

# [Perinatal Mental Health Inquiry – Have your say](#)

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## Perinatal Mental Health

The National Assembly's **Children, Young People and Education Committee** has agreed its first inquiry as part of its programme of work on the First 1,000 days of a child's life. The Committee has agreed to undertake an inquiry on **perinatal mental health**, informed by the Committee's [pre-consultation evidence](#).

Perinatal Mental Health refers to the period from the start of pregnancy to the end of the first year after the baby is born. Perinatal mental health is about the emotional well-being of pregnant women and their child, their partner and families.

Perinatal mental health problems include a range of disorders of varying severity, which present in a variety of health settings and which are currently managed by many different services. Some of these services are specifically designed to meet the needs of pregnant and postpartum women and their infants. Others are provided for them as part of a general service.



Perinatal mental health services are concerned with the prevention, detection and management of perinatal mental health problems that complicate pregnancy and the postpartum year. These problems include both new onset problems, recurrences of previous problems in women who have been well for some time, and those with mental health problems before they became pregnant.

## Terms of Reference

The Committee will conduct an inquiry into current Welsh Government policy on perinatal mental health. The purpose of the inquiry is to help gain a picture of current perinatal mental health service provision across Wales, in both community and inpatient settings. The Committee will gather written and oral evidence, as well as hold



a stakeholder event to hear about women's (and their families) own experiences and journeys through care.

The Committee is keen to hear how services link together under the umbrella of Perinatal Mental Health, including specialised perinatal mental health services, maternity services, general adult mental health services, inpatient mother and baby units, parent and infant mental health services, health visiting, clinical psychology, and midwifery services, GPs and the extended primary care team, role of the third sector and local support groups, and private providers of services.

The Committee's Inquiry will consider:

- The Welsh Government's approach to perinatal mental health, with a specific focus on accountability and the funding of perinatal mental health services covering prevention, detection and management of perinatal mental health problems. This will include whether resources are used to the best effect.
- The pattern of inpatient care for mothers with severe mental illness who require admission to hospital across both specialist mother and baby units (designated mother and baby units in England) and other inpatient settings in Wales. (Since 2013, there has not been a mother and baby unit in Wales).
- The level of specialist community perinatal mental health provision that exists in each Health Board in Wales and whether services meet national standards.
- The current clinical care pathway and whether current primary care services respond in a timely manner to meet the emotional well-being and mental health needs of mothers, fathers and the wider family during pregnancy and the first year of a baby's life.
- Consideration of how well perinatal mental healthcare is integrated, covering antenatal education and preconception advice, training for health professionals, equitable and timely access to psychological help for mild to moderate depression and anxiety disorders, and access to third sector and bereavement support.
- Whether services reflect the importance of supporting mothers to bond and develop healthy attachment with her baby during and after pregnancy, including breastfeeding support.



- The extent to which health inequalities can be addressed in developing future services.
- The Committee has today issued a call for written evidence, which will provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider a range of views from stakeholders.

Do you have a story to tell? The Committee would be keen to hear about your experiences of receiving care. Please visit the Committee webpage for more information by clicking [here](#).

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