



Women & Families Maternal Mental Health Pledge

I should have the right to good care from NHS Scotland for my baby, my family and me

The NHS Scotland Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities* gives patients the right to get services appropriate to their need, to be involved in decisions about their care, to expect confidentiality and to be treated with dignity and respect, to have safe, effective care and to be able have any complaints dealt with.

More than one in five women will experience mental health difficulties in pregnancy or the first postnatal year. A woman's need for care at this time is distinctly different from that at other times and good care benefits not only her, but also her baby growing up, her partner and other family members. **The Mental Health (Scotland) Act (2015)** gives a woman the right to be admitted to a specialist mother and baby unit, jointly with her infant, if she needs inpatient mental health care. In addition, women with lived experience of perinatal mental illness have identified the following expectations, which they believe would help improve care for women, their infants and families throughout Scotland.

I expect that:

1. I am fully involved, and at the centre of my care, so that I have the information I need to make the best decisions for me, my pregnancy and my infant's future health
2. I can be confident that staff who assess and care for me will have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills
3. I will receive preconception and pregnancy advice and care if I have a pre-existing mental health problem
4. I will receive expert advice and care about my maternal mental health when I require it, wherever I live in Scotland
5. I will have rapid access to talking therapies during my pregnancy and postnatal period
6. I can openly discuss my maternal mental health without fear of stigma or of being judged
7. My family are given the information and support they need to help me and to get help for themselves
8. I can be confident that my baby will have parents who are supported with their mental health

*You can find the NHS Scotland Patient Charter at: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/patients-charter/the-charter-of-patient-rights-and-responsibilities>

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