

Perinatal Mental Health Cymru (PMH Cymru)

About Perinatal Mental Health Cymru

- Perinatal Mental Health Cymru is a Charity founded in 2016 by Charlotte Harding.
- We are a lived experienced organisation with a board of four trustees who have a knowledge or a lived experience of mental illness.
- We are currently based in the Llandaff North hub in Cardiff.
- We take a family approach to perinatal mental health related illness and currently run courses and activities for families at risk and/or those affected.
- We are currently unfunded and all involved work on a voluntary basis.

Background

- PMH Cymru founder has a long term mental illness. She was unfortunate to suffer with postpartum psychosis after the birth of her first child and postnatal anxiety after the birth of her second.
- During an episode of postpartum psychosis, Charlotte needed hospital treatment but could not receive this as the specialised mother and baby unit in Wales had been closed.
- Charlotte had a perinatal mental health psychiatrist and community mental health nurse at the time and it was agreed that home treatment would be better than a stay in an acute psychiatric ward without her baby.
- Home treatment was long and there was very little support other than her CPN. It took 1.5 years to recover.

- Whilst pregnant with her second child in 2014, Charlotte had specialised care from the start of the pregnancy however this was short lived as funding cuts had been made in Wales to perinatal mental healthcare so at 20 weeks all support was stopped.
- Charlotte set up PMH Cymru as a result of the funding cuts made in Wales, to raise awareness that there is no mother and baby unit and that families are not being heard, children are being removed from homes due to services not having the understanding of perinatal mental health related illnesses.

What PMH Cymru offers

We offer a wide range of services delivered in the community by volunteers with a lived experience.

- We offer peer based support to families In South Wales with or at risk of developing perinatal mental health issues.
- We offer an 'Enjoy your baby' 5 week course based on Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). All volunteers have been trained to deliver this course, we received support and free training from Mind Cymru. We have a licence to deliver this course under our Charity name.
- We offer a 4 week introduction to mindfulness which is delivered by a qualified mindfulness practitioner. The course is usually taken after the 'Enjoy your baby' to give parents extra tools to help in their recovery.
- We offer one to one based peer support to parents not wanting to/ or to anxious to talk in our peer group settings. We stress that the one to one support is not 'professional support' and no advice will be given on medication.
- We offer support for fathers and partners.

Referral criteria

We accept self referrals and referrals from health professionals. Referral forms can be downloaded from our website or requested by email. Although referrals can be made by the parent themselves our usual referral criteria is as follows

- Women who are identified during pregnancy who have severe mental illness which may include bipolar disorder, psychosis, depression, schizophrenia
- Women with alcohol/substance misuse problems
- Those identified during pregnancy who are at risk of a serious mental illness (family history of bipolar disorder or severe child birth related mental illness i.e. postpartum psychosis
- Women with a severe form of depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, obsessional compulsive disorder, personality disorder, pregnancy related mental health problems

Who we work with

At present we are developing a relationship with the Cardiff perinatal mental health team. They currently receive high numbers of referrals for women with low to moderate mood and anxiety who could perhaps get support in the community from PMH Cymru. We hope our relationship will grow and we are looking to work closely with them.

We also have links with

- Primary mental health services. They will be referring service users to us shortly. Families will be referred to the 'Enjoy your baby' course.
- Flying start have expressed an interest and wish to refer parents to our services. This is something we can see happening very soon.
- Health visitors. Local health visitors (Llandaff North area) put information about our services in every 'New Mum' pack. We hope that health visitors from other areas of Cardiff will do the same soon.

Committees and boards we are part of

1. The All Wales Perinatal Mental Health Steering group. A group that sees the management of the 1.5 million perinatal mental health fund.
2. The Tier 4 specialised mental health group. A subgroup of the All Wales Perinatal Mental Health Steering group which sees us working with Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) and those with a lived experience. The group was formed to develop a model mother and baby unit for Wales.