Perinatal Mental Health Report
Full Report - Section 1
Details Of Peer Support Currently Available
February 2017
A changing picture

The SMILE group will be establishing a new informal drop-in group in Sandbach from the end of November, and will also be providing 1-2-1 home visiting sessions in Macclesfield, Congleton and Sandbach.

What we don’t know but would like to know

• Postcode data of service-users from the Knutsford Lavender Group.

• Postcode data from the yet to be established SMILE initiatives.

• More detail on the types of peer support facilitated by health visitors across Cheshire West and Chester, their delivery locations and service user postcode data.

Approximate figures taken from service provider data available.

Map Commentary

This map shows the reach of peer support services in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester.

The map illustrates a predominance of structured peer support in the South of Cheshire East, with a lack of informal drop-in peer support. Poynton Pandas at the northern boundary attracts service users from those living in close proximity and from women outside of Cheshire East. The Knutsford Lavender Group, (no data collected) would seem to be the only local support service in the Western area of Cheshire East. The only support identified in Cheshire West and Chester is provided in Winsford and through the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership and East Cheshire Trust Health Visiting Services (no further details available).
Details of peer support currently available

The report was initially tasked to cover the Cheshire East region. However, this was expanded to include Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) during the course of the project.

Four service providers were identified and interviewed within Cheshire East, but despite extensive use of contacts and local networks within CWaC, it was not possible to identify perinatal mental health peer support within that region apart from the Motherwell provision which is delivered in Winsford.

Health visitors in CWaC are currently working to provide professional-led peer support in the near future, but there are no details available at present.

The Cheshire East service providers are as follows:

VCFS service providers ((Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector)
• Motherwell (delivered in Crewe and Winsford)
• Poynton PANDAS (Poynton)
• The SMILE Group (delivered in Congleton, Macclesfield and Sandbach)

Statutory provision
• The Lavender Group (Crewe and Knutsford)

The ‘journey’ through service provision

A significant number of the mums will access several of these options during their recovery period and will create their own ‘journey’ through the portfolio. If women who require additional support, such as counselling, are identified during group peer support sessions they can, (with Motherwell and SMILE) access their 1-2-1 counselling services.

Those service providers who run informal peer support drop-in sessions see the peer support group sessions as the core part of their service. From these sessions, attendees can be identified as requiring further support, and be referred for counselling (either in-house or to a local service with links to them) or signposted to a health professional or service that can provide the additional support required.

Types of service provision

Each of the VCFS groups offering peer support have more than one service, with many offering a portfolio of service provision. This menu of different activities is deemed to be important by the group leaders, to cater for the different needs of women who are at varying stages of their perinatal mental health journey to recovery. These include:

• 1-2-1 counselling
• Peer Support sessions (structured and informal drop-in)
• Online support (Facebook presence or website access)
• Activity based peer support (e.g. Buggy Fit, Baby Yoga or a monthly Chill Out evening with complementary therapies)
• Family support (monthly family days including LGBT events or Dads’ sessions)

Step-down provision

All of the VCFS providers offer a form of ‘step-down’ support which women tend to access alongside the main peer support provision, before phasing out the main peer support group as they begin to recover. These ‘step-down’ sessions tend to take the form of activity-based peer support, (for example, Buggy Fit, creative sessions, and complementary therapy based ‘chill out evenings’), or family support such as The SMILE Group’s monthly Family Day at Ruby’s Fund in Congleton, or Motherwell’s ‘We Are Family’ LGBT family sessions.

Women often attend these ‘step-down’ groups for some time as a way to stay in touch with the groups, and they will also often maintain online contact with group leaders for significant periods of time after they have left the peer support group sessions.

Motherwell (Crewe and Winsford)

Motherwell offers a portfolio of services at ‘Everybody’ lifestyle centres in Crewe (Cheshire East) and Winsford (Cheshire West and Chester) to provide an holistic approach to support and empower women and new mums. They offer 1-2-1 counselling support and various groups with a peer support element:

• Mums Uniting Mums (MUMs) - a six week closed group therapeutic course which requires commitment from participants.

• #Riseandshine - a 24 week challenge of 12 weeks of baby yoga and 12 weeks of Buggy Fit.

• Mum Shine - an ongoing creative group which is more informal and takes place once a month.

