development.	Up to £3.6m recurrent £900k in 2020/21

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who made this happen, including the women and families who have shared their lived experience to influence change, and Health Minister Robin Swann MLA, for his commitment to the mental health of pregnant women, new mums and their loved ones.

While we celebrate this chapter, there is still a journey ahead. We will continue to work together to ensure **concrete funding and services flow from these plans**, so the [map of specialist PMH community services turns green](#) and women and families in Northern Ireland can finally access the right support, at the right time, in their local area!

Health Minister for Wales says PMH is a "priority as we enter recovery phase"



Upon MMHA's request, Lynne Neagle MS tabled a written question to the Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething, who responded positively by saying PMH is a priority now and as we emerge from the current crisis.

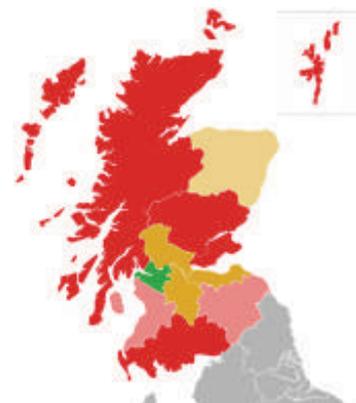
Welsh translations now available!

The new MMHA [maternal mental wellbeing guidance](#) and [Everyone's Business Plea to PLAN](#), which secured support from [20 cross-party MSs](#) (members of the Senedd), have been translated into Welsh.

Cymraeg

Scottish Government announces funding for third sector perinatal services

Whilst it was encouraging to see the Scottish Government recognise the hugely valuable contribution of the third sector and invest in this work via the [Perinatal and Infant Mental Health](#) fund, it is important to note that this is not new money.



Funding will be drawn from the [£52 million pledged in 2019](#) to transform specialist perinatal and infant mental health services.

We look forward to updates on how the remainder of the money will be spent and seeing the map turn green for women and families.

Decisions made now will help determine the future wellbeing and prosperity of Scotland for generations to come.

Why specialist PMH services matter more than ever in the UK

With PMH experts speculating about an increase of referrals on the horizon, Everyone's Business expert by experience champions share why specialist services are vital, now and always:

"In my first pregnancy, I spoke to 11 different professionals before I started to get the help I needed. Second time round it was a different story. Because of my experiences, I know how having access to the right services can be life-changing for the whole family. I believe every mother is entitled to receive the level of support I eventually received."



Kirsten

"Perinatal mental health services matter as they not only support the mother going through difficult times, but they also benefit the wider family. The highest quality of care is imperative during those dark days, and a specialist team will provide non-judgemental guidance to mums, who are struggling with a range of emotions."



Lindsey

"If we've learned anything from COVID-19, it's that the NHS needs to be well resourced, and that means mental health services too. We know that women will not have had the birth experiences that they wanted or expected in terms of birth partners, continuity of carer and perhaps home births, and it's important that this experience is acknowledged."



Clare

Visit our website for more **real life stories**, including new champions Catherine, Jillian and Michaela.

Another amazing Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week



MMHA member, PMHP UK delivered a packed agenda for Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week 2020. It was amazing to see so many people coming together to raise the profile of perinatal mental illness, advocate for those affected by it, and help mums access the care they need. **Catch up on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).**

Although the week is over, we **MUST** continue to raise **awareness**, **educate** the public and healthcare professionals, and urge decision makers to PLAN. Maternal mental health is everyone's business!

Media moments

New parents 'suffering in silence' with mental health during lockdown – [ITV News](#)

Pregnancy support helplines report dramatic spike in urgent enquiries – [The Independent](#)

Having a baby in lockdown – [BBC Woman's Hour](#)

I just gave birth during lockdown. I'm lonely, anxious and I can't get the mental health support I need – [The Independent](#)

Everyone's Business Champion and midwife Charlie offered mental wellbeing tips to pregnant women and new mums – [BBC Radio Solent](#)



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

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