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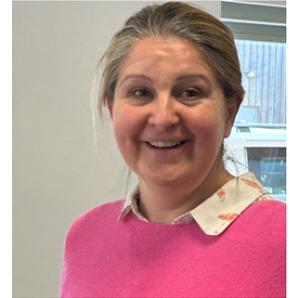
# Network News

**SHARON FERNANDEZ**

**NATIONAL CLINICAL LEAD FOR PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH**

Hello Spring!

Welcome to our Spring edition of the Wales Perinatal Mental Health Implementation Network Newsletter and to the end of Winter hopefully.... I don't know about you, but I am delighted to see the longer and brighter days.



It is that time of year where we are reflecting over the year, thinking about all that we have achieved and where we want to go next. With that in mind, we are really pleased to share that the Wales Perinatal and Infant Mental Health on-line modules are now live. You can find out more about these, our training plan and framework [here](#).

Our focus for the coming year will continue to be on the development of the inpatient unit for North Wales and making sure that women's and families voices are central, developing an All-Wales data set for our specialist teams and reviewing the psychological offer across the pathways. We will also be working with our primary care colleagues to shape and agree a perinatal pathway for them.

We have achieved so much, so far, but there is always more to do. [The Mental Health and Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategies](#) consultation period continues. A summary of the key recommendations from our 2023 Stakeholder workshops can be found [here](#). You are invited to join us at an on-line workshop on 14 May 2024 - [book here](#) to join us. However, we still urge you respond, individually, as a team, service, and organisation.

Thank you, again, for your continued passion and drive to improve the experiences of women, babies, and their families across Wales.

Enjoy the rest of your read !

## 1. NETWORK

We have been focussed on working towards meeting our 2023-24 objectives, with our key pieces of work being:

- Working in collaboration with Traumatic Stress Wales to shape and agree pathway content.
- Reviewing the psychological intervention offer for the Specialist Teams.
- Identifying gaps and developing outline resource plan for an infant mental health programme.
- Launch perinatal awareness project.
- Strengthening staff and parents' voices.
- Work towards meeting CCQI Standards for Specialist Teams.
- Agreeing outcome measures and data collection for specialist teams, midwifery and health visiting services.

We have also identified and will continue to work on:

- Developing a pathway that clarifies the support/care offered for neurodivergent parents.
- Collaborating to agree the content for the Primary Care Health and Care Pathway, for Perinatal Mental Illness.

## 7. ALL WALES PNMH DATA SET AND RCPSYCH CCQI STANDARDS

Work to agree the All-Wales Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Team data set has now started – monthly meetings are being facilitated with DHCW colleagues.

Agreement has been given for us to work collaboratively with colleagues from the Maternity & Neonatal Network on influencing mental health data and outcome measures.

The network team attended the All-Wales Health Visiting Digital Development Group in March, to explore a way forward in agreeing perinatal data collection.

Meetings have been held with HB's to understand current position against the CCQI Standards.

## 2. PERINATAL TRAUMA PATHWAY

A proposed workshop to explore a perinatal trauma pathway has been discussed, date to be confirmed.

This would provide a space to bring colleagues from midwifery, health visiting, psychology and trauma together, to better understand where we are at and where we want to be.

We are also awaiting the appointment of the National Psychological Lead, which will support us to progress this work.



## 6. HEALTH PATHWAYS AND TRAINING

Work to shape content the Health Pathways continues.

Additional funding was secured from HEIW to train another 22 Perinatal and Infant Mental Champions. Places were allocated across health boards.

The All-Wales Perinatal and Infant Mental Health On Line Learning Modules are now live ! They are the latest addition to our suite of resources for professionals, women, dads, partners and families, including care pathways, guidance on mental health screening and medication, and a series of advice and support leaflets.

[Click here](#) to find out more

## 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

Work to explore the psychological offer across the pathway has been paused until the appointment of the National Psychological Lead.

Specialist Team Lead colleagues have suggested meeting up to discuss and understand what each team is offering now and, how this could be shared and replicated across teams.