21-40 mums used the 1-2-1 counselling support last year, 41-60 attended the peer support group sessions and activities.
Of these, 6 mums attended the MUMs session in Winsford, with some mums travelling to the sessions from Northwich, and 3 mums attended the MUMs session in Crewe (all were referrals from health services). At the moment user data is not collected for Mum Shine. 21 mums and their babies have attended the #Riseandshine sessions in Crewe.

The portfolio of service provision is the same for both delivery locations, and the three programmes are run at each site in the local Lifestyle Centres, Winsford on Wednesdays, and Crewe on Fridays (but moving to a Thursday). The maximum capacity for these groups is 8. The next MUMs courses will begin in December 2016.

Mode of referral

Motherwell’s MUMs course can be accessed via self-referral or professional referral (social care, Health Visitors). Where a mum has self-referred, a group coordinator contacts the mum and “triages” them, looking for postnatal diagnoses and to see if their midwife/health visitors feel they need additional support. Motherwell receives a high proportion of referrals for their Crewe MUMs course from social care.

Programme details

The MUMs course is based on the Recovery Toolkit and is underpinned by CBT but delivered in a person-centred way.

Sessions cover:
- Expectation vs reality
- Parent styles
- Our support networks
- Managing our emotions
- Effects on our relationship
- Self-esteem

Staffing

Motherwell’s structured MUMs sessions are delivered by a trained facilitator and at least one co-facilitator. Their other informal drop-in sessions are run by trained volunteers, and Motherwell is currently training two volunteer co-facilitators and plans to have a Volunteer Co-ordinator in the future. Motherwell CIC provides all of the training for the volunteers in-house.

Poynton PANDAS (Poynton)

Poynton PANDAS offers peer and online support as part of their service provision, which aims to support new and expectant mums who are struggling either with being a new mum or with perinatal mental health issues. Dads and carers are also welcome to attend.

The provision can be broken down as follows:

- **Peer support** A drop-in group that runs weekly during term-time from St. George’s Church Hall in Poynton on a Monday, 10.45 – 12.15. This group is overseen by at least two voluntary peer supporters, often three. Women can bring children up to the age of three. They also run a monthly evening ‘Chill out’ group in Adlington where complementary therapies are offered and up to ten mums usually attend.

- **Online support** Poynton PANDAS runs a Facebook page where users and non-users can communicate with the Group Leader. They also host an ad-hoc ‘Sunday night Tea and Chat’ between 8 and 9pm, which is a private group session where users need to be approved or invited beforehand. This ‘chat’ will not appear in the user’s timeline and is popular with 20-30 women communicating with each other during this time.

Last year 65 women attended the drop-in group and 17 women attended the monthly ‘Chill Out’ sessions. 61-100 used the online forum support (this is an estimation as it is not possible to obtain exact figures).

“...we’re either a preventative going into statutory, or we’re the step down coming out.”
- Motherwell (Kate)

“A lot of people will come here before they even speak to a health professional about what they’re going through. It’s kind of that safe place where you can talk about your symptoms without that fear of consequences.”
- Poynton PANDAS (Rhiannon)
have been diagnosed with perinatal mental health issues through to new mums who are struggling with motherhood and looking for advice and support.

**Staffing**

Poynton PANDAS informal drop-in sessions are overseen by a minimum of two volunteer peer supporters, often three. They insist that the group leader and deputy have DBS training and one of them has to be present at each drop-in session. Other training provided includes:

- Safeguarding children and adults
- Peer support in the community
- Introduction to counselling
- Introduction to CBT
- Homestart Oldham, Stockport and Tameside parent infant mental health course.

**The SMILE Group (Congleton, Macclesfield and Sandbach)**

SMILE offers 1-2-1 support and a peer support group in three locations all year round (Congleton every Wednesday, Macclesfield every Friday and Sandbach every Tuesday). The Sandbach group launched at the end of November 2016. Their groups are hosted in the local Children’s Centres. They also hold monthly family sessions (2 hours) on a Saturday in Congleton at Ruby’s Fund which can be attended by, on average, 8 to 9 families. This session is closed to the general public.

