



Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund

FUND UPDATE REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2023



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Perinatal & Infant
Mental Health Fund

INSPIRING SCOTLAND

Welcome



The Scottish Government's Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (PIMH) Fund was launched in 2020 and is managed by Inspiring Scotland. The charities that receive funding from the PIMH Fund support families from conception until the age of three.

Since 2020, funded charities have carried out vital mental health support to families and babies across Scotland. This includes counselling, peer support and parenting support.

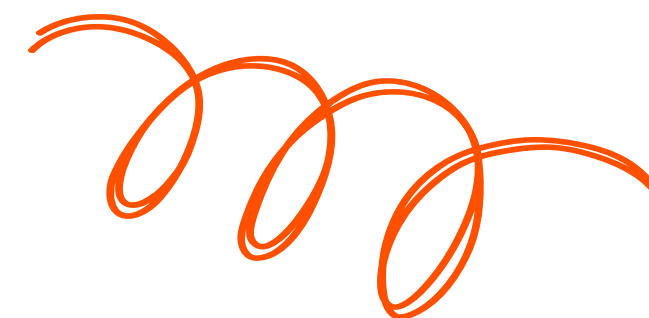


This fund update has been built from the reporting data of the funded charities, covering the period from October 2022 to March 2023. **This time period has been an extraordinary time for both families and organisations as we continue to feel the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and due to the cost of living crisis.**

Through this fund, we have seen the **transformational impact that the third sector has on families.** This is down to the relationships built from the hard work and dedication from all of the staff and volunteers.

This fund update follows the stories of families who have been supported by the charities. These stories highlight the kind, compassionate approach and life changing impact that the third sector has on families and babies, and shows how the work which is being delivered helps to achieve the overall outcomes of this fund.

The PIMH Team at Inspiring Scotland want to thank all the charities and families involved for letting us share their stories.



Fund Overview



£2.5m

investment over 2.5 years

34

charities

10,000

people impacted*

Main Grants Fund



£2.3m over 2.5 years



16 charities funded



£58k per organisation per year on average

Small Grants Fund



£208k over 18 months



18 charities funded



£11.5k awarded per organisation on average

I am so glad to have found Expecting Something and it's been such a big part of mine and my babies' lives. Expecting Something has made me and my life better in more ways than I can put into words.

Parent supported by Starcatchers

* Figure based on the number of people charities have reported back that they have supported since September 2020

Fund Locations

CrossReach Perinatal Services;
Dads Rock;
Fathers Network Scotland;
Held In Our Hearts;
Human Development Scotland;
Mellow Parenting
Nationwide / Multiple Local Authorities

Home-Start East Highland
with Home-Start Caithness
Highland

CrossReach
Counselling;
Moray Perinatal
Service
Moray

Home-Start Aberdeen;
LATNEM
Aberdeen

Home-Start Dundee
Dundee

Aberlour Child Care Trust
Clackmannanshire,
Falkirk, Stirling

Home Start Dunfermline;
Home-Start Levenmouth
Starcatchers
Fife

Stepping Stones North
Edinburgh;

Multi-Cultural Family Base;
Pregnancy Counselling &
Care;
Starcatchers
Edinburgh

Midlothian Sure Start with
East Lothian Council;
Home-Start East Lothian
East Lothian and Midlothian

