

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee  
Wednesday 22 January 2025  
1st Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

## PE2017: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year

### Introduction

**Petitioner** Margaret Reid

**Petition summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

- amend section 24 of Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal mental health support beyond one year,
- introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health boards,
- introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet Perinatal Quality Network Standard Type 1 across all health boards, and
- establish a Mother and Baby Unit in North East Scotland

**Webpage** <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2017>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 17 April 2024](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 2 May 2023](#).
7. [The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee wrote to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport on 28 November 2023](#) to seek an update on

progress on issues raised during its inquiry into perinatal mental health. [The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport provided an update on perinatal mental health to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on 24 January 2024.](#)

8. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 625 signatures have been received on this petition.

## **Action**

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

**Clerks to the Committee  
January 2025**

## **Annexe A: Summary of petition**

**PE2017: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year**

### **Petitioner**

Margaret Reid

### **Date Lodged**

3 April 2023

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

- amend section 24 of Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal mental health support beyond one year,
- introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health boards,
- introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet Perinatal Quality Network Standard Type 1 across all health boards, and
- establish a Mother and Baby Unit in North East Scotland

### **Previous action**

I contacted one of my North East regional MSPs in December 2021 who raised the situation during First Minister's Questions. I contacted another North East regional MSP, Tess White MSP, in early 2022 about maternal health services and she has been supporting us on the issues raised in this petition in the intervening period.

### **Background information**

A member of my family who lives in NE Scotland, developed postpartum psychosis and relapsed after receiving initial treatment at a Mother and Baby Unit. Her experience shows that difficulties with maternal mental health are not just confined to the first year of motherhood.

After being diagnosed with postpartum psychosis, she and her baby were admitted to the Mother and Baby Unit in Livingston. They received exceptional care, while her family were kept up-to-date with her treatment and progress.

However, she experienced a relapse some months later and was sectioned in a mental health unit. Her experience was profoundly different to the MBU where she had made so much progress. She said to me that 'it was like living a nightmare; the whole experience just didn't seem real.'

**CPPP/S6/25/1/5**

To watch someone you love be so ill, to put her in the hands of a system with people you should be able to trust, and be let down so badly is one of the hardest experiences of my life. It has driven me to make change.

## **Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2017 on 17 April 2024**

**The Convener:** PE2017 is on extending the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year. The petition, which has been lodged by Margaret Reid, calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend section 24 of Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal mental health support beyond one year; to introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health boards; to introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet perinatal quality network standard type 1 across all health boards; and to establish a mother and baby unit in the north-east of Scotland.

We are joined this morning by Tess White, who, we understand, has been supporting the petitioner's pursuit of her petition. Good morning, and welcome back to the committee that you were once a member of.

**Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con):** Thank you.

**The Convener:** The Scottish Government provided the committee with information back in August of last year. In that submission, the Government noted its intent to publish an initial plan on options for changes to the 2003 act by the end of 2023. Moreover, last November, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee followed up on the recommendations from its inquiry into perinatal mental health services.

The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport provided an update in January in which she noted that a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services was being developed and that the NHS National Services Scotland's report on mother and baby unit provision was with the Scottish Government for consideration. The update also noted that the Scottish Government was continuing to collaborate with mother and baby units to conduct a review of the mother and baby unit family fund.

Before I ask committee members to say how they think we might proceed, I invite Tess White to address the committee.

**Tess White:** Good morning. I thank the committee for its consideration of the petition.

I have been deeply moved by Maggie Reid's campaign to improve perinatal mental health services in Scotland. The campaign began because of the horrendous experience of her sister, Lesley. Maggie and Lesley could not make it today, but they are watching, and this is what they wanted to say to you.

Lesley wants you to know:

"Having been admitted to both a MBU and an adult mental health unit, in my experience the environments and care are miles apart. From what I experienced the adult mental health unit was a horrible environment for someone with my condition. I

was one of 2 females on a male dominant ward which made for intimidating and difficult conditions.

Although I can understand why I was 'locked up' and separated from my family, in the MBU the environment was softer and I had a focus as I had my baby with me."

This is from Lesley's sister, Maggie, who submitted the petition:

"After experiencing Lesley's terrible care when she was sectioned it made me want to make a change so that it did not happen to anyone else.

It disappoints me and frustrates me how little the government has done to support the petition I put in. I keep asking myself the same question how many more women need to become so unwell that they need the system which fails them or how many more sadly die from being so ill. It is all over the newspaper just now regarding women's mental health and suicides" so "why are you not acting faster"?

To date, we have heard warm words from the Scottish Government about establishing a mother and baby unit in the north-east, but national health service building projects have now been put on hold for up to two years.

A key message from organisations such as the Maternal Mental Health Alliance is that the changes are so desperately needed. Suicide is the leading cause of death for new mothers. One in four mothers develop a mental health issue as a result of pregnancy or childbirth, and many of those women are being failed every day, with a postcode lottery in service provision.