In the meantime, the network team have re-connected with colleagues within Improvement Cymru and agreement has been given to share information with the national forum. Colleagues within health boards have also been encouraged to re-connect with local forums.

## 4. PARENT-INFANT RELATIONSHIP

The network team have met with Dr Liz Gregory and agreed a way to work collaboratively going forward.

Work is now underway, to understand where we are at across Wales, identify stakeholders, map existing positions, and inform programme content for the development of infant mental health service provision across Wales.

## 5. PERINATAL AWARENESS PROJECT AND STRENGTHENING SERVICE USER VOICES

We continue to work in collaboration with Women's Health colleagues, to identify appropriate resources to support perinatal mental health. This information will be used to develop a web presence which will be made available for the public to access very soon.

Links have been made with Welsh Government colleagues leading on this work. Further meetings are planned to explore and agree, how the network can influence perinatal mental health discussion within Maternity Voices Partnerships.

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE EVENT

A powerful one day event was held where colleagues from across Wales' perinatal mental health network came together to share ideas and best practices on how we can better support fathers during the perinatal period. You can view presentations from the day [here](#)

See feedback below from attendees who joined us....

## What you told us you enjoyed the most about the event

Why fathers mental health matters too. Although we may know this but to present the science and reasons behind it was really refreshing. I will most certainly relay this across to my ethnic minority communities

5 respondents (31%) answered **speakers** for this question.

thoroughly enjoyed  
certainly relay  
range of speakers  
services  
speakers  
informative  
speakers were excellent  
ethnic minority  
passion and drive  
dads  
speakers - interesting  
perinatal stage minded researchers  
support  
England and Wales  
fathers  
services and research  
Variety of speakers  
available for men  
event was informative

learning about the amount of support that is out there for dads to be able to signpost them to

Everyone who spoke and all those who attended have the same passion and drive, this was evident. All the speakers were excellent and thoroughly enjoyed all of the presentations.

Meeting like minded researchers and professionals

It was helpful to hear what is happening both in England and Wales to engage Fathers more meaningfully in services

Great Event Thank you! Lots of food for thought

An interesting worthwhile and uplifting day, thank you to everyone who had an input. I have lots to go away to think about and act on.

Excellent event today; lots to think about re. developing support and pathways for fathers/partners.

Thank you for a really informative and enjoyable day. Excellent speakers. Lots to think about

### Feedback

lots of motivating work and ideas heard

Thank you, very informative

It has been very informative, so thank you all. Looking forward to receiving the resources to share with my team members

Thank you for organising it's been an excellent event, informative and inspiring

# FUTURE EVENTS

**MONDAY**  
**29 APRIL 2024**

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS  
WEBINAR  
(LUNCH AND LEARN)

**[Book Here](#)**

**TUESDAY**  
**14 MAY 2024**

MENTAL HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING  
STRATEGY  
CONSULTATION  
WORKSHOP

**[Book Here](#)**

**MONDAY**  
**20 MAY 2024**

COMMUNITY OF  
PRACTICE EVENT  
**EDI- LGBTQI+**

**MONDAY**  
**23 SEPT 2024**

COMMUNITY OF  
PRACTICE EVENT  
**NEURODIVERSITY**

**MONDAY**  
**27 JAN 2025**

COMMUNITY OF  
PRACTICE EVENT  
**BEREAVEMENT,  
SUICIDE, SELF HARM**

# SPOTLIGHT ON..



## Perinatal Mental Health Online Learning Modules

Our new series of online training resources to help health and social care professionals to support women and families experiencing mental health difficulties are now live on the [Tŷ Dysgu](#) platform.

We have produced the e-learning modules with the mental health team at Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW). They provide a highly detailed introduction for staff working from 'informed' through to 'specialist' levels as outlined within the Wales perinatal and infant mental health curricular framework.

The modules are the latest addition to our suite of resources for professionals, women, dads, partners and families, including care pathways, guidance on mental health screening and medication, and a series of advice and support leaflets.

