

Maternal Mental Health

Summary from Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - April 2018

Why is this important?

This topic assessment was chosen because Maternal Mental Health (MMH) problems pose a huge human, social and economic burden to women, their families and the wider population, constituting a major public health challenge. The JSNA explores the mental health and well-being needs of women in Lewisham in the 1001 days from the conception of their child until the child is two years old.

Key Facts and Figures

1019

(20%) of women in Lewisham develop a mental health problem in pregnancy or within a year of giving birth.

Serious perinatal mental disorders are associated with an increased risk of suicide.



1 in 10

men may suffer from depression after becoming fathers

The cost of MMH problems in the UK in 2014 was estimated to be

£8.1 billion

Suicide is the leading cause of maternal mortality in developed countries

The effects of MMH problems are often felt by the wider family particularly fathers and partners



What is happening nationally?

- There is a national drive for prevention of mental health problems and the promotion of good mental health e.g. [Better Mental Health](#)
- It is now recognised that this needs to be achieved through redesigning services to align with an early intervention, prevention and family-based model.
- To be effective there needs to be closer working between the criminal justice system and children and young peoples services.

What is happening locally?

- Lewisham's local policies emphasise MMH as a key priority for the borough.
- The [Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy](#), utilises CAMHS Transformation Funding to develop better MMH services in the borough to achieve key aims, including guidance on where support is available.
- The Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) have launched a campaign, ['It's ok not to feel ok'](#). PMH is one of the groups key priorities.

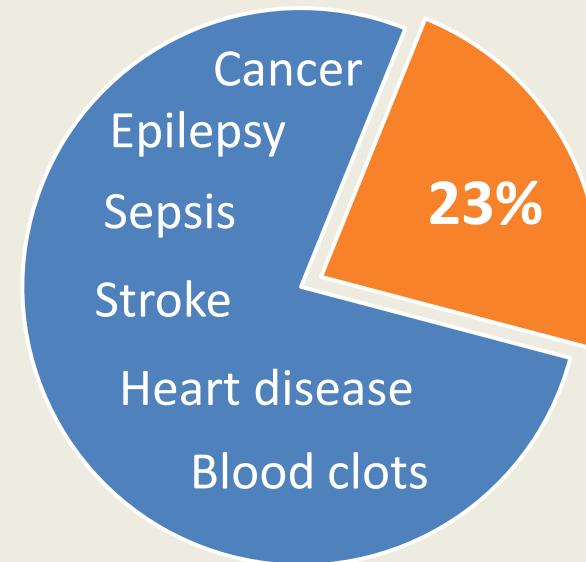


Figure. Almost a quarter (23%) of women who died between six weeks and one year after pregnancy died from mental health related causes

What needs to be done?

Key recommendations to improve MMH in Lewisham include:

1. **Undertaking additional research into the latest evidence based practice** - focus should be given to the needs of partners/ fathers in relation to MMH
2. **Ensuring multi-agency input into an integrated MMH care pathway** - this will be aided by increasing PMH training opportunities and early intervention services in PMH
3. **Prioritising plans to achieve continuity of midwifery care** - thus ensuring families can easily access existing services that address the wider determinants of mental health.