SMILE has recently undertaken a pilot where they engaged PSS PND (a Liverpool company) to go out into the mums’ homes for 8 sessions. It was felt there was a need for this as some people with perinatal mental health issues are not in a position to go out to the group sessions. These sessions cover a range of issues, explore any problems the mum is experiencing, and offers tools and techniques to deal with them. The idea is that this then gives the person the confidence to attend weekly sessions. In the pilot, four of the mums were off work sick and after the 8 sessions 3 returned to work. SMILE plans to roll this programme out to 6 people a week at all three of their delivery locations in the near future. Mums will be identified by a Health Visitor referral system.

Fewer than 10 used the 1-2-1 counselling support last year and more than 100 women attended the peer support group sessions at Congleton and Macclesfield. Approximately 8-9 families attended each monthly family session. SMILE has recently become a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO).

**Mode of referral**

The SMILE Group can be accessed via self-referral or professional referral. The drop-in group can be attended without prior contact and attendees range from mums with a diagnosed perinatal mental health issue to new mums who are struggling with motherhood and looking for advice and support. The SMILE Group has strong links with local Health Visitors and regularly receives referrals.

**Staffing**

The SMILE Group has two facilitators (paid positions) who oversee each of the informal drop-in sessions at the three locations (Congleton, Macclesfield and Sandbach).

The facilitators take part in relevant CVS training sessions and also undergo safeguarding training. They will both soon undertake counselling training at a local college.

**The Lavender Group (Crewe and Knutsford)**

The Lavender Group is a statutory professional intervention which runs a 6 week structured programme delivered by Wirral Community Trust Health Visitors in local Children’s Centres.

It offers peer support as part of their wider provision and is led by Health Visitors trained in perinatal mental health and supported by a Family Service Worker from the Children’s Centre.

For the purposes of this report Project workers spoke to the programme leaders in Crewe and Knutsford. 20 women used the support at the Crewe group last year (it has been running for 12 months) and approximately 25 women used the support at Knutsford last year. The programme is a closed group and users have to commit to the designated sessions.

"...in the last five years I can't tell you how many people are in a very similar situation and say they want out of their life... so you do absolutely need help and support. But there is some normalisation and normality to some of the feelings that you might be feeling when you have some form of perinatal mental health. And going along to a group where there are other people saying, “yes!”, kind of makes you go, “oh, so it is all right then that I feel like that.”

- SMILE (Ruth)
Mode of referral

All referrals are currently made by health professionals (Health Visitors, GPs and IAPT). Health Visitors complete an ‘Edinburgh Post-Natal Depression Score’ with every family where a new birth has occurred. This is completed at the 6 week visit.

Where families have scored highly (a score of 12 or above) Health Visitors will discuss the Lavender Group with them. This process will be changing, however, so instead of using the Edinburgh scale as an initial identifier, they will be using Whooley and GAD2, before moving onto the Edinburgh scale and then GAD7. The Group is promoted heavily within the Health Visiting Service and advertised on the monthly Children’s Centre Timetable. Family Service Workers are also aware of the Group and promote it with families they are working with.

The original Lavender Group was set up at Knutsford Children’s Centre and it was rolled out to Crewe just over a year ago. The Crewe group follows the same structure as the original group in Knutsford, however, both group Leads are free to introduce their own activities and content as appropriate.

Programme details

The programme for the course at Crewe is as follows:

Week 1
- Understanding Postnatal Depression
- Activity session: Sensory play

Week 2
- Exploring Motherhood
- Activity session: Treasure baskets

Week 3
- Looking After Yourself (Diet, Exercise and Me Time)
- Activity session: Music time

Week 4
- Understanding and Managing Anxiety
- Activity session: Hand and foot paintings

Week 5
- Sleep and Relaxation
- Activity session: Baby massage

Week 6
- Celebrate Achievements
- Activity session: Messy play

A crèche is provided for the babies (in an adjoining room) so that mums can fully engage in the structured programme. The afternoon activity sessions provide a safe space for mums to bond with their babies and to enjoy getting to know them through various activities including baby massage and music.

On completion of the course, families are asked if they would benefit from further support, and if this is required their Health Visitors will make contact to discuss appropriate support options. A Dad’s session is sometimes included in Week 7.

The Lavender Group does not currently have an online presence on the internet or on social media, but discussions are taking place around how to promote the groups.

Counselling

The SMILE Group and Motherwell CIC both offer in-house counselling to women who attend their peer support group sessions and who are identified as requiring 1-2-1 support. For example, the SMILE Group offer 6-8 sessions of counselling, and they have two one hour appointments available during each weekly drop-in session (with a trained counsellor at the Children’s Centre).