I urge the committee, on behalf of Lesley and her sister Maggie, to hold the Scottish Government to account on those issues and to help Maggie to secure the urgent change that she is hoping for.

**The Convener:** Thank you, Tess, for that impassioned address. In view of the submissions that we have received and the evidence from Tess White, do colleagues have any suggestions as to how we might proceed?

**Maurice Golden:** I should highlight that I know the petitioner and her sister. I raised this matter with the First Minister previously. However, it is my colleague, Tess White, who has primarily been supporting the petition, and she raises some very pertinent points.

Our first course of action should be to write to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport to seek updates on the development of a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services; on progress on the Scottish Government's consideration of NHS National Services Scotland's options appraisal report on mother and baby unit provision; on the review of the mother and baby unit family fund; and on the publication of the mental health and capacity reform programme, which was initially expected at the end of last year.

**The Convener:** Are we content with those suggestions? Are there any other complementary suggestions from members of the committee?

Ordinarily I would not invite suggestions from non-committee members, but if you have a suggestion for some further action, Ms White, I am sure that the committee would be happy to hear it.

**Tess White:** I do have a suggestion—thank you, convener.

I will mention two things. First, you said earlier that you would take the First Minister a list of petitions that the committee feels are very important. I ask whether PE2017 could be included in that list.

Secondly, I asked representatives of NHS Grampian, at their most recent meeting with us, if it could consider ensuring that design for the purposes discussed could be included in its architects' drawings when the new hospital goes ahead and is built. If that could be included, that would be welcome.

**The Convener:** I am sure that colleagues would be happy to include the latter and to reflect on the former.

**Tess White:** Thank you.

**The Convener:** We will keep the petition open on that basis and pursue the actions as suggested.

## **Annexe C: Written submission**

### **Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport written submission, 6 June 2024**

#### **PE2017/E: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year**

Thank you for your letter of 30 April on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee. Following your meeting held on 17 April to discuss the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available, you requested an update on the following issues:

- development of a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services
- progress on the Scottish Government's consideration of National Services Scotland's options appraisal report on Mother and Baby Unit provision
- review of the Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund
- publication of the Mental Health and Capacity Reform Programme

I am pleased to provide an update to your specific points below:

#### **1. Development of a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services**

The Joint Strategic Board for Children and Family Mental Health has identified the development of a service specification for clinical perinatal services as a priority area within the workstreams. Work is underway to bring stakeholders together, including Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Network Scotland, to agree a first draft.

#### **2. Progress on the Scottish Government's consideration of National Services Scotland's options appraisal report on Mother and Baby Unit provision**

I wrote to the [Health, Social Care and Sport Committee](#) on 29 April to inform them that I am considering the Mother and Baby Unit Options Appraisal from NHS National Services Scotland, which will be published in due course. The outcome will be impacted by current financial restrictions, which prevent new capital spend by Boards.

I also recognise the distinctive challenges that mental health services in the North of Scotland face in delivering care to the most severely ill women in the perinatal period. For this reason, I told the Committee of my intention to provide £85,000 in this financial year to support the first phase of work to develop Intensive Treatment Services for perinatal women, their infants and families in the North of Scotland. We will be engaging with Boards, local perinatal mental health services



and those with lived experience to assess how this additional funding will be best used.

### **3. Review of the Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund**

Where travel to a Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) is necessary, we are continuing to operate the Mother and Baby Unit Family Fund (MBUFF) which helps families with expenses incurred when visiting a loved one admitted to a MBU.

We are currently reviewing the terms and conditions of the MBUFF, taking into account feedback from those with lived experience and clinical staff, to ensure its effectiveness. We are considering recommendations such as: removing the £500 cap; exploring the limit of travel expenses; and extending the claim to cover the patient as well as the family where appropriate. We will be meeting with both NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lothian, as host Boards, to gather further feedback. The review is expected to be completed by autumn 2024.

### **4. Publication of the Mental Health and Capacity Reform Programme**

We had intended to publish the initial delivery plan for the Mental Health and Capacity Reform Programme on 2 May. Given other pressing parliamentary business that week, the statement and publication did not go ahead. We will reschedule the publication date as soon as practical.

You also asked whether the Scottish Government holds any relevant information or guidance on the designing and building of hospitals.

NHSScotland (NHSS) Assure - Health Facilities Scotland (HFS) publish a library of NHSS Guidance on behalf of Scottish Government for the design, construction and operation of NHSS Facilities. A master list of all current guidance can be found at: [HFS Guidance Index](#). Although not Mother and Baby Unit specific, [Health Building Note 03-01](#) on Adult Acute Mental Health Units may be of particular interest.

I remain committed to ensuring equitable, coordinated access to mental health provision for women, infants and their families throughout pregnancy and during the postnatal period; and appreciate the Committee's interest.

**MAREE TODD**