

Options to increase Mother and Baby Unit capacity consultation

February 2022

Section A: Background

Scottish Government Consultation Process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our [consultations online](#). Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online or by email.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Currently, there are two regional Mother and Baby Units in Scotland. These are at St John's Hospital, Livingston hosted by NHS Lothian and Leverndale Hospital, Glasgow hosted by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Each Mother and Baby Unit can take up to six women and their babies.

Information from the existing Mother and Baby Units and data linkage show that, over the five years 2016-2020, there were an average of 115 Mother and Baby Unit admissions per year. However, there were a further 125 admissions per year of women within 12 months of childbirth to other inpatient mental health beds.

The data also indicate that in all health board areas, except NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, women were more likely to be admitted to a non-Mother and Baby Unit setting than to a Mother and Baby Unit if they require inpatient mental health treatment. NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are the host boards for the two Mother and Baby Units.

It is likely that some of the women and their infants admitted to non-Mother and Baby Unit settings would have benefitted from Mother and Baby Unit admission. However, we do not currently have the data to tell us why women were admitted to non-Mother and Baby Unit beds. There are a number of possible reasons ranging from not being the primary caregiver or the patient preferring to be treated away from their baby to lack of available of beds in Mother and Baby Units or the patient not wishing to travel away from their local area.

[Delivering Effective Services: Perinatal mental health services: needs assessment and recommendations](#) (2019) draws on the findings of the Perinatal Mental Health Network's NHS board visits, professionals' workshops and online survey of women's views, conducted in 2017-18, and the existing evidence base on service provision. The report makes recommendations on what services Scotland should develop to meet the needs of mothers with mental ill health, their infants, partners and families.

The Scottish Government established the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board in April 2019. The Programme Board oversee a programme of investment, provides strategic leadership and have overall management of the delivery of improved perinatal and infant mental health services. Since its establishment, the Programme Board has been working to take forward the recommendations from [Delivering Effective Services](#) (2019).

[Delivering Effective Services](#) (2019) recommended that Scotland could benefit from an additional four Mother and Baby Unit beds. These additional beds could be created by expanding one or other of the existing Mother and Baby Units, or through creating a new, third, Mother and Baby Unit in the north of Scotland.

[Delivering Effective Services](#) suggested that an options appraisal should be carried out to determine where the additional beds should be sited. We are currently seeking views to help us understand the needs of women and families in Scotland. This will help to inform the options appraisal. The options appraisal will evaluate potential options on the basis of equity of access, cost, and the safety and sustainability of the service.

Why your views matter

To help ensure that the right services are available at the right time, and in the right way for those who need them we are aware that we need to hear the views from people across Scotland. Your views will help us in determining the most effective way forward in developing inpatient services which meet the recommendations outlined in [Delivering Effective Services](#).

What we will do with the responses we receive

We will use this data to inform the final draft of the options appraisal and to support future decisions in this area. The views of people across Scotland are highly valued and as such we would also seek to incorporate these into other future policy developments. This would involve discussing and sharing the analysis of the consultation with Scottish Government policy areas and stakeholders involved in Mother and Baby Unit provision. The information shared at this point would be from the final consultation analysis and would take into account the context and approach of the consultation itself.

The consultation will conclude on 31st May 2022. We will then carry out further engagement with any groups underrepresented in consultation responses. All consultation responses will be analysed.

We will publish the results of the consultation Summer 2022.

The following questions are designed to be deliberately open to allow you to share your thoughts. If there is not a specific question focusing on an area/issue you feel strongly about, please add it to the final comments section.

You may not have any thoughts about some of the questions or there may only be a specific area you are interested in commenting on; we would still appreciate your thoughts. If you do not have an answer for a question, just skip it and move onto the next.

You can choose for your response to be published with your name, be published without your name, or for your response not to be published. If you choose for your response not to be published, we will still consider your views and response as part of the decision making process. We will redact personal and identifying details from any published responses. However, please be mindful of the personal information that you are sharing when responding to the questions.

