

**Perinatal Mental Health
Good Practice Guide**



INTRODUCTION

Perinatal Mental Health refers to mental health during pregnancy and up to one year after the baby is born. During this period new and expectant parents (mums, dads, co-parents') can experience issues with their mental health. This includes mental illness existing before pregnancy, as well as illnesses that develop for the first time, or are greatly exacerbated in the perinatal period. These illnesses can be mild, moderate or severe, requiring different kinds of care or treatment.

Becoming a parent is often portrayed as a joyous time, however for many the reality is very different with reports showing that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men ([Scottish Government, 2020](#)) are affected by mental health problems during pregnancy and the first year after birth. The stigma and fear associated with perinatal mental health can leave those affected feeling inadequate as a parent, isolated and vulnerable and can impede or delay getting help, treatment and recovery.

This resource is intended to support Health Care Workers, Third Sector partners and any community organisations in contact with, supporting and/or working with new and expectant parents. The guide takes cognisance of the nine protected characteristics as set out in the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) and gives suggestions as to what organisations might do to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by new and expectant parents due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of new and expectant parents from protected groups where are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage new and expectant parents from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low

A supporting Training Appendix is included which offers suggested learning opportunities for staff wishing to further develop and increase their knowledge and understanding of Perinatal Mental Health.



PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

| Theme | Good Practice | Supporting Resources | Purpose |
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| <p><u>Pregnancy & Maternity</u></p> | <p>All staff participate in the Maternal Mental Health (MMH) awareness session from Healthy Minds Resource. This can be delivered in house by senior management or identified staff.</p> <p>Staff can deliver the Healthy Minds MMH session to new and expectant parents to help raise awareness, develop understanding and encourage help seeking behaviours.</p> | <p>Download MMH session from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde <u>Mental Health Improvement Team website</u></p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of MMH</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and practice around stigma and discrimination experienced by new and expectant parents.</p> |
| | <p>Participate in the Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination awareness session from Healthy Minds Resource using case study for new and expectant parents within session. This can be delivered in house by senior management or identified staff.</p> <p>Staff can deliver the Healthy Minds Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination session to new and expectant parents to help raise awareness, develop understanding and encourage help seeking behaviours.</p> | <p>Download MH Stigma and Discrimination session from NHS Greater Glasgow and Glasgow <u>Mental Health Improvement Team website</u></p> | |
| | <p>Access the NHSGGC Perinatal Mental Health guide to help support staff have conversations with new and expectant parents about their mental health and signpost to resources/supports if required.</p> | <p>Download the guide from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde <u>Mental Health Improvement Team website</u></p> <p>Copies can be ordered from <u>www.phrd.scot.nhs.uk</u></p> | |

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| <u>Pregnancy & Maternity</u> | Display the Public Health Scotland Maternal Mental Health awareness posters across your building and promote key messages on social media platforms. | Download from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde <u>Mental Health Improvement Team website</u> | Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH |
| | Promote and signpost new and expectant parents to resources. | <u>Ready Steady Baby</u> : a guide to pregnancy, labour and birth and early parenthood up to 8 weeks. <u>Mood Disorders during pregnancy and after the birth of your baby</u> : a booklet for women and their families. | Enhancing knowledge and practice around stigma and discrimination experienced by new and expectant parents. |
| | Promote information on common illnesses and conditions which could occur in pregnancy and childbirth. | <u>NHS Inform Scotland Pregnancy and Childbirth</u> | |

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| <p><u>Pregnancy & Maternity</u></p> | <p>Promotion and support for breastfeeding parents.</p> <p>Promotion and availability and local breastfeeding support groups.</p> | <p>Breastfeeding Information/Literature can be ordered from www.phrd.scot.nhs.uk</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and practice around stigma and discrimination experienced by new and expectant parents.</p> |
| | <p>Share information and available supports on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).</p> <p>Promote information and awareness of Alcohol before, during and after pregnancy resources.</p> <p>Promote services that offer support to those with alcohol issues.</p> | <p><u>Alcohol Focus Scotland</u>: provides useful information for staff. The FASD Hub Scotland provides help to families living with FASD through its helpline 0300 666 0006 (option 2) Tues-Thurs, 10am-2.30pm</p> <p>Alcohol and Pregnancy resources can be ordered from www.phrd.scot.nhs.uk/</p> | |
| | <p>Does your service provide or is considering peer support work?</p> <p>Is it underpinned by the five principles of Perinatal Peer Support?</p> | <p><u>Perinatal Peer Support principles and poster</u></p> <p><u>Let's do Peer2Peer!</u>: an adaptable and flexible resource from Scottish Recovery Network that can be delivered as a whole or focus on specific sessions.</p> | |

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Pregnancy & Maternity

Participate in Maternal Mental health awareness week (May). Consider a co-production approach with new and expectant parents to help raise awareness.

Facilitate 'Ask, Tell - Save a Life' sessions using the animation, part of the series of animations aimed at highlighting communication skills for mental health and suicide prevention conversations.