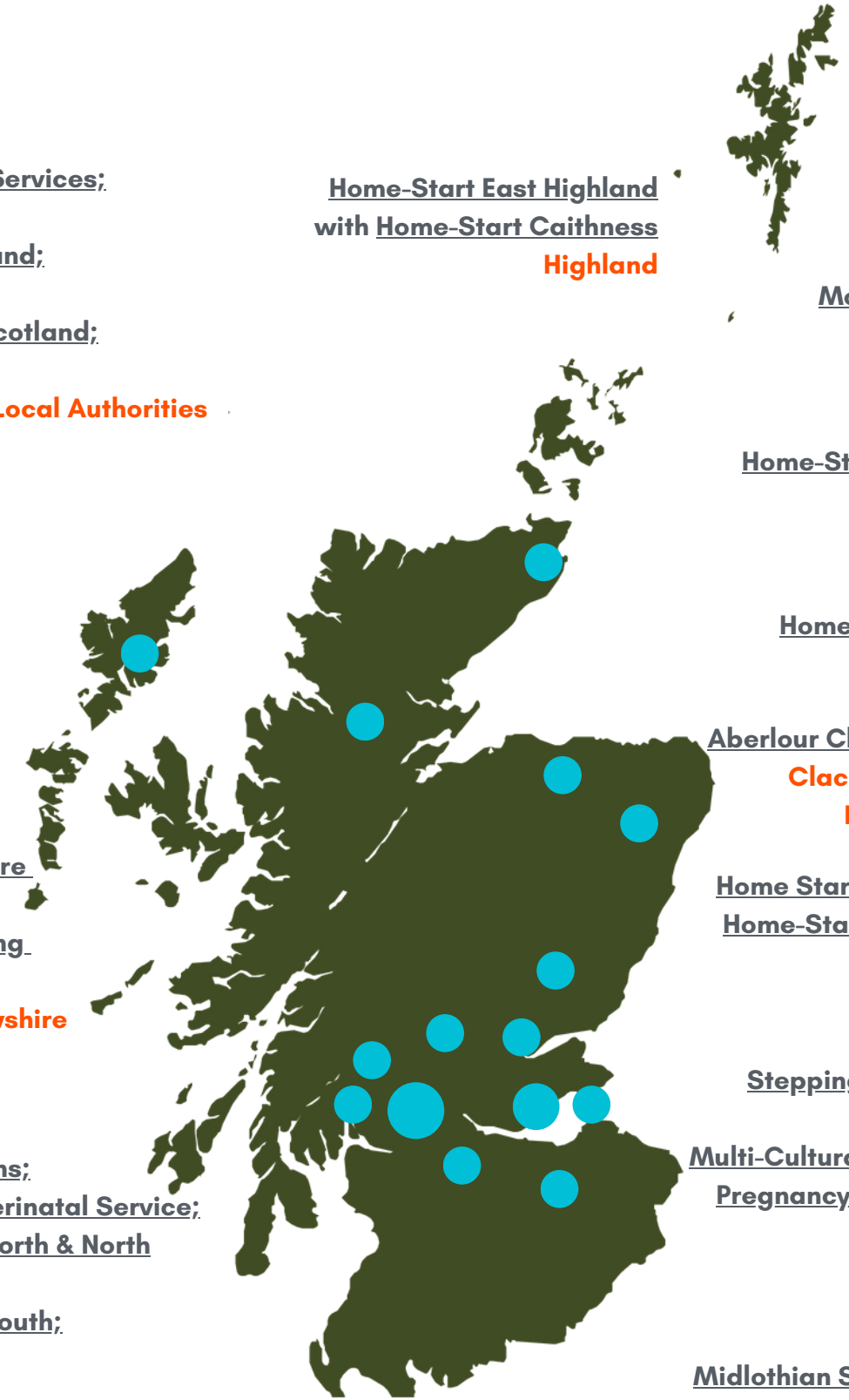
Action for Children
West Dunbartonshire,
Western Isles

Barnardo's;
Home-Start Renfrewshire
& Inverclyde;
MindMosaic Counselling
and Therapy.
Inverclyde and Renfrewshire

3D Drumchapel;
Amma Birth Companions;
CrossReach Bluebell Perinatal Service;
Home-Start Glasgow North & North
Lanarkshire;
Home-Start Glasgow South;
Quarriers;
With Kids
Glasgow and surrounding areas

Healthy Valleys
South Lanarkshire

PND Borders;
Nurture The Borders
Borders



Fund Outcomes

All funded charities monitor their progress against the five outcomes which are listed below. This report will use data and case studies provided by the charities from October 2022 to March 2023 as examples of how they have met these outcomes.



OUTCOME 1 - Increased Access

That parents and carers with perinatal mental health issues have increased access to specialist care in the area where they live



OUTCOME 2 - Reduced Isolation

We want parents and carers to feel less isolated and better able to seek support from family, friends and their community



OUTCOME 3 - Meeting Baby's Needs

That parents or carers have access to parenting support which allows them to feel better able to meet the needs of their infants and children (physical, social, emotional and cognitive)



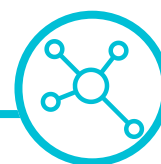
OUTCOME 4 - Improved Attachment

That parents and carers feel better able to maintain a warm and secure relationship with their infant



OUTCOME 5 - Infant Mental Health

That infants at higher risk of mental health problems are better supported by parents and carers



OUTCOME 1 - Increased Access

From October 2022- March 2023, **4,569** people have been supported through the PIMH Fund



OUTCOME 2 - Reduced Isolation

77% of parents and carers with perinatal mental health issues reported back that they feel less isolated and are better able to seek support from family, friends and their community



OUTCOME 3 - Meeting Baby's Needs

81% parents and carers reported feeling better able to meet the needs of their infants and children (physical, social, emotional and cognitive)



OUTCOME 4 - Improved Attachment

85% of parents and carers feel better able to maintain a warm and secure relationship with their infant



OUTCOME 5 - Infant Mental Health

82% of parents showing improvement in supporting infants at higher risk of mental health problems

This report will go through each outcome individually and share the work of some of the charities working towards that outcome.