We understand that this can be a difficult subject to talk about. Please see below for a places you can find support.

- [Breathing Space](#) - Breathing Space is Scotland's mental health helpline for individuals experiencing symptoms of low mood, depression, or anxiety, and offers free and confidential advice for individuals over the age of 18. They can be contacted on 0800 83 85 87, 6pm to 2am Monday to Thursday; and from 6pm Friday throughout the weekend to 6am Monday.
- [Samaritans](#) – Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. You can contact Samaritans free on short code 116 123.
- NHS24 - If you're feeling overwhelmed or need support you can call NHS 24 on 111. The Mental Health Hub is open 24/7.
- [NHS Inform](#) - NHS inform has a lot of resources to help with your mental health, whether you're looking for advice, information, local support, or ideas for improving your wellbeing.
- [Clear Your Head](#) – Clear Your Head provides practical advice on how to stay active, keep connected with friends and family, and create healthy routines to support your mental health and wellbeing.

Section B: Mother and Baby Units (MBUs)

Section 31 of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015, 'Services and accommodation for mothers', imposes a legal duty on health boards to provide for joint admission of a mother and baby to suitable facilities, where the infant is under 12 months, and it is in the best interests of both mother and infant. It is widely accepted that suitable facilities are those provided in dedicated mental health Mother and Baby Units (MBU), staffed by professionals with appropriate training and expertise.

Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) sit within a range of interconnected services, recommended by [Delivering Effective Services](#), which address the needs of women, infants and their families who experience mental ill health in the perinatal period. These include specialist community perinatal mental health teams, maternity and neonatal psychological interventions services, wider infant mental health provision, the third sector and peer support. These are complemented by universal maternity and primary care provision and by general mental health services.

1. How familiar are you with the Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) that exist currently?
 - Not at all familiar – A bit familiar - Familiar – Quite familiar - Very familiar

2. If you are familiar with existing Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) can you tell us;
 - a) What works well

- b) What doesn't work well

c) What can make it hard for women to access the service

d) What improvements you would suggest

3. If you have lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth, is there anything else you want to tell us about your experience of care?

Section C: Options for the Provision of Additional Mother and Baby Unit Services

[Delivering Effective Services](#) (2019) recommended that Scotland could benefit from an additional four Mother and Baby Unit beds. These additional beds could be created by expanding one or other of the existing Mother and Baby Units, or through creating a new, third, Mother and Baby Unit in the north of Scotland.

The north of Scotland was identified by [Delivering Effective Services](#) as a potential site for a third Mother and Baby Unit as there were concerns about equity of access for women who live significant distances from the existing Mother and Baby Units within the central belt.

A Mother and Baby Unit in the north of Scotland would be sited in either NHS Highland, NHS Grampian or NHS Tayside.

Best practice indicates that the minimum size for a Mother and Baby Unit is 6 beds. Therefore, the recommendation by [Delivering Effective Services](#) for an addition 4 beds will be considered as a minimum number of additional beds so that any new unit, if chosen as the preferred option, could be created in line with best practice and standards. If a new Mother and Baby Unit were to be developed it may be larger than 4 beds.

The report suggested that a full options appraisal should be carried out to identify the most appropriate model of bed provision. We are now carrying out the options appraisal and we are seeking views on the options developed to inform the decision making process.

Options will be evaluated on the basis of the ability to provide equitable access to care for women across Scotland, cost-effectiveness of the service, and the safety and sustainability of the service.

When a woman is referred to an MBU for mental health inpatient care there are a number of considerations that need to be taken into account, for herself and her family.

4. What do you think is important to women and families when considering admission to an MBU?

Please give us your views

5.

a) What do you imagine would be benefit(s) of increasing the number of beds in existing units? (choose all that apply)

- Access for women and families across Scotland
- Cost
- Safety
- Sustainability of the service
- Other –

b) Can you tell us your reasons for thinking this?

6.

a) What do you imagine would be the challenges/drawback of increasing the number of beds in existing units? (choose all that apply)

- Access for women and families across Scotland
- Cost
- Safety
- Sustainability of the service
- Other –

b) Can you tell us your reasons for thinking this?