Participate in Suicide Prevention week (Sept) using Public Health Scotland Marketing materials.

Consider development of organisational self harm and suicide protocols.

Promote supports and resources out with your organisation to new and expectant parents who may require support for their mental health that you are unable to provide eg counselling provision. Link to other mental health and wellbeing supports within your locality that are available to new and expectant parents.

Maternal Mental Health Week

Ask Tell – Save a Life

Public Health Scotland website

Heads Up: provides advice, and information, on mental health conditions - about how you can support yourself or the people you care for, the services available for you and the range of interventions you may participate in.

Inspiring Scotland Directory

Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH

Enhancing knowledge and practice around stigma and discrimination experienced by new and expectant parents.

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| <u>Sex</u> | Display Women and Families Maternal Mental Health Pledge and promote accompanying video. | <u>Maternal Mental Health Pledge poster</u> & <u>Supporting Video</u> | Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH amongst mums, dads and co-parents. |
| | Participate in UK Maternal Mental Health Week (May) | <u>Perinatal Mental Health Partnership</u> | |
| | Participate in Men's Mental Health week (June) | <u>Men's Health Forum</u> | |
| | Promote and share Perinatal Positivity Video with new and expectant parents, audio and translations also available. | <u>Perinatal Positivity Video</u> | |

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Sex

Is your service inclusive of dads and co-parents?

Do you mention dads and co-parents as well as mums to be and new mums?

Are dads and co-parents visible on your website, leaflets and in policies?

How do you make your services known to dads and co-parents?

Have you considered a support group for dads and co-parents?

Encourage staff to complete Gender Based Violence(GBV) awareness training.

Display information on your website, leaflets and other promotional material to promote supports available to those who have/or are still experiencing GBV.

Facts for Fathers to be: a downloadable leaflet available in different languages.

Fathers Network Scotland: works to increase fathers' involvement in the life of their children.

Same Sex Parenting: information on parenting in same sex relations.

New Family Social: support for LGBT+ families with adoption and fostering.

Access resources and information via **NHSGGC Gender Based Violence and Human Trafficking website**

Access resources and information via **Money Worries website**

Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH amongst mums, dads and co-parents.

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| <u>Sex</u> | <p>Promote sexual health services information on your organisations digital platforms and promotional materials.</p> <p>Provide information on abortion support services if required.</p> <p>Promote services offering support around miscarriage and any baby loss.</p> | <p><u>Sandyford Sexual Health Services</u></p> <p><u>Abortion Information and Support</u> at Sandyford</p> <p><u>Baby Loss Retreat</u>: offer counselling and support to families who have suffered any baby loss resulting in miscarriage, stillborn, neonatal death and IVF.</p> <p><u>Miscarriage Support</u>: providing counselling for women and couples in Scotland who have suffered miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal loss.</p> <p><u>Scottish Cot Death Trust</u>: offer support to anyone in Scotland affected by the sudden unexpected death of a baby or young child.</p> <p><u>Still Birth and Neonatal Death</u> (SANDS): offer support for as long as they need it, to anyone affected by the death of a baby.</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH amongst mums, dads and co-parents.</p> |

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| <p><u>Age</u></p> | <p>Is your organisation inclusive of young parents?</p> <p>Do you include information for young parents?</p> <p>Are young parents visible on your website, leaflets and in policies?</p> <p>How do you make your services known to young parents?</p> <p>Do you have links with your local Family Nurse Partnership team?</p> <hr/> <p>Consider and be aware of the risks in Pregnancy and Birth for Older Women.</p> | <p><u>Ping</u>: the digital information resource for young people in Scotland who have experience of pregnancy and parenthood.</p> <p><u>Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP)</u>: resource can be used in community based learning.</p> <p><u>One Parent Families Scotland</u>: offer a range of supports to single parent families in Scotland.</p> <p><u>GGCFamilyNursePartnership@ggc.scot.nhs.uk</u></p> <p><u>Becoming the Mum I Want to Be</u>: A young mother involved in the Family Nurse Partnership programme in NHS Tayside talks about how the Partnership helped her become the mum she wanted to be.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Pregnancy and birth for women over 35 NCT</u></p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of PNMH in young parents.</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and practice around working with young and older parents in the perinatal period.</p> |

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Sexual Orientation & Gender Reassignment

Is your service inclusive of LGBT+ families?

Do you include information for LGBT+ parent families?

Are LGBT+ parent families visible on your website, leaflets and in policies?

How do you make your services known to LGBT+ people in your area?

Have you considered a support group/peer supporters for LGBT+ parent families?

Do you promote/participate in LGBT+ History Month and/or local LGBT+ Pride events?

Stonewall: download easy read definitions of lesbian, gay bi and trans.

NHS Inform: LGBT Paths to Parenthood.

Stonewall Parenting Rights

Rainbow Families: Events, information and support for LGBTQI families.

Queer Families: Support and advice for LGBTQ parents.