Throughout this report, we will be sharing the stories of families who have been supported by the charities. We are so grateful to all of the charities and families involved for letting us tell their stories. To protect the identity of families, all information has been anonymised.

Please note that this report contains themes throughout which you may find upsetting.

Figures based on reporting data from charities receiving main grants during the reporting period October 2022 - March 2023.

Outcome 1 - Increased Access

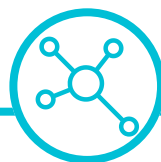


The first outcome of the fund is to increase access to specialist perinatal mental health services.

Being rooted in their local communities, charities work closely with families to get to know them and understand their needs.

By getting alongside families and offering flexible, compassionate support, charities form strong relationships, building the trust needed for parents and carers to have open and honest conversations about their mental health.

In many cases, the work of the third sector prevents families from needing to access NHS perinatal mental health support, however if someone would benefit from additional statutory support, charities often play an important role in providing 'wraparound' care and can act as the bridge between families and NHS services.



OUTCOME 1 - Increased Access

4,569 people, including babies, families, staff and volunteers have been supported from October 2022- March 2023



Amma Birth Companions

Amma Birth Companions provides trauma-informed emotional and practical support to vulnerable women who would otherwise experience birth without a partner or face significant barriers to accessing perinatal care. Their clients are mostly refugees, asylum seekers and people living in poverty. Amma's services include birth and postnatal companionship, antenatal classes and peer support activities and aims to support the wellbeing and life chances of mothers and infants.

Amma increase access to support as they advocate on behalf of their clients who would otherwise face significant barriers eg cultural or language barriers. From this quote you can see that Amma, helped their client understand what was happening to them when they were in hospital by providing an interpreter and continued to visit them once they were out of hospital.



"I cannot stress enough how great the service was, from the start, the support was overwhelming. One of the things I am most grateful for, I was in hospital for so long and it was so difficult to find an interpreter. I didn't even know what was going on. Amma was helping to get things sorted and organised on my behalf. I am so grateful for that as I just couldn't manage. After I was home, they came to my house to check on me, ask me all the time if I needed anything, it continued to be great support. Honestly, I can't think of anything that should change, I thank God for them all. I have had so many issues and they have supported me with all my health things."

Client Supported by Amma

Quarriers



"you are doing an **absolutely fantastic job with this family**. I really can't express how uplifting your email with an update on the progress of family A is. **I'm genuinely struggling to think of a case that's had such a transformational change as this one** in such a short space of time."

Social Worker, Easterhouse

Quarriers Maternal Wellbeing Service based in North East Glasgow provides a range of services to support families such as psychological support, groups, counselling and one to one parenting support from trained Family Practitioners. Many families are facing extreme adversity which can significantly impact their mental health

This quote from a social worker shows the powerful impact that Quarriers had on a family.

Outcome 2 - Reduced Isolation

A recent scoping review found that loneliness is experienced at greater rates and more intensively in pregnancy and for new parents. It was also found that identifying loneliness may help with early detection of depression.

Whether it is a Home-Start Volunteer visiting a family in their home, a parent attending counselling sessions or mums and babies going along to a regular group; charities play a crucial role in helping parents to make connections and gain the confidence to access their local community.



Home-Start Levenmouth



OUTCOME 2 - Reduced Isolation

77% of parents and carers with perinatal mental health issues reported back that they feel less isolated and are better able to seek support from family, friends and their community

Home-Start Dunfermline

Home-Start Dunfermline offer one-to-one, personalised support for parents with infants and young children who may be lonely, struggling to cope with day to day routines, or at risk of social exclusion. Services include baby massage and family group sessions and baby café. During these group sessions, staff and trained volunteers provide peer and parenting support.

The Home-Start Dunfermline team have written the case study below to show the journey of one of their mums who was struggling with isolation.

“Sophie felt isolated at home with two young children after recently moving to the area and felt her mental health was suffering. Home-Start Dunfermline supported Sophie with **1:1 support to get out the house and engage in things within the community for herself and the children.** With the support from Home-Start, they would: **go to the park, walk along the beach and explore the local area** together.

After coming to the group Sophie became more open and able to interact with the staff and felt more comfortable to ask for help and advice regarding the children's needs. Sophie wasn't aware that she would be entitled to nursery care support and with the help from Home-Start, she applied for a nursery place.