Anyone can access the training, but the modules will be of particular benefit to practitioners in the following sectors and disciplines:

Early Years	Emergency Services	Health Visiting
Maternity Services	Neonatal Units	Primary Care
Social Care	Specialist PNMH/PAIRS Teams	Voluntary Sectors

[You can find the catalogue of the seven modules on the Tŷ Dysgu website.](#)

<u>Essential Introduction</u> (Module 1)	Keeping Baby in Mind (Module 2)	Stigma (Module 3)
Risk (Module 4)	Assessment (Module 5)	Interventions (Module 6)
Pharmacological (Module 7)		

You will need to register on [Y Tŷ Dysgu](#) if you do not already have an account.

Ainsley Bladon, Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan Implementation Lead at HEIW said: "We are delighted to be able to support the workforce to strengthen their knowledge, skills and understanding as they support families in this important period of life."

Sharon Fernandez, National Clinical Lead for Perinatal Mental Health at NHS Wales Executive said: "It is so important that all colleagues working with women, their families, and babies during pregnancy and after having a baby, have the right knowledge, skills and support, to ensure that they are delivering the best care that they can. These online modules, will support all of us across Wales, to be able to achieve this."

For more information, visit <https://executive.nhs.wales/functions/strategic-programme-for-mental-health/perinatal-mental-health/curricular-framework/>

# SPOTLIGHT ON...



## PNMH and Lactation-Breastfeeding - Improving the interface of care for the benefit of women and their babies

### Breastfeeding and Maternal Mental Health

There is great potential for positive collaborative working between PNMH and Lactation/Infant Feeding Care teams to improve both PNMH and Breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and babies. For many women, lactation and breastfeeding are an intrinsic and integral part of how they see themselves as a mother and are thus often key to their self-efficacy and self-identity as both a mother and a woman.

The Wales Infant Feeding Network (WIFN) was set up in 2017 by clinical specialists to provide an expert, network forum for lactation specialists and infant feeding leads across Wales to help drive forward improvements in breastfeeding and infant feeding care.

All services and professionals serving mothers and babies in Wales are required to receive infant feeding training appropriate to role.

What do PNMH team professionals need to know about breastfeeding, lactation and infant feeding?

UNICEF BFI UK has established a bespoke training programme for PNMH professionals to provide a minimum benchmark [Courses - Baby Friendly Initiative \(unicef.org.uk\)](https://www.unicef.org.uk/courses-baby-friendly-initiative).

### Breastfeeding and Maternal Mental Health Key Points

- If a mother wants to breastfeed and it is going well, this is protective of her mental health
- If a mother wants to breastfeed and she experiences problems that are not addressed and mediated, this increases her risk of PND and other PNMH issues
- Breastfeeding is so much more than just transferring milk and calories to a baby - it is part of a complex, primal relationship between mother and child.
- Studies show that 80% of women who stop breastfeeding in the first six weeks report that they were not ready to stop but felt they had no other option
- When women are experiencing adverse PNMH issues, supporting their continued breastfeeding can have an important protective effect on their recovery and help prevent exacerbation of their illness
- Cultures which have a low incidence of postpartum mood disorders have rituals associated with new motherhood that provide support and care for new mothers. These cultures, although quite different from each other, all share similar protective social structures that honour the woman's new motherhood status and have cultural practices in place to nurture her supportively with establishing breastfeeding
- Timely and effective lactation and infant feeding support can prevent and mitigate escalation of breastfeeding problems, thus it is really important that PNMH professionals work closely with midwives, HVs and local Lactation Specialist-Infant Feeding teams to ensure the mother's breastfeeding journey is safeguarded
- Practical advice with issues such as how to manage overnight parenting to ensure the mother gains adequate sleep can help a woman to maintain her equilibrium during the intense early days of new mothering.