Poynton PANDAS has strong links with a local charitable counselling service and will signpost to this service or to IAPT if it is felt necessary.

Online support

Aside from the online presence and any social media groups facilitated by the VCFS groups, national online support is also available and includes:


PND Hour: #PNDHour on Twitter

Action for Postpartum Psychosis offer online 1-2-1 support using peer supporters with lived experience. User location data is not collected as this is seen as a potential barrier to support: www.app-network.org

“I have had ladies who have sat there and said, I can’t bond with my baby. And we can deal with it and we can help them and support them. So they feel brave in this familiar environment. ...It soon becomes a little family for those six weeks, if you like.”

- Lavender Group (Linda)
Key findings

There is a predominance of structured peer support in the south of Cheshire East with a lack of informal drop-in peer support.

Poynton PANDAS at the northern boundary attracts service users outside of Cheshire East.

The Knutsford Lavender Group appears to be the only local support service in the west of Cheshire East.

What we don’t know but want to know

• Postcode data for the Lavender Group in Knutsford.

• Whether there is a need for Lavender Group support for women after the 12 month postnatal period.

• If there are safeguarding issues or duties of care for groups of mums who continue to meet after structured courses have finished.

• The capacity of groups to deal with current and future levels of demand.

• More detail on the types of peer support facilitated by health visitors across Cheshire West and Chester, their delivery locations and service user postcode data.

Opportunities for improvement

• Facilitation of cross-sector partnership working between service providers ie further explore the PMH forum model in Stockport.

• Consider expanding the Cheshire East Maternal Mental Health Working Group to include VCFS organisations.

• Facilitate the sharing of best practice between all perinatal peer support groups in Cheshire.

Glossary

CBT - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CIC - Community Interest Company
CIO - Charitable Incorporated Organisation
CWaC - Cheshire West and Chester
DBS training - Disclosure & Barring Service Training
GP - General Practitioner
IAPT - Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
PMH - Perinatal Mental Health
PND - Postnatal Depression
VCFS - Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
**General perinatal mental health resources**

“Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit”, Royal College of General Practitioners website (featuring two contributions from the SMILE Group). Aimed at Primary Care Professionals, the Toolkit includes a section on Peer and Online Support and was launched in July 2016: [http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/toolkits/perinatal-mental-health-toolkit.aspx](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/toolkits/perinatal-mental-health-toolkit.aspx)


**Cheshire perinatal mental health peer support providers**

Motherwell CIC: [http://www.motherwellcic.com](http://www.motherwellcic.com)

Poynton PANDAS: [https://en-gb.facebook.com/PoyntonPANDAS](https://en-gb.facebook.com/PoyntonPANDAS) or [http://poyntonpandas.blogspot.co.uk](http://poyntonpandas.blogspot.co.uk)

The SMILE Group: [http://www.thesmilegroup.org](http://www.thesmilegroup.org)

**Campaigns**

**Maternal Mental Health Alliance’s ‘Everyone’s Business’ campaign.** Hosted by Action on Postpartum Psychosis (APP) and funded by Comic Relief, the campaign was launched in January 2014: [http://everyonesbusiness.org.uk](http://everyonesbusiness.org.uk)

**National Childbirth Trust’s #BeyondBabyBlues campaign.** Launched at the end of 2015: [https://www.nct.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/beyond-baby-blues](https://www.nct.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/beyond-baby-blues)

**National Childbirth’s Trust’s ‘Parents in Mind’ campaign.** Launched in 2016 and funded by the Department of Health, this campaign centres upon trained, local volunteers delivering 1-2-1 and group peer support within community settings: [https://www.nct.org.uk/professional/parents-in-mind](https://www.nct.org.uk/professional/parents-in-mind)

**Benefits of peer support supporting information**

“Peer Support”, The Mental Health Foundation website: [https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/p/peer-support](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/p/peer-support)


**Perinatal mental health national bodies and organisations**


Association for Post Natal Illness (APNI): [https://apni.org](https://apni.org)

Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA): [http://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org](http://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org)


Perinatal Mental Health Network (PMHN): [http://www.pnmhnetwork.org](http://www.pnmhnetwork.org)

**Social media resources**

“#PNDHour” on Twitter, run by PND&Me: [http://www.pndandme.co.uk/pndhour](http://www.pndandme.co.uk/pndhour)

Netmums online information: [http://www.netmums.com/support/pre-and-postnatal-depression](http://www.netmums.com/support/pre-and-postnatal-depression)

Perinatal mental health peer support in the Cheshire region

54% of mums found out about the peer support group through the internet/Facebook followed by (in order):

- Friend/word of mouth (31%)
- Health Visitor (23%)
- GP (8%)
- Private Health Visitor (4%)
- Private Doula (4%)
- Children’s Centre (4%)

*Does not add up to 100% as some respondents ticked more than one option.