Whilst attending the group, Sophie **gained the confidence to chat with other mums in the local area and swap numbers to meet up outwith the group setting.** The 1:1 support has ended as Home-Start Dunfermline feel Sophie is coping with meeting the needs of her children and she still attends the family group. Sophie knows that Home-Start Dunfermline are there for her should she ever need the support. Sophie her children also come along to day trips which they might not have the chance to attend without the support of Home-Start and receive the help when needed from staff to have a fun filled day.”



Home-Start East Highland

Home-Start East Highland deliver a range of peer and parenting support services to socially and geographically isolated families in the Highland region. This includes one to one support (delivered by staff and volunteers), parenting groups, Baby Café and structured play sessions.

The service's ability to reach and get alongside families has brought about genuine and meaningful connections, reducing loneliness and improving self confidence. Read the section below to hear how this has impacted one mum in her recent feedback to her Home-Start volunteer.

"My Home Start Coordinator and Volunteer believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. **They have been the only consistent, compassionate and reliable supporting organisation in my life since having my little girl. They have listened, cared, inspired and engaged with me to find hope, fun, passion and knowledge in life again.** They have empowered and encouraged me to re-discover my self worth, self-esteem and abilities. We have had serious chats, but also lots of fun and introduced me to a range of creative and mindful activities, which have given me a sense of achievement and made me realise I can do things when I put my mind to it. I have learned to lino print, knit and crochet! All of which provide a welcome, peaceful and mindful activity from some of the harsh realities of my life at the moment.

As a result of their interactions I have found new confidence and engaged with different community groups, this was after many months of being isolated and depressed. I have also been inspired to invest in myself and applied to study a degree! Something which I have always aspired to do. They understood that I gave too much to everyone around me, and as a result had so little for myself. They have encouraged healthy compassionate, self care, boundaries. **They have listened, when no one else would.** My Home Start volunteer, along with my Coordinator, have held space and inspired me to find my full potential. **They have had a transformational impact on my life, I am so glad and grateful to all they have done."**

Action for Children - Eilean Siar



Based in Stornoway, operating in a geographically isolated location, Action for Children Western Isles can step in and help parents who are struggling with isolation and poor mental health by visiting and providing one to one support.

Below you can read about Catriona's experience and how Action for Children helped Catriona to feel supported and less alone.

Catriona was pregnant in the early stages of COVID-19 lockdown. Her family support was very small, having lost her own mum just a few years prior, and the special moments she had looked forward to sharing with her husband, his family and her close friends were not allowed due to the pandemic restrictions. Catriona needed to continue working during her pregnancy and carried the concerns and fears of the potential risks to her and her baby and the unknown virus throughout. Catriona's low moods eventually took over whilst being heavily pregnant and extremely isolated, causing her severe bouts of depression.

After what felt like a very long and difficult pregnancy, Catriona and her partner welcomed a baby girl to the world. In what should have been a time to celebrate the new arrival, the pandemic restrictions were again in place and Catriona and the baby were home alone for long periods of time whilst her partner had to return to work. Catriona's low moods lingered, and without having people to lean on she continued to dip. She began to feel her isolation all the more. The baby struggled with colic for the first 4 months of her life which made it difficult at times to bond.

Their health visitor referred her to Blueprints during baby's 4-month check in. Catriona warmly welcomed the Blueprints team into her home, and proudly showed off her baby girl. Catriona was honest about her long-term battle with her mental health, having low moods and anxiety regularly in her past and the effect that the current isolation had been having on her. Catriona, a very sociable person, was finding the current situation had even further impacted her emotions. A Blueprints keyworker began fortnightly visits, chatting with Catriona listening to her struggles and supporting her to find ways to cope with her current situation. During the visits the worker provided the excitement and joy over baby and her every stage giving Catriona the community she had missed out on. This supported Catriona and baby developing a healthy bond and attachment and a way of learning babies' way of communicating her needs.

Catriona continued to experience low moods and anxiety throughout her postnatal period, often feeling the loss of not having her own mother by her side, and processing the complicated grief she carried. As Catriona was due to return to work, the anxiety about the risk of Covid made her come to the hard decision to not return to work.

She was slowly supported and encouraged to begin attending groups by her Blueprints keyworker which provided Catriona with the confidence to get out and about with her baby. Her keyworker continued to model interactions of play and engagement with toddler during monthly home visits.

Catriona has gradually found a rhythm to her and her toddlers week, regularly attending a local community baby toddler group, her weekly visits to her extended family and engage in positive activities. While Catriona still continues to have her lows, she understands them better, and what helps to lift her. She often gushes over how far herself and her wee girl have come, and what a delight her girl is to her. Catriona and her wee girls bond and positive attachment is so clearly evident. Catriona's wee girl has her sociable nature, welcoming others to their home and always willing for a chat and a play.

