



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Oibríochtaí Meabhairshláinte
Ospidéal Naomh Lómáin Baile Phámar Baile Átha Cliath 20.

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PQ Ref: 18689/21

6th May 2021

Parliamentary Question:

To ask the Minister for Health the progress made since 27 June 2020 to expanding the national roll-out of the model care for specialist perinatal mental health; and if he will make a statement on the matter.
-Neasa Hourigan

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Perinatal mental health services are specialist services for women with a mental health problem. The service is for pregnant women and women with a baby up to one year old who may have an existing or new mental health problem and also women with severer mental health problems and are planning a pregnancy. Although as many as 1 in 5 women have mental health problems in pregnancy or after birth a perinatal mental health service will usually look after someone who has a more serious or complex mental health problem. So, not every woman with a mental health problem during pregnancy, or after their baby is born, will need this service. Women can get good care from their GP and public health nurse (PHN) for milder mental health problems in pregnancy and after birth.

The Model of Care is based on the maternity networks recommended in the National Maternity Strategy and aligned to hospital groups, developed in a hub and spoke format with all 19 maternity services included. There are now 54 of the 67 funded posts in place in Hub sites and 12/13 perinatal mental health midwives in post in spoke sites. The perinatal mental health midwife outstanding is for MRH Portlaoise, at this post has been recently re-advertised with a closing date of 13th May. In Q1 2021 additional PFG funding was made available to the Programme to continue with the recruitment of outstanding staff. With bespoke panels already in place for most disciplines it is hoped that all teams will be fully recruited during 2021.

The specialist teams and perinatal mental health midwives work jointly to ensure that all women attending the maternity service will have information on positive mental health. Since June 2020 the 12 PMH leaflets developed by the experts in the PMH service are available to order free of charge for individual women and frontline healthcare services at www.healthpromotion.ie.

Whilst the focus of the Model of Care (MOC) was on the specialist component of a perinatal mental health strategy, it is hoped and expected that this will act as the catalyst for all relevant service areas in the HSE to



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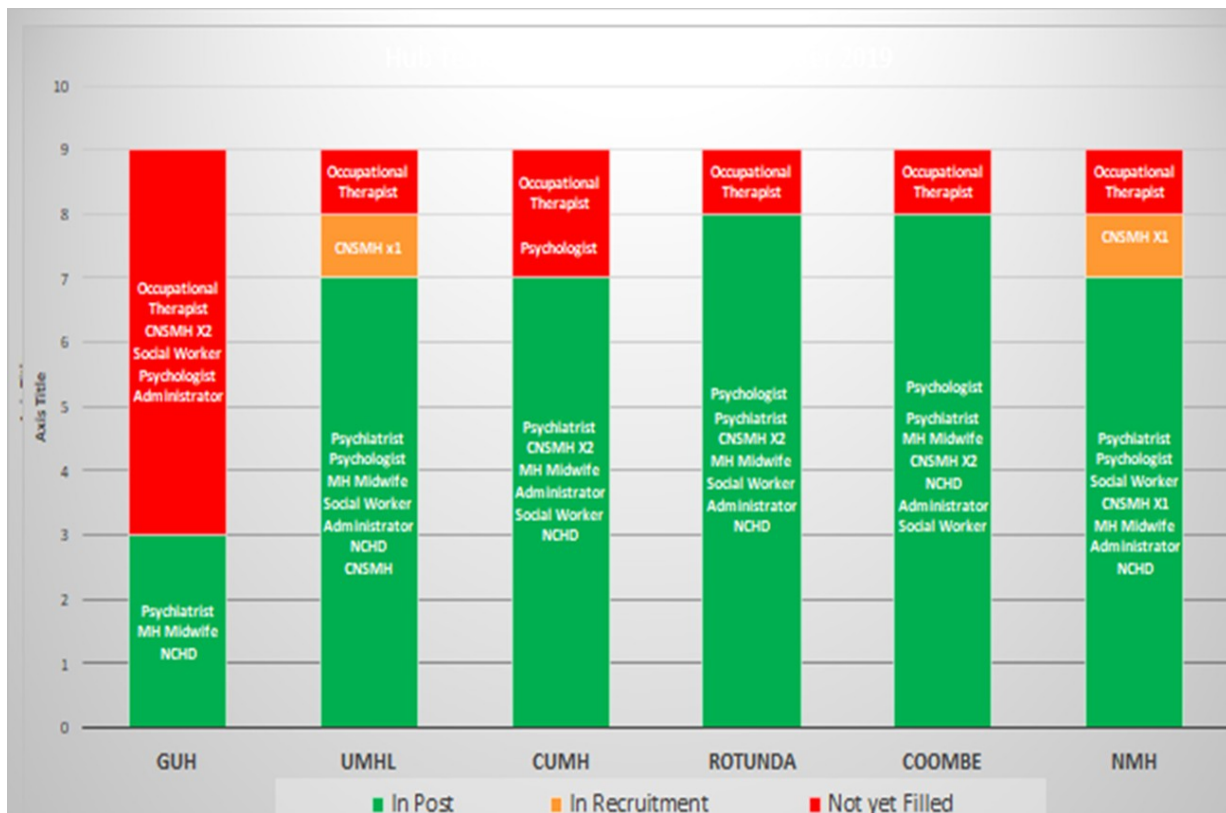
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come together to implement a comprehensive mental health strategy. For this reason the MOC also included a section on the clinical pathway for a complete perinatal mental health response.

