



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Women's Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Women's Forum held at The Guldhall, Northampton and on Teams, Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 11.00 am.

Present Pauline Woodhouse (Co-Chair), Neil Goosey, Rachel Packman, Anthony Dumi, Carly Galpin, Katy Newman, Alex Rex, Debs Burns, Debbie MacColl

1. Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made around the table and screen.

Apologies were received from Cllr Anna King (Co-Chair), Divya Terry, Mavis Mundirwa, Annabel Pickering, Morcea Walker, Cllr Rosie Humphries, Laura Boatwright and Neelam Aggarwal.

2. Code of Conduct

Attached to Agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

4. Update on Maternal Mental Health Service

Many women experience moderate or worse mental health issues during pregnancy and the first 12 months after birth. Some will be due to pre-existing conditions, some will be completely out of the blue. This can be depression or anxiety sometimes as a result of the maternal journey due to the end of a pregnancy, death of the baby or trauma through the birth experience.

The cost of maternal mental health conditions is around £8.1bn and relates more to the child than the mother proving the extent the impact has on the next generation. Of those women who died 6 weeks to 1 year after birth, 1 in 7 did so by suicide. 20% of women will experience mental health issues 1 year + after pregnancy, this is higher in those with a pre-existing condition.

During 2016 there were 9,113 live births in the county, breakdown for mental health issues was:-

Postpartum psychosis – 20

Serious mental illness – 20

Severe depression – 250

Mild to moderate depression/anxiety – 800-1,250

PTSD – 250

Adjustment disorders and distress – 1,240-2,480

Covid has definitely had an impact over the last few years, not just with the women, but also within the maternity workforce with many facing burnout.

The specialist perinatal service provides assessment and treatment for those who have experienced, or are at an increased chance of experiencing, moderate to severe mental health conditions including

- Pre-conception counselling
- Medication advice
- Specialist psychological interventions
- Birth planning & postpartum monitoring of mental health
- Mother infant interventions
- 1:1 and group interventions
- Peer support – lived experience
- Referrals from any health professional
- Tokophobia (fear of childbirth)
- Loss
- Trauma

The Team had been in place a year now and was made up of:-

Consultant psychiatrists & junior Doctors

Psychology team

Wellbeing therapists

Perinatal practitioners

Occupational therapists

Nursery nurses

Support workers

Peer support workers

Administration

Midwives

The team engaged with Mental Health Awareness week, 2-8 May, with some webinars.

Aims for the coming year included:

Supporting 10% of the county's birth population

Fathers & partners pathway

Engage with Baby Loss Awareness week 9 – 15 October 22

Continual work on development/delivering training on PMH

Continual work on develop/support charity sectors raising awareness and improve mental health disparity

Support 3rd sector re mental health disparities

The website had been refreshed - [Specialist perinatal mental health | NHFT](#)

Alex asked if they had connections with community organisations. Carly stated that they do especially with Home Start but wanted to expand especially with parent/infant connection services as many mothers needed support with bonding. They were also keen to increase the voice of 0-2's in Northampton. They had done some engagement in the Central Library which had great diversity and wanted to do more meaningful work with tots groups etc. asking questions around mental health and

wellbeing. Alex responded that there were some good play groups including in St James and Pearls of Peace which could be a good starting point.

Cllr Russell asked if any specific resources and support were available for same sex couples as they were easy targets for unpleasant remarks. Carly responded that anyone can be referred and they were working with a lot of same sex couples also offering support for family & friends and peer support worker to support partners. Within wider communities all Mental Health Services were trying to do the same and they were looking for some of the service users to come back and help shape services.

Pauline stated that the support around adoptions was very good but there was more disconnection amongst people since the pandemic and many had retreated into themselves. She suggested a leaflet that be out in the community in supermarkets etc, maybe on a factory type information board, so that the information was freely available and drip fed into people's consciousness. Also perhaps groups in libraries and similar that people could dip into. Carly stated that they were doing a lot of work with groups across the county, working with them to help spot the signs and promote wellbeing but there was always more that could be done. A play group was starting in Pengreen in Corby for women open to the service so they could socialise.

Cllr Stone thanked Carly for the presentation and said she was heartbroken by the figures. During Covid women had been sent home from hospital with their new baby and no support which had a huge impact on both and the partner and they were still carrying the consequences. The Health visitor used to be the helpline so it was a red flag that they were not there. She asked who could make referrals. There were also a lot of community members who were getting pregnant without the traditional support of their family (such as the Afghan resettlement and Ukraine refugees) facing a huge cultural change which was causing issues to physical and mental health, a lot of which was being mediated through men – they needed to find their own voice. Family hubs were essential, a bid had been put into Public Health but had not been successful.

Carly responded that traditionally referrals were made by Health Visitors but there was currently a huge national shortage and they were having to see people on a targeted basis. Referrals were coming in from Midwives (who discuss mental health at every contact), and GP's. The referrals were now coming in at an earlier stage. Midwives and Health visitors were the eyes in the community so the resource problem was a huge issue. There was access to interpreters but most preferred to use a female family member. NNC had been successful with their bid for family hubs and there was a lot of work going on across the county.