"Blueprints are a great laugh. Easy to get along with. Good to have people to talk to and share stories with. Best service provided in Stornoway. Amazing people with great advice, will help with anything. Fabulous."



Outcome 3 - Meeting Baby's Needs

Babies are communicating their needs with us all of the time. From their eye contact to their movements, from how they interact with their environment to the noises they make.

The third sector plays a crucial role in supporting parents and carers to understand baby's needs and to be attuned to what baby is trying to tell us.

Through having an open, friendly and non stigmatising approach, charities encourage parents and carers to ask questions and learn how they can better meet the needs of their infants and children (physical, social, emotional and cognitive).



OUTCOME 3 - Meeting Baby's Needs

81% parents and carers reported feeling better able to meet the needs of their infants and children (physical, social, emotional and cognitive)



Midlothian Sure Start



Midlothian Sure Start run several preventative programmes which provides peer and parenting support to families in Midlothian.

Read about Ian's experiences and the adaptable support that Midlothian Sure Start were able to provide him. Midlothian Sure Start empowered Ian by providing him with knowledge and confidence which helped him to better understand his baby.

In January 2023 Ian got in touch with Midlothian Sure Start looking for support.

Ian's unborn child had been placed on the child protection register due to police reports, prior police record, removal of previous children and both parents in treatment as newly recovering alcoholics.

The baby was born prematurely. Both parents felt unclear on how to be in a relationship together and of how to structure contact to preserve each of their parental rights to provide care for their baby.

A few months into baby's life Mum relapsed and re-entered treatment. This resulted in baby being placed in emergency kinship care with Ian's Mum. This was a turning point for Ian who wanted to do more to care for baby himself. Ian was going through his parenting capacity assessment when Midlothian Sure Start first met with him. He was linked in with recovery groups and taking appropriate medication for both alcoholism and his Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD). They linked Ian into a Raising Children With Confidence course to support him with the upbringing of his child and access knowledge and research. After the first session Ian was in awe of everything, he couldn't believe how much he didn't know and immediately started looking to know more, accessing extra sessions because of this. Midlothian Sure Start had started A Good Start at home with Ian and baby, however as baby was in private nursery while the kinship carer was at work and Ian was being assessed, there was no suitable time as baby was overly tired later in the day after nursery. Ian was spot on in noticing this wouldn't work for baby. Ian joined the Dads OK group held on a Saturday, this gave him the opportunity to spend quality time with his son, spend time with his peers and to see other role models for parenting.

Recently they have had a joint meeting with the NHS Lothian Parent and Infant Relationship Service (PAIRS) team to meet and assess needs of Ian and baby and this has resulted in accessing Video Interactive Guidance with a psychologist from the specialist team.

During this time Ian has completed all required parenting assessments and has recently had his child put back in his care full time. Ian and baby will continue to come to the Dads OK and will be looking to keep support to secure his own tenancy and further learning groups and parenting support.

Ian has commented that the service is **"the only service I have had which is for me and baby together"**.

Outcome 4 - Improved Attachment

Attachment is the warm and secure relationship that forms between baby and parent, helping baby to feel safe, protected and cared for.

It is important that a baby has a safe and secure attachment to a parent or carer. This not only helps the baby's mental health now, but also influences healthy brain development, laying the foundations for a child's later social and emotional wellbeing.

Due to the relationships built with charities, and with staff and volunteers seeing families regularly (often in their home environment), charities are in a unique position to observe and support families to improve attachment.

To learn more about attachment, [click here](#) to read NHS Education for Scotland's guide on Developing Positive Early Attachments.



OUTCOME 4 -Improved Attachment

85% of parents and carers feel better able to maintain a warm and secure relationship with their infant.

Barnardos



Barnardo's services in Renfrewshire and Inverclyde support parents and infants from pregnancy to 3 years old who face a range of adversities that increase the risk of mental health problems. Adopting a whole-family approach, the 'Growing Together' programme offers a solution focused approach to supporting families with children under three years through parenting and peer support. 40% of current service users are care experienced.

Read about the one to one support that Jasmine received to help her manage her mental health and form a positive bond with her baby, Calum.

Jasmine has engaged with the service for 3 years. She initially was referred for pre-natal care when pregnant with her first son. At this point she was in a relationship with her baby's father, and substance use was a major feature of this relationship. She met and started to build a relationship with her Family Support Worker (FSW) at this time. By the time baby Calum was born, the couple had split up very acrimoniously. A shared care arrangement was agreed with social work services, however due to the substance use, Jasmine's family time was to be supervised by her mother at all times. Her Family Support Worker continued to support the family, including attempting to support Calum's father.