7.

a) What do you imagine would be the benefits of developing a new unit in the north of Scotland? (choose all that apply)

- Access for women and families across Scotland
- Cost
- Safety
- Sustainability of the service
- Other –

b) Can you tell us your reasons for thinking this?

8.

a) What do you imagine would be the challenges / drawbacks of developing a new unit in the north of Scotland? (choose all that apply)

- Access for women and families across Scotland
- Cost
- Safety
- Sustainability of the service
- Other –

b) Can you tell us your reasons for thinking this?

9. Do you think there is a different way to provide care for those women with severe illness, and their infants, who might otherwise need to be admitted to hospital?

Please give us your views

Section D: The Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund (MBUFF)

The Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund (MBUFF) was established in 2020 to provide a contribution towards the cost of visiting a mother and baby being treated in an MBU for perinatal mental illness. This is to facilitate support for the woman and baby in the unit, support continued family bonding and allow staff in the unit to work with the family group.

Partners/ fathers/ main carers, in addition to existing children up to school leaving age (16), can make claims for reasonable accommodation, travel expenses and a flat rate contribution of £8.50 per person per day for food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Claims can be submitted incrementally during an ongoing MBU stay (e.g. weekly) or in full for the entire stay, up to three months, following discharge.

10. Are you aware of the Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund (MBUFF)?

- Yes
- No

11. If you are aware of the fund, how did you find out about it?

- From clinicians
- From the website
- From a leaflet
- From other service users
- Other

12. If you or a family member have been treated in a Mother and Baby Unit since October 2020, did you use the fund?

- Yes
- No

13. What, if any, are the barriers to using the Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund (MBUFF)?

Please give us your views

14. How could the MBUFF be improved?

Please give us your views

Section E: Conclusion

Thank you for your input.

15. Finally, is there anything else that you would like to share about this issue?

Section F: About you

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will still take account of your views in our analysis but we will not publish your response, quote anything that you have said or list your name. We will regard your response as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy. By clicking submit you agree to our [privacy policy](#).

We require answers to questions in this section marked with a * in order to process your consultation response.

What is your name?

What is your email address?*

Entering your email address allows you to return to edit your consultation at any time until you submit it. You will also receive an acknowledgement email when you complete the consultation.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?.*

- Individual
- Organisation

What is your organisation?

If responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter the organisation's name here.

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference.*

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)

- Do not publish response

Information for organisations only:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?*

- Yes
- No

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.*

[Privacy Policy](#)

- I consent

Section G: A little bit more about you

This consultation is designed to help us shape the development of services for women and families in Scotland. In order to make sure that we develop services that work for everyone it would be helpful to know a bit more about you.

You are not required to answer any of the questions in this section if you do not wish to share this information with us.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#).

In what capacity are you completing this consultation? (please choose the response that best fits)

- Woman with lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth who received care and treatment in an MBU (service user)
- Woman with lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth who received care and treatment in a general adult mental health inpatient ward (service user)
- Woman with lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth who received care and treatment in the community from your GP, mental health service or other health professional including third sector services (service user)
- Woman with lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth who did not access treatment or services
- Family member of a woman with lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth (service user)
- Clinician MBU care
- Clinician general mental health inpatient care
- Clinician perinatal mental health community team care
- Clinician general mental health team care
- Clinician primary care
- Clinician maternity/neonatal care
- Clinician other (please specify) –
- Organisation (please specify) –
- Member of the public with no lived experience of mental health problems in pregnancy or after childbirth
- Other –

What is your age?

- Under 24
- 25-34

- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-69
- 70+
- Prefer not to say

What is the first half of your postcode?

Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by Tuesday 31st May 2022.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/mental-health-unit/mother-and-baby-unit>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of Tuesday 31st May 2022.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form to PerinatalOptionsAppraisal@gov.scot

Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

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Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at perinataloptionsappraisal@gov.scot

Scottish Government consultation process

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