Hub Team posts in place - 01/01/2021



Hub Team posts in development following the release of funding - 01/04/2021

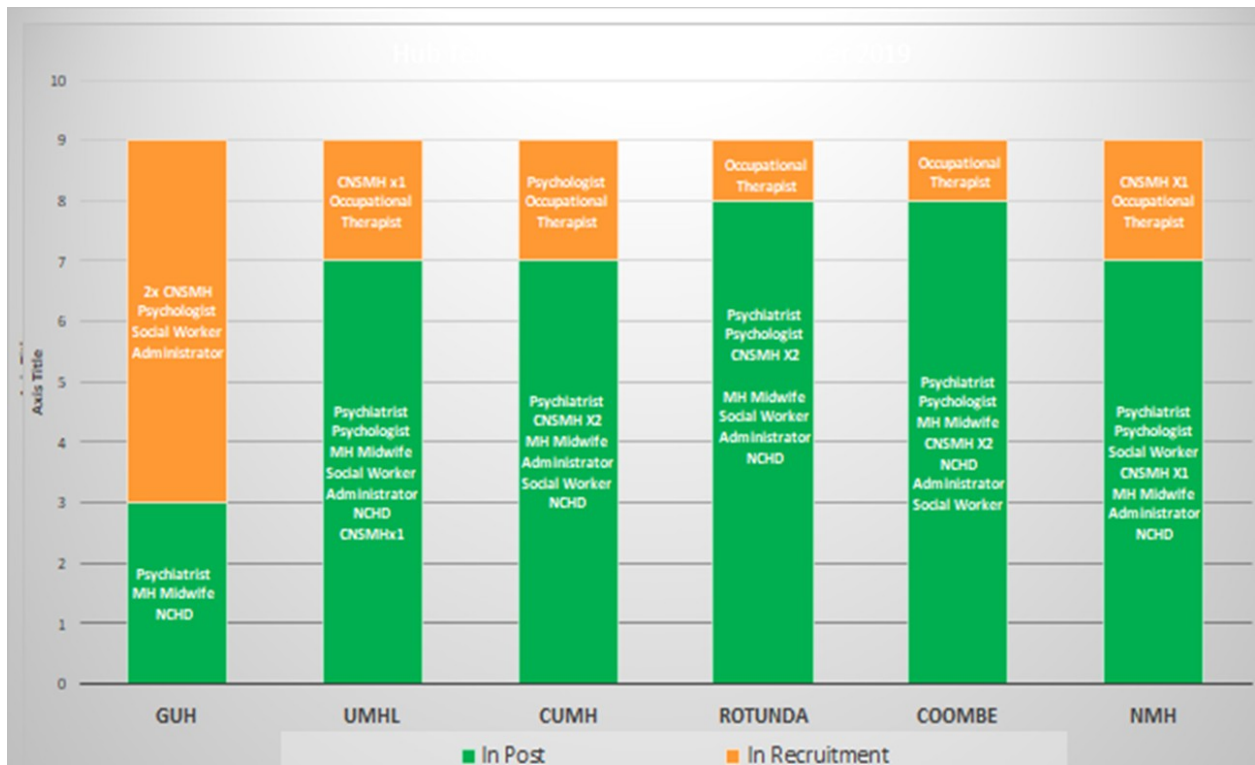


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Also since June 2020 the National Programme for SPMHS has developed A Handbook for Perinatal Mental Health Midwives working in spoke sites. The Programme is also working jointly with the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (OMNSD) in developing A National Guidance Framework to Enhance Knowledge and Skills for Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) Midwives, Clinical Midwife Manager 2 (CMM2).

New frontline staff working in Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services have been provided with specific induction and specialist training in line with their discipline and role within the multidisciplinary team. The National Programme also has a National Oversight Implementation Group (NOIG) which consists of a psychiatrist from each hub site as well as a national nominee from each other discipline on the SPMH multidisciplinary team. The NOIG meet every two months and address:

- the recruitment of hub teams and spoke staff
- clinical activity
- training needs

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- accommodation

and other relevant matters.

The Specialist Perinatal Healthcare App for healthcare professionals continues to be updated regularly. It is designed to provide specific PMH information and information on how to access service for all frontline staff, as well as detailed PMH training materials. The PMH app has been downloaded by approximately 1,200 frontline healthcare professionals, the majority being midwives and public health nurses. The app provides easy access to the latest information from the service for all staff including GPs and practice nurses. Since June 2020 specific information was added for GPs following a specific piece of work with GP Buddy who developed a series of questions for the perinatal service. These were answered by Dr. Richard Duffy, Perinatal Psychiatrist, Rotunda Hospital. New video resources were also added such as the SPMHS Me to Mum videos and videos to raise awareness of women from the travelling community to perinatal mental health supports.