Unfortunately due to Jasmine's poor mental health, criminal activity and substance use by both parents, Calum was placed in kinship care. **Jasmine continued to engage sporadically with her FSW who provided emotional support, supervised the family time with Calum, and modelled and coached nurturing and responsive behaviour with Calum.** This relationship has been one of the most stable in Calum's life, and Jasmine's life as her relationship with her mother broke down, and her mental health spiralled into suicide attempts.

However as the FSW continued to respond to Calum's needs, and supervise the family time, Jasmine's mood began to stabilise. **Her family relationships began to improve and her interaction with Calum was much more positive.** The family time became unsupervised and was allowed in the community by Calum's second birthday.

Jasmine became pregnant again. She was living with her mum when she gave birth to another boy. Jasmine advised her FSW that she felt her mood was affected postnatally, however did not feel the same as she had when she Calum was very young. Her FSW sees her weekly and speaks to her daily, to provide emotional and practical support. **Jasmine has care of her second son, and has unsupervised family time with Calum and she feels that life is much more positive.**



Home-Start Glasgow North and North Lanarkshire

Home-Start Glasgow North and North Lanarkshire support families in the perinatal period through a range of services. Intensive one-to-one support for families is provided by a perinatal family support worker and home-visiting peer supporter volunteers. Home-Start Glasgow North and North Lanarkshire also facilitates successful peer support groups, including a drop-in café, as well as peer support groups for Dads to support mental wellbeing.

Read the experience of Katy and Dylan and see how HSGNNL encouraged Katy to attend a support group which improved Katy's confidence and helped her and her baby Jake grow a stronger bond.

Katy and Dylan were referred to HSGNNL by their housing association family support officer as Katy was pregnant with her second child and they required peer support once the baby arrived. Katy and Dylan were both care experienced and had no family support. They benefited from young person's services, but they have been withdrawn. **The concern was that Katy was feeling so low that she would struggle to bond with the new baby.**

When the Family Worker first met Katy, she struggled to look at her and was very scared and shut down. **Once Jake was born it was important for Katy and Dylan to understand the importance of bonding and attachment. They were cautious but started to see progress as Jake was responding to their positive interactions.** Katy had difficulty with trusting anyone which hindered her from meeting new people and the advantages of peer support. Katy was encouraged to the Heart of Scotstoun perinatal group with Jake. Due to past childhood trauma, Katy struggles with meeting new people. This meant that she was very unsure at the thought of being in a large group, but once she understood the benefit for Jake to socialise and be in a play environment with other children she was happier to come along. It was explained to Katy that **attending this group will increase the baby's communication skills which will allow him to thrive and improve his confidence.**

As soon as Katy started attending the group, her Family Worker started to see a huge change in her confidence as she felt safe and respected by the group worker who knew Katy's history and was very empathetic. **She was interacting with other Mum's and playing with her baby who was enjoying the different themed activities to enhance their relationship.** Katy engages every week and looks forward to the interactions with other Mum's and has made a friend. Katy even had the confidence to attend some training that offered about Trauma Informed Parenting. This was a massive achievement and showed how much stronger Katy felt.

Outcome 5 - Infant Mental Health

“Early moments matter. The mental health of babies and young children is important now, and critical for their future health and development.”

Mental health will be experienced differently from one child to the next but broadly, being mentally healthy in infancy and early childhood enables babies and young children to understand and manage emotions, to experience nurturing, meaningful relationships and to explore, play and learn. Being mentally healthy in this life stage also enables children to develop the capacities to be mentally healthy throughout life.”

-UNICEF and PEDAL: Understanding and Supporting Mental Health in Infancy and Early Childhood

In this section, read how charities working towards this outcome demonstrate how infants at a higher risk of mental health problems are better supported by parents and carers.



OUTCOME 5 - Infant Mental Health

82% of parents showing improvement in supporting infants at higher risk of mental health problems

Starcatchers



Expecting Something (Wester Hailes, Edinburgh) and Play & Explore (Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline, Fife) are groups for parents to enjoy protected time in a safe space with their babies up to age two. Starcatchers' artists facilitate creative arts experiences for the families to engage in together, building friendships, strengthening infant-adult attachments, learning new skills, and developing positive connections in the community.

Read from the perspective of 18 month old Luke about how much he has benefitted from attending the group Play and Explore and how they gave his mum the confidence to allow Luke to play outside and access nutritious food.

