

Briefing summary: Maternal mental health workshop January 2023

An overview of projects discussed at a workshop on 23rd January 2023 led by Ways to Wellness together with colleagues from the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria (NENC) and Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Network team. A more detailed record of the event is available [here](#).

The workshop chaired by Professor Chris Drinkwater brought together clinicians, academics, link workers and social prescribing project leads, VCSE and charity infrastructure organisations, commissioners and health and care professionals across maternity and mental health to review evaluation activity in the North East and North Cumbria related to maternal mental health through two projects, Ways to Wellness-hosted VCSE Maternal Mental Health Services projectⁱ and Newcastle University's Designing Accessible Maternal Mental Health Services: The MaMS Study.

About the MaMS Study

The MaMS studyⁱⁱ which began in April 2021 aims to inform the design of maternal mental health services to make them more accessible to women experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in the North East and North Cumbria. While there are services available in the region to support new parents struggling with their mental health, not all those who need support are accessing these services. The project gathered insights from a range of stakeholders from various professional backgrounds including healthcare, voluntary and charity sectors and social enterprises to gain their perspectives on why maternal and mental health services are not reaching certain groups of women, and ways of better engaging with these women.

Women experiencing various forms of deprivation were also interviewed to understand the barriers they face in accessing maternal mental health services, their views of current services and how they think services could be improved to make them more accessible. The findings from this project will provide valuable and practical insights that can inform the development of maternal mental health services that can better reach women living in deprivation and meet their needs.

About the VCSE Maternal Mental Health Services project

A new VCSE-hosted link worker prototype project was launched in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) to support the development of the NHS pilot services for Maternal Mental Health Services (MMHS). The prototype project was developed in partnership with the NHS to support women on their pregnancy journey requiring community support to navigate services, maintain their health and access advice. The project, which began roll out in 2022, has created a collective of VCSE partners working in tandem with NHS services to understand the preventative help and support women and birthing people require when they experience trauma, loss and fear relating to the birthing or maternity experience.

The prototypes in Sunderland, North Cumbria, South Tees and Northumberland are designed to support women with mild to moderate mental health needs in pregnancy and to babies' second birthday and complement the NHS MMHS support for women specifically targeting support to women and birthing people experiencing moderate to severe psychological difficulties related to pregnancy, childbirth or child loss.

We would like to invite you to join us for a follow up event **Wednesday 26th April 2023 from 1 – 4pm in Central Newcastle (venue TBC), if you would like to be sent information to sign up for our event please email ang.broadbridge@waystowellness.org.uk**

ⁱ The 'VCSE Maternal Mental Health Services Project' is led by Ways to Wellness, in partnership with the NHS, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) organisations and Maternity Voices Partnerships. Funding is provided by the North East and North Cumbria Mental Health ICS and Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Network team, as part of the NHS England Maternal Mental Health Fast Follower programme.

ⁱⁱ The project is funded by the Local Maternity and Neonatal System and the Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Network.