Queer Families: Hints and Tips for Services working with LGBTQ+ families.

Pride and Joy: a selection of podcasts on queers having kids.

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers: tips for supporting LGBTQ families.

Promoting insight and understanding of same sex parenting relationships and transgender parents.

Enhancing knowledge and practice around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Understanding the importance of inclusive language including using the correct pronouns/titles for LGBT+ parents.

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| <p><u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u></p> | <p>Raise awareness on the impact that pregnancy and becoming new parents can have on relationships and provide information on supports and resources available.</p> | <p><u>Relationships Scotland</u></p> <p><u>The Spark:</u> Free counselling and relationship support.</p> <p><u>Ready Steady Baby:</u> information on relationships and wellbeing in pregnancy.</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of Marriage, Civil Partnership and PNMH.</p> |
| <p><u>Disability</u></p> | <p>Is your organisation inclusive of parents who have a disability and/or have a baby with a disability?</p> <p>Do you include information for parents or babies affected by disability?</p> <p>Is disability visible on your website, leaflets and in policies?</p> <p>How do you make your services known to parents with a disability and/or with babies with a disability?</p> <p>Have you considered a support group/peer supporters for parents with disabilities and/or with babies with a disability?</p> | <p><u>Down's Syndrome Association:</u> provides a range of information on pregnancy and new parents. Helpline available on 0333 1212 300 offers info, support and advice to people with Down's syndrome, their families and the people that support them.</p> <p><u>Deaf Parenting UK:</u> information for Deaf parents and professionals working with Deaf parents.</p> <p><u>National Autistic Society:</u> a guide for partners of autistic people.</p> <p><u>The British Dyslexia:</u> provides information on dyslexia friendly style guide.</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of Disability and PNMH.</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and practice around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p> |

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| <p><u>Race & Ethnicity</u></p> | <p>Is your organisation inclusive of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority parents?</p> <p>Do you include information for BAME parents?</p> <p>Is BAME visible on your website, leaflets and in policies?</p> <p>Do you make you services known to BAME parents?</p> <p>Do you interpret key information in various languages?</p> | <p><u>Communicating with Diverse Communities: Tips Cards</u></p> <p><u>Amina-Women’s Muslim Resource Centre:</u> organisation that empowers and supports Muslim and BME women. Free Helpline: 0808 801 0301</p> <p><u>Amma Birth Companions:</u> provide perinatal support to women and birthing people facing barriers like poverty, isolation, or language.</p> <p><u>Saheliya:</u> a specialist mental health and well-being support organisation for black, minority ethnic, asylum seeker, refugee and migrant women and girls (12+).</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of BAME and PNMH</p> <p>Enhancing knowledge and practice around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p> |
| <p><u>Religion and Beliefs</u></p> | <p>Have an awareness of the different faiths and implications for new and expectant parents.</p> | <p><u>Interfaith Scotland:</u> a guide to faith communities in Scotland.</p> | <p>Promoting insight and understanding of Religion and beliefs and PNMH</p> |

TRAINING APPENDIX

| Maternal Health, Infant & Early Years | Course Descriptor | Provider | Cost |
|---|--|----------------------------|------|
| Understanding maternal mental health e-module | <p>Introduces the learner to key facts about mental illnesses that may affect women during their pregnancy and postnatal period, examines the promotion of positive mental health, identifies risk and protective factors for mental ill health and explores current evidence about prescribing in pregnancy and during breastfeeding. Completion time is around 1.5 hours.</p> <p>http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/maternalhealth/learning/maternal-mental-health.aspx</p> | NHS Education for Scotland | Free |
| Maternal mental health: the woman's journey | <p>This module takes the learner through the woman's journey from pre-conception to the postnatal year. The learner is encouraged to understand their own role in promoting and supporting a woman's mental health in the context of coordinated multi-agency care. This module represents around 2.5 hours of learning.</p> <p>http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/maternalhealth/learning/maternal-mental-health.aspx</p> | NHS Education for Scotland | Free |

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| Addressing Postnatal Depression as a Healthcare Professional | Learn how postnatal depression affects parental mental health and how to provide support on this BPS-approved course. https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/guided-self-help-for-postnatal-depression | University of Exeter via Future Learn | Free |
| Essential perinatal and infant mental health : introduction | Introduction module for the Essential Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Resource for specialist services. Key terms: perinatal community mental health team; mother and baby unit; neonatal. Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Turas Learn (nhs.scot) Requires you to register for a TURAS account- https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/ | NHS Education Scotland via TURAS | Free |
| Essential perinatal and infant mental health : keeping baby in mind | Module of Essential Perinatal and Infant Mental Health that focused on the Infant and the Parent-Infant Relationship Key terms: perinatal community mental health team; Mother and baby unit; Neonatal Unit; Learning Outcomes: Explains why the perinatal period is so crucial for child development and parent child relationships. Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Turas Learn (nhs.scot) Requires you to register for a TURAS account- https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/ | NHS Education Scotland via TURAS | Free |