My name is Luke and I am 18 months old. I have been going to Starcatcher sessions along with my big brother since I was born. I was born during lockdown which meant that my Mummy is very anxious about Covid and is worried that we will get ill. If it weren't for Starcatchers, then I wouldn't have the chance to meet other children and adults other than my own family.

My big brother has started going to Nursery and so he no longer comes with Mummy and I to Starcatchers. Mum is worried that I am too clingy but I just feel shy and miss my big brother.

I find it really hard to sleep at night which makes my Mummy really exhausted during the day. I have just learnt to run which is so much fun! Mummy keeps me in my buggy or indoors all day because she is so tired and worried that I am going to run away. I like coming to Starcatchers because I am allowed to get out of my buggy, play and run around which makes me feel happy and relaxed. It also helps me sleep better at night.

Thanks to Starcatchers, Mum now realises how much I enjoy being outdoors and can see how much I love getting to play in the mud, pick up sticks and run free. My Mummy also says that she feels like herself at this group and that the other Mums and Dads are really supportive.

Starcatchers have helped my Mummy when it comes to healthy foods. Because of Starcatchers, I have tried lots of new fruits, vegetables and hot delicious food that I would never have tried before. I really enjoy trying new food as it gives me energy for my favourite thing - running!

I love coming to Starcatchers!



Multi-Cultural Family Base (MCFB)

Multi-Cultural Family Base are an Edinburgh based organisation that promote the wellbeing and life opportunities of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people and families from diverse communities.

They receive funding from the PIMH Fund to run the Chinese Flower Group. This group supports vulnerable and marginalised Chinese speaking families with infants and children.

Read the experiences of Mum Suzy and her infant Aidan as MCFB help to improve their attachment through holistic and therapeutic interventions.



Suzy and Aidan were invited to attend the Chinese Flower Group in September 2022. The family were initially very cautious due to Covid.

Through the support of the Chinese speaking Project Worker, Suzy and Aidan were able to establish themselves as regular members of the Chinese Flower Group. Whilst in the group, workers observed that Aidan wasn't participating with the rest of the group and would spend his time looking out of the window. **The worker also observed that there was a mis-attachment between Suzy and Aidan. In several settings Aidan established a strong and instant attachment to a worker or student social worker, dismissing any attempts for Suzy to connect and choosing the new person for the majority of the time.** Suzy's awareness of Aidan's limited verbal communication and presentation was heightened during this time due to comparison to others in the group.

Following these observations, they offered individual sessions at home alongside the continuation of the Chinese Flower Group. Suzy was keen for this to happen and welcomed them into their home. The first block of home visits was made by the Chinese speaking Project Worker and a second Project Worker grounded in therapeutic family work. During this time Suzy disclosed having felt suicidal following the birth of Aidan and she thought about taking both her own and Aidan's life. Her husband was aware that she was struggling but was unaware of the extent of her distress.

Suzy was separated from Aidan shortly after birth and had to leave hospital without him while he received treatment for jaundice. This was during the peak of COVID19 and followed Suzy having to be without her husband for the majority of the labour/birth. In a series of home visits with two workers Suzy was able to share in Mandarin her experience of this for the first time. Suzy also shared the pressure she was under from family in China for Aidan's development to improve.

In these sessions Aidan continued to show a preference for seeking play and contact with staff rather than Suzy. Workers aimed to offer the **modelling of relational play, observing opportunity for and moments of connection, between Aidan and Suzy, whilst giving language to Aidan's experience.** Throughout this giving language to Aidan's experience. Suzy shared that she felt unable to talk to Aidan despite caring for him daily. This has now changed and **Suzy feels well enough to play and communicate with Aidan. Suzy has shared with her husband how important this is too, and he plays and talks with Aidan when home from work.**

MCFB has continued to support Aidan and Suzy's relationship and during this time they have observed Aidan seeking comfort and play from Suzy as a first choice.

Learnings

There have been some consistent themes and challenges facing the PIMH sector, which charities have shared with Inspiring Scotland. These include:

Demand for Services:

Charities have reported a consistent increase in demand for services. In an Inspiring Scotland survey conducted in March 2023, 74% of funded charities said they have insufficient capacity to meet demand.

Complexity of Cases:

Charities have seen a rise in the complexity of cases. This results in having to work more in depth with families, often for longer periods of time.

Challenging Funding Climate:

Charities have reported concern about lack of funding in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health. In an Inspiring Scotland survey conducted in March 2023, despite 71% of referrals coming from NHS Statutory services, less than 5% of funding comes from NHS statutory services. This leaves the charities in a fragile position, as on average their biggest source of funding is from independent trusts and foundation (43%), followed by Scottish Government funding at 33%.