Specialist perinatal mental health services are provided in maternity hospitals and teams aim to see women in convenient and child friendly locations. These include both Antenatal clinics and Maternity wards. However, in recent times because of covid-19 the use of Video Enabled Care through [Attend Anywhere](#) (AA) has supported women to connect with their perinatal mental health service. For some women, clinicians can provide support and interventions online through this platform. The rollout and support for this platform in the form of equipment and training for all hub and spoke sites took place since June 2020. For new mothers, it allows therapy to be provided in their own environment, without the constraints of travel or having to bring a newborn to an appointment. Video calls through AA may provide a blended approach to linking with the service; allowing accessibility for those who have limited transport links or cannot drive following a C-section.

The National Programme has also presented to the DOH Woman's Health Taskforce and submitted a business plan for an additional 0.5WTE Consultant Psychiatrist for GUH and 4 additional perinatal mental health midwives for 4 of the larger Hub sites. We are awaiting the result of our submission at present.

Two of the main areas to be addressed in 2021 include appropriate accommodation for Hub site teams, in particular in the three HSE hub sites, that is, UMHL, CUMH and GUH and the development of the Ireland's first Mother and Baby Unit which will be the National Programmes focus for World Maternal Mental Health Day 2021 on the 5th May, 2021.

For more information on the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service please see the following link [here](#).

Yours sincerely,

Dr Amir Niazi



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