Anthony was the Project Manager for the team and did the co-ordination but was not a clinician. He worked in the background to ensure everything worked as it should with contacts, engagement and awareness raising, the website, organising webinars and social media outlets.

Pauline stated that that she was always getting pop ups on her computer about something – could that be a way of getting the message out. Anthony responded he

would speak to Comms about targeted ads. They were more likely to proceed down the social media route than paper leaflets.

5. Plans for IWD 2023

Debbie asked for approval/comments to proceed with:

- Developing something along the business route following on from meeting the business Inspirational Woman winners and shortlisted and other business women we had met over the last few years. Also the talk from Asy last time promoting the help Nat West had available for female start-up businesses.
- Involving Northants Sport and Northampton Leisure Trust. Apparently a few years ago they had run a day at Lings for women and girls under the 'This Girl Can' banner with lots of taster sessions and stands raising awareness of activities.

Support was given from those present. It was also agreed the Guildhall event would be held on Saturday 4th March. It was agreed that more was needed outside to promote what was going on inside – potential of parking the fire engine outside, having a workshop to design poster.

Debbie said the feedback from the shortlisted Inspirational Women presentation had been very good and they really appreciated the intimate atmosphere and also the opportunity to speak to other shortlisted women. Debbie suggested doing things along a similar line but at an earlier time, then putting in the programme that they would then come downstairs and be presented on the stage. The issues with sound had been taken on board and advice taken on ways of improving the viewing quality of the live streaming.

6. Community Information Exchange

Alex - Current Grants from NCF:-

- **The Constance Travis Endowment Fund for Northamptonshire** will be opening for applications in June and awarding grants from July onwards. This will be a rolling programme, with no set deadlines and organisations will be able to apply for up to £3,000. Projects would need to be linked to one of the following local goals – no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable communities, climate action and peace, justice and strong institutions.
- **Queen's Institute Relief Fund** for Northampton - grants up to £5000 for projects based in Northampton that are all about improving health and wellbeing. The next deadline for applications is Friday 5th August <https://www.ncf.uk.com/grants/grant-finder/queens-institute>
- **The Compton fund** is limited this year, it currently has just over £10,000 available, it will be open for applications of up to £5,000 and the next deadline is 7th October. Applications will go to a panel at the end of November and applicants will be notified of the funding decision in the first week or so of December. <https://www.ncf.uk.com/grants/grant-finder/compton-fund>

- **High Sheriff Initiative** - this year the Northamptonshire High Sheriff's Initiative Fund's focus will be on tackling serious youth violence and projects covering prevention and intervention. The programme will make awards of up to £5000. Applications are by expression of interest – deadline 10th June <https://www.ncf.uk.com/grants/grant-finder/high-sheriffs-initiative-fund>
- **Rachael's Fund** was established to support projects working with adults and young people, who have mild learning difficulties, to live independently. The aims of Rachael's Fund are to award grants to new or existing innovative projects supporting young people and adults with mild learning difficulties, particularly where there are gaps in provision. The programme will make awards of up to £10,000. Applications are by expression of interest – deadline 20th June <https://www.ncf.uk.com/grants/grant-finder/rachael's-fund>

NCF are looking to recruit a new Programmes Officer to join the Grants Team - <https://www.ncf.uk.com/about-us/vacancies>

Cllr Russell – Currently writing to residents about setting up a Semilong Residents Association which will meet at Alliston Gardens Community Centre.
Monthly meeting at Links View on first Monday of the month for coffee and cakes.
Cllr Advice Surgery at Northampton Bangladeshi Association first Thursday of the month.

Carly – 13-19 June Infant Mental Health Week

Tina – During the recent recruitment 1 woman had been taken on out of the 12 successful recruits which was a bit disappointing. There had been a big interest from women at the beginning and they would be looking to see where in the process they had dropped out. The new recruits were currently on training. The next intake would be in October and there would be positive action days in the lead up which they would be asking partners to promote. The service was still only 20% female. The Fire Women's Forum had developed a FAQ for those thinking of applying. They had a lot of bookings for community events throughout the year. The OFPCC had a lot of funding for a big project working around women and violence which included training opportunities.

Rachel & Neil – The Positive Action Team would be represented at IWD – unable to trump a fire engine though! They continued to try and attract more women and a broader diversity to the Force. They currently had the highest number of women ever in Northamptonshire and had peaked at 4% ethnic minority which had only been achieved once before since the records had started. A lot of the success was down to working closely with colleagues in Fire & Rescue. The recruitment window for those without a degree, or wish to have one, was currently open. This enables those who were not academically minded but had other desirable skills and helped to make them aware they had those skills.

Upcoming events include:-
Carnival 11 June

Pride 26 June

Queens Baton Relay 11 July 8-8.30am finishing at the University where there would be an event until about 12/1pm

7. Items for Future Meetings

Creating Equalz – update on the recent workshops
SWAN project – update
Something around financial crisis and rising costs

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be:-
11am 26 July 2022 by Teams and at Northampton's Guildhall