Staff and Volunteer Recruitment / Retention:

Resourcing continues to be a challenge for many organisations. Short term and uncertain funding cycles makes it difficult for staff recruitment and retention.

Many charities are reporting difficulty in attracting / retaining volunteers which they believe is linked to a reduction in volunteer numbers during COVID 19 lockdowns, the rise in complexity of mental health cases and the cost of living crisis forcing families and retirees back to work.

Cost of Living Crisis:

This reporting period (October 2022 - March 2023) was an extremely challenging time for families (and services) due to the cost of living crisis. With many charities reporting that families they are supporting having to make a choice between "heating or eating", some perinatal and infant mental health charities have had to increase the practical support they offer.

For example, this could be supporting with emergency funding for electricity, referrals to food banks / baby banks or signposting to financial support agencies.

Many charities ran a 'Christmas Appeal' and supported families with access to clothes and toys over the winter period.

Charities have also been strongly affected by the cost of living crisis, with an increase in overheads and staffing costs.

Statutory Service Partnerships:

The majority of charities have built strong working relationships with statutory services such as NHS and Social Work and are valued as a critical partner in delivering perinatal and infant mental health care. There are however challenges which arise from different levels of provisions and referral pathways across the country.

Family Feedback

"Having Home-Start means I am more confident as a parent and that I am not alone. I now think more about how I can be a better Mum to my baby. Coming to the groups at Home-Start has helped me enjoy being with my daughter."

Home-Start Levenmouth

"I enjoy that my little one has a place to come play with other babies, and chatting with other mothers also and Amma Family group is a free space where there is no judgement"

Amma

"thank you for being here, it has really helped me as a new mum, meeting others and realising that some of the things i have been worried about are 'normal' as a new mum', offering us First Aid was amazing and really helped with my confidence as we move onto the weaning stage"

Home-Start East Lothian

"I need this group weekly as I get more out of the group than I do with the mental health services I use, it's all about trust. Home-Start Dundee has given me the opportunities that I wouldn't be able to find anywhere else and has helped me grow my confidence not only as a mum but as a person."

Home-Start Dundee

" You guys were always there for me and my baby, I never felt judged"

Aberlour

"Thought it was all really positive. Liked how fast everything went ahead - it was rapid and that was great because that's when I needed the support"

Dads Rock

"I have gained more confidence as a mum, the ability to acknowledge my feelings and be more open about what goes on inside my head."

Home-Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde

" Since therapy I feel more comfortable and relaxed. Before I used to have my guard up all the time. I am more engaged and interested in my child. We do more things together. I now enjoy being a mum"

CrossReach

"I've had the best experience doing Baby Massage. I've gained an amazing bond with my baby girl now and can't thank this group enough. I've also been able to help my baby with her colic and reflux. My confidence has also been boosted."

3D Drumchapel

"Held in our hearts have been invaluable to me. Without their help and guidance I don't think I would've made it through this pregnancy. Thanks to them I managed to change my way of thinking to a more positive way"

Held in Our Hearts

"I am very grateful that you helped us with everything. There are a billion words of gratitude in my heart, but I can't explain it better than thank you. Thank you very much for your help and advice."

Stepping Stones

"Even when I'm having dark thoughts, I know I can chat to the group leader after if I need to, but I'm going to group as well as my home visit. I don't know what I would have done without group to be with other people who just get it"

Home-Start Caithness

"Such a lovely environment. I was so nervous about going to a baby group as I'm such an anxious person and new places, but I was made to feel so welcome and instantly felt at ease. "

WithKids

"The staff instantly understood my position and more so than any professionals I've had contact with before and they didn't judge me. I was lonely, I was purposeless, my self-esteem was on the floor, and I was close to checking out. I cannot tell you how much it meant to me when Amy, the Perinatal Support Co-ordinator, listened to me and saw my need for help."

Home-Start Glasgow South

"These sessions have been very useful, it was so hard to find antenatal classes, I am so glad I found these. They were informative and a nice relaxed atmosphere where you weren't afraid to ask questions"

Healthy Valleys

"I feel more confident just having you there to help me. I find it so difficult to leave the house as I feel so low at times but you gently encourage me and I now realise how important that is for my confidence and for my son who needs the stimulation."

Home-Start Glasgow North and North Lanarkshire

"I will be forever grateful for the support I received from my counsellor at MindMosaic and she has assured me that I can refer back if I need to in the future. I now feel excited about having my baby and know I can be a good mum"

MindMosaic

"Thank you for listening when I thought I had no-one to talk to. I feel you have given me the strength to carry on and be a better mum for my kids"

LATNEM

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