

## Policy and Developments in Readiness for Trauma-Informed Maternity Services

In addition to the Scottish Government's commitment to developing a Trauma-Informed nation and workforce (detailed within Policy section), there has been collaborative commitments to policy and developments pertinent to the maternity and perinatal setting. Many of these improvements have built foundations embracing trauma-informed principles. These have included:

[The Best Start: A Five Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care](#) (2017), sets out a future vision for maternity and neonatal care which focuses on putting women, babies and families at the centre of maternity and neonatal care to ensure they receive the highest quality of care according to their needs. The future vision of maternity and neonatal services across Scotland recognises one where:

- All mothers and babies are offered a truly family-centred, safe and compassionate approach to their care, recognising their own unique circumstances and preferences.
- Every woman will have a clear birth plan developed for her needs which is updated regularly throughout her maternity journey.
- Fathers, partners and other family members are actively encouraged and supported to become an integral part of all aspects of maternal and newborn care.
- Women experience real continuity of care and carer, across the whole maternity journey, with vulnerable families being offered any additional tailored support they may require.
- All NHS Boards should review their current access to perinatal mental health services to ensure early and equitable access is available to high quality services, with clear referral pathways.
- Staff are empathetic, skilled and well supported to deliver high quality, safe services, every time.
- Multi-professional team working is the norm within an open and honest team culture, with everyone's contribution being equally valued.
- All neonatal staff can refer parents of babies in neonatal care to local psychological services.
- Where a family is bereaved they should be offered access to appropriate bereavement support before they leave the unit, and each maternity and/or neonatal unit should have access to staff members trained in bereavement care.

[Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (2022) and [Child Protection Guideline](#) (2021/ 23), have embedded processes within services to support identification of families requiring early interventions to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time. GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people.

Within maternity, this has enhanced routine enquiry across many traumatic events that has been embedded within the initial booking process of the pregnancy. Multi-agency communication, processes and pre-birth planning forums are well established nationally.

[Perinatal Mental Health Network](#) (PMHN). In 2019, following a review of current service provision across Scotland, PMHN Scotland published its report [Delivering Effective Services: Needs Assessment and Service Recommendations for Specialist and Universal Perinatal Mental Health Services](#). The Scottish Government announced funding for perinatal mental health and the establishment of the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board. The network's aims would be to develop standards and pathways for referral and management of women experiencing perinatal mental illness, establish competencies and training for health professionals, and ensure all pregnant and postnatal women had equitable access to appropriate care.

This has seen the expansion of specialist perinatal support including Perinatal Mental Health multi-agency Teams, Infant Mental Health, Specialist Midwives and Maternity and Neonatal Psychological Intervention Service (MNPI). The clinical psychologists providing the MNPI service are co-based within maternity services with a specific remit

to provide interventions which address psychological need for parents with previous or current pregnancy and neonatal complications, or who have mental health problems which directly affect maternity care.

[The National Bereavement Care Pathway Scotland](#) provides dedicated, evidence-based care pathways designed for all healthcare professionals and staff who are involved in the care of women, partners and families at all stages of pregnancy and baby loss. Funded through Scottish Government in partnership with SANDS, the vision of the National Bereavement Care Pathway (NBCP) is to increase the quality of bereavement care and reduce local and national inconsistencies so all bereaved women, partners and families in Scotland receive compassionate, person-centred care. The pathway is centred on nine core bereavement care standards:

1. A parent-led bereavement care plan is in place for all families, providing continuity between settings and into any subsequent pregnancies.
2. Bereavement care training is offered to staff who come into contact with bereaved parents, and staff are supported to access this training.
3. All bereaved parents are informed about and, if requested, referred for emotional support and for specialist mental health support when needed.
4. There is a bereavement lead in every healthcare setting where a pregnancy or baby loss may occur.
5. Bereavement rooms are available and accessible in all hospitals.
6. The preferences of all bereaved families are sought, and all bereaved parents are offered informed choices about decisions relating to their care and the care of their babies.
7. All bereaved parents are offered opportunities to make memories.
8. A system is in place to clearly signal to all health care professionals and staff that a parent has experienced a bereavement to enable continuity.
9. Healthcare staff are provided with, and can access, support and resources to deliver high quality bereavement care.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- [The Best Start: A Five Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care](#)
- [Getting it Right for Every Child](#)
- [Child Protection Guideline](#)
- [Perinatal Mental Health Network](#)
- [Perinatal and early years](#)
- [Perinatal and infant mental health NES](#)
- [Perinatal Mental Health Curricular Framework](#)
- [The National Bereavement Care Pathway Scotland](#)