100% of survey respondents had used a peer support group.

96% of survey respondents said the peer support group had made the biggest difference to them out of all the support given.

17 out of 20 (85%) said they felt lonely and isolated while waiting for support.

100% of survey respondents said it had a positive impact on them – ‘normalising’, ‘reducing isolation’, ‘sharing’.

Up to 88% of mums using VCFS services said they wanted someone with lived experience to run the groups.

3 out of 4 service providers and 55% of service users said that anxiety is the biggest barrier to attending a peer support group.

Just under 7,200 maternities in Cheshire (Cheshire East and CWAC). An estimated 15-20% of women develop depression or anxiety within a year of giving birth which could mean between 1,080 women (15%) and 1,440 women (20%).

The four providers worked with:

- Peer support: up to 300 women
- Counselling: up to 50 women
- Online support: more than 100 women

Still leaving a large shortfall of women who have not used their support but who could benefit from it.

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## APPENDIX 1: Summary of service provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>SMILE</th>
<th>Poynton PANDAS</th>
<th>Motherwell</th>
<th>Lavender Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of support provided:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-1 support</td>
<td>&gt; 10 users</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>21-40 users (estimation)</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support groups</td>
<td>100+ users</td>
<td>65 users</td>
<td>44 users</td>
<td>6 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online support</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>Figures not available</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone support</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>8-9 families per monthly session</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Figures not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery location</td>
<td>Macclesfield, Congleton and Sandbach at the Children’s Centres</td>
<td>St. George’s Church Hall, Poynton</td>
<td>Everybody Lifestyle Centre</td>
<td>Everybody Lifestyle Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often regular peer support groups meet</td>
<td>Weekly, all year round</td>
<td>Weekly, term-time</td>
<td>6 week structured programme, 1 day per week, 9-5</td>
<td>6 week structured programme, 1 morning per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What days/times?</td>
<td>M: Friday am; C: Wednesday am; Tuesday pm</td>
<td>Monday 10:45 - 12:15</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any additional regular sessions?</td>
<td>Monthly Saturday family day (Ruby’s Fund, Congleton)</td>
<td>Monthly evening session in Adlington</td>
<td>#Ressandishoe (Buggy Fit &amp; Baby Yoga); and Mum Shine creative group</td>
<td>A dad’s session in week 7 at Crewe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time regular sessions established</td>
<td>1-2-1 as a 3 month pilot, peer 5 years+</td>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>Less than 12 months</td>
<td>2-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential barriers cited to accessing support</td>
<td>Anxiety and transport</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can women attend sessions with:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/child</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can users attend on a drop-in basis?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Yes for the peer support group session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do users have to commit to a certain number of sessions?</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of referral</td>
<td>Self-referral or professional referral</td>
<td>Self-referral or professional referral</td>
<td>Self-referral or professional referral (social care, Health Visitors)</td>
<td>Referral by Health Visitor, GP or IAPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the group funded?</td>
<td>Eastern Cheshire CCG, fundraising activities, Cheshire Community Foundation, Peaks and Plains</td>
<td>Donations and fund-raising</td>
<td>Big Lottery funding, donations and fund-raising activities</td>
<td>Venue provides refreshments, funded as part of service level agreement with Eastern Cheshire CCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your service quality assured?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of impact measurement</td>
<td>CORE10</td>
<td>No specific mechanisms</td>
<td>HAD Scoring</td>
<td>Pre-course and post-course evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When can service be accessed?</td>
<td>Antenatal and up to 3 years</td>
<td>Antenatal and up to 3 years</td>
<td>Antenatal and up to 2 years</td>
<td>Up to 1 year after birth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Visitors deliver Baby Matters Groups in Vale Royal Children’s Centres and Peer Support Groups are also being developed in West Cheshire CCG area but further details are not currently available.