# SPOTLIGHT ON...



## PNMH and Lactation-Breastfeeding - Improving the interface of care for the benefit of women and their babies... continued

- Simply suggesting that a woman experiencing PNMH problems stops breastfeeding is often unhelpful and potentially harmful. Concerns regarding, for example, medications should always be investigated with reference to expert lactation-medication information sources and collaboration with local infant feeding-lactation specialists so that a plan can be drawn up that safeguards the woman's breastfeeding as well as keeping her and her baby safe

### National Action on Breastfeeding in Wales

- The All Wales Breastfeeding Action Plan (AWBAP) aims for more women to be supported to breastfeed their babies in Wales and to do so for longer, and for the inequalities in breastfeeding between demographic groups to be reduced.
- The plan calls for a whole system approach incorporating the whole health team as well as wider action around normalising breastfeeding.
- A National Breastfeeding Strategic Steering group has been re-established
- Current workstreams include:
  - Development of UK and Wales wide frameworks for infant feeding data
  - Exploration of "Once for Wales" approach for the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)
  - Development of an Infant Feeding Knowledge and Skills framework including all staff who are involved in the care of mothers and babies.

### For more information contact:

Sharon Breward MBE, Queen's Nurse - Chair Wales Infant Feeding Network  
[Sharon.breward@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Sharon.breward@wales.nhs.uk)

Rachel Evans  
National Lead Midwife for Breastfeeding, Public Health Wales  
[rachel.evans43@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:rachel.evans43@wales.nhs.uk)

### Helpful links

[A4-Handout-Breastfeeding-Mental-Health-9.11.17-LCGB.pdf](#)

[Antidepressants and Breastfeeding - The Breastfeeding Network](#)

# SPOTLIGHT ON..



## #BeeProud

**Barbara Cunningham (Perinatal Peer Mentor)**  
**Sarah Tunley (Perinatal CPN)**  
**Katie Davies (Perinatal Peer Mentor)**  
**Becky James (Peer Mentor Development Worker)**



In collaboration with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's Arts In Health team, Barbara Cunningham, Perinatal Peer Mentor, has been successful in achieving funding to make a dream a reality for Spring 2024.

The current funding release is enabling Barbara and colleagues to host and facilitate five sessions, in each borough in Gwent. The sessions are offered to mums in the community under the care of our Mental Health Perinatal Team. Mums can attend with their babies. At the session, they have opportunity to take part in zero cost creative activities and to build their own networks and support by connecting with others with similar experiences and conditions. This is a connection that offers great support to each other, by sharing their stories and experiences.

The creations have all been so well considered. Take for example the bunny prints - the feet are foot prints from their babies.

The mums gave feedback that they really enjoyed the session and expressed interest in attending other groups for perinatal that may be offered. They expressed interest in attending further craft sessions in future when available.



# SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Topic Area	URL Link	Brief Description
Autism	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@AutismMenstruationToMenopause/playlists">https://www.youtube.com/@AutismMenstruationToMenopause/playlists</a>	A series of videos re Autism and menstruation to menopause
COVID 19	<a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S037837822300227X">https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S037837822300227X</a>	Research into parent-infant bonding in relation to parents' perceived stress and psychological distress during the first lockdown, and to examine whether associations of stress with parent-infant bonding were mediated by parental mental health.
3rd Sector	<a href="#">Impact Report 2022 2023 (adobe.com)</a>	Llamau Impact Report for 2022/23
3rd Sector	<a href="#">Reflect Cymru - Gwent   Barnardo's (barnardos.org.uk)</a>	Further info on "Reflect" who provide support to women (and partners) that have had one or more children permanently removed from their care.
Early Years	<a href="#">Early childhood play, learning and care in Wales - Hwb (gov.wales)</a>	Resources and guidance for childcare, play settings and schools on early childhood play, learning and care for 0 to 5 year olds in Wales.
Lived Experiences	<a href="#">WHAT WORKS FOR ME? An exploration of perinatal mental health interventions in Scotland — Discovery - the University of Dundee Research Portal</a>	An exploration of perinatal mental health interventions in Scotland.
Mental Health Act - review	<a href="#">The independent Mental Health Act review interim report 01_05_2018.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>	The independent review of the Mental Health Act – Interim Report from 2018.
Resources	<a href="#">27-mmha-everyones-business-ebulletin-winter-2023-24.pdf (maternalmentalhealthalliance.org)</a>	Maternal Mental Health Alliance Winter 2023/24 Newsletter
Suicide and Self Harm Strategy	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy">https://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy</a>	Draft suicide and self harm prevention strategy
Suicide and Self Harm	<a href="https://ssh.p.wales/en/knowledge-base/resources/documents/">https://ssh.p.wales/en/knowledge-base/resources/documents/</a>	Findings from learning and development needs survey conducted during June and July 2023, aimed at people across all sectors in Wales whose work brings them into contact with people affected by suicide and self-harm, and people involved in developing and managing services to respond to the needs of those affected by suicide and self-harm.



