



Office of the Assistant National Director  
Access and Integration

HSE Mental Health Services,  
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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúnta  
Rochtain agus Comhtháthú: Seirbhísí  
Meabhairshláinte FSS

Ospidéal Naomh Loman  
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Deputy Sorcha Clarke.  
Dail Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**PQ Number: 27078/25**

**PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health the steps she is taking to reduce disparities in access to perinatal mental health care among minorities such as migrants, those from the Travelling community, and low-income families; and if she will make a statement on the matter. - Sorca Clarke**

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Dear Deputy Clarke,

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 available for all pregnant women in Ireland who may have an existing or new mental health problem. This service is also available for women with more severe mental health problems who are planning a pregnancy. Although as many as 1 in 5 women in Ireland have mental health problems in pregnancy or after birth, perinatal mental health services usually look after someone who has a more serious or complex mental health problem. Not every woman with a mental health problem during pregnancy, or after their baby is born, will require access to this service. The GP and public health nurse (PHN) can also provide care and support to women experiencing mild mental health problems in pregnancy and after birth. If the mental health problem is moderate to severe, the GP can make a referral to a specialist perinatal mental health service.

The Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services (SPMHS) Model of Care (MOC) was launched in 2017 and provided a national framework for the development of mental health for women in the perinatal period. It has been very successfully implemented with the establishment of a hub and spoke model covering the 19 maternity hospitals across the country. All the hub sites have appointed full consultant led multidisciplinary teams providing a comprehensive range of services to women with moderate to severe perinatal mental health problems. In addition, an innovative aspect of the MOC was the development of Perinatal Mental Health Midwife posts in all of the maternity hospitals who provide care to women with milder mental health problems. A [National Framework document to support PMH Midwives](#) was launched in 2021.

The "Social Inclusion Work Stream" under "Sharing the Vision" (STV), our mental health policy, aims to ensure equitable access to mental health services for all marginalized groups in Ireland. This work



stream focuses on reducing health inequalities and improving access for vulnerable and excluded populations, including those with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. In addition, the perinatal mental health services provided under the framework of the 2017 Model of Care are public services and are available to women irrespective of their ethnic status and income. A key principle of the services is to ensure that they are accessible as possible. A service project underway in the Rotunda Hospital is the examination of a specific approach to care “Trauma Informed Care” which acknowledges that many service users have experienced trauma. This approach aims to avoid re-traumatisation of women accessing the service while promoting positive outcomes. This will help to inform approaches to service provision for disadvantaged women.

### **Supports Available**

Further awareness of perinatal mental health has increased substantially within maternity services since the inception of the MOC. The HSE SPMHS programme have developed a number of resources to support women during this time. Patient information leaflets are displayed within maternity services and are available online on the HSE website. Further information can be found by consulting with the links below:

- [Mental Health in Pregnancy.pdf \(size 459.7 KB\)](#)
- [What are Perinatal Mental Health Services.pdf \(size 549.1 KB\)](#)
- [Planning a Pregnancy - Information for women with mental health problems.pdf \(size 480.2 KB\)](#)
- [Postnatal Depression.pdf \(size 601.7 KB\)](#)
- [Postnatal Depression - Information for Carers.pdf \(size 484 KB\)](#)
- [Perinatal OCD.pdf \(size 478.5 KB\)](#)
- [Perinatal OCD information for Carers.pdf \(size 544.3 KB\)](#)
- [Lithium in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding.pdf \(size 484 KB\)](#)
- [Valporate in women and girls who could get pregnant.pdf \(size 513.3 KB\)](#)
- [Postpartum Psychosis.pdf \(size 530 KB\)](#)
- [Postpartum Psychosis - information for Carers.pdf \(size 419.3 KB\)](#)

Further information on Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Services can be found here:

[Download the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health: Model of Care for Ireland](#)

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

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**Tony McCusker**  
**General Manager**  
**Access and Integration; HSE Mental Health Services**