# SUGGESTED FURTHER READING CONT'D

Topic Area	URL Link	Brief Description
Trauma	<a href="https://acehubwales.com/resources/trace-toolkit/">https://acehubwales.com/resources/trace-toolkit/</a>	Various toolkits and resources
Training	<a href="#">blatfform Tŷ Dysgu</a>	Perinatal Mental Health On Line Learning Modules
Training	<a href="#">Perinatal and parent infant mental health lecture series (CPD90) - Tavistock Training (tavistockandportman.ac.uk)</a>	Perinatal and parent infant mental health lecture series
Training	<a href="#">Perinatal mental health - Tavistock Training (tavistockandportman.ac.uk)</a>	Perinatal and parent infant mental health lecture series
Training	<a href="#">Courses - Family Relations Institute</a>	A range of courses and resources
Training	<a href="https://www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/post-graduate-certificate-in-advanced-practice-in-infant-mental-health-and-wellbeing/">https://www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/post-graduate-certificate-in-advanced-practice-in-infant-mental-health-and-wellbeing/</a>	The University of Northampton's Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Practice in Infant Mental Health and Wellbeing
Training	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/in-fant-mental-health/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/in-fant-mental-health/</a>	University of Glasgow's Postgraduate Infant Mental Health
Training	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/microcredentials/understanding-infant-mental-health-development/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/microcredentials/understanding-infant-mental-health-development/</a>	Understanding infant mental health & development
Training & Resources	<a href="#">Mental Health Leadership Hub - Gwella HEIW Leadership Portal for Wales</a>	Resource for professionals at any stage of their career to develop an understanding of how leadership applies to everyone at all levels, and how practicing compassionate leadership can benefit both our staff and patients within mental health services in Wales
Training	<a href="https://tavistockandportman.ac.uk/courses/in-fant-observation-in-the-perinatal-period/">https://tavistockandportman.ac.uk/courses/in-fant-observation-in-the-perinatal-period/</a>	12-week,(on line) CPD course supports multidisciplinary practitioners, who work with women experiencing mental health difficulties, and their families, to better understand how infant observation can be used in clinical work.

# SUGGESTED FURTHER READING CONT'D

Topic Area	URL Link	Brief Description
Wellbeing	<a href="https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/parenting-families-research/our-research/digital-assessment-of-wellbeing-for-new-parents-dawn-p/">https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/parenting-families-research/our-research/digital-assessment-of-wellbeing-for-new-parents-dawn-p/</a>	A study into wellbeing in new parents.
Welsh Government - Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/draft-mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy">https://www.gov.wales/draft-mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy</a>	Draft Mental Health Strategy Consultation paper
Welsh Government - Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy Consultation	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy">https://www.gov.wales/suicide-and-self-harm-prevention-strategy</a>	Draft suicide and self harm prevention strategy
Welsh Government Consultation	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/proposed-changes-putting-things-right-process">https://www.gov.wales/proposed-changes-putting-things-right-process</a>	<b>Cut off for responses 6th May</b> on proposed changes to Putting it Right process
Welsh Government Guidance Paper	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people/improving-the-mental-health-of-babies-children-and-young-people-a-framework-of-modifiable-factors</a>	Guidance paper on improving the mental health of babies, children and young people: a framework of modifiable factors.

If there is anything you would like to see included in future newsletters, or if you would like us to shine a spotlight on your organisation or the work that you and your team are doing, then do please contact one of us to arrange.

**THANK YOU!**

***From Sharon and the team***



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