

Women and Families Maternal Mental Health Pledge

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

The NHS Scotland Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities* summarises patient's rights to; receive services appropriate to their need; be involved in decisions about their care; expect confidentiality and have the right to complain and the complaint dealt with effectively.

More than one in five women** will experience mental health difficulties in pregnancy or the first postnatal year. The need for care at this time is very different and good care benefits not only the mother, but also baby growing up, dads and 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.

Women with lived experience of perinatal mental illness have identified the expectations below. They believe these will help improve care for mums, dads, their infants and families.

I expect that:

- 1. I'm fully involved, informed and at the centre of my care, so I have what I need to make the best decisions for me, my pregnancy and my baby.**
- 2. I'm confident that staff caring for me will have the appropriate knowledge and skills.**
- 3. If I have mental health concerns, I'll get advice and support before becoming pregnant.**
- 4. I'll get expert advice and trauma-informed care of my perinatal mental health when I need it, wherever I live in Scotland.**
- 5. I'll have timely access to help and support during my pregnancy and postnatally.**
- 6. I can talk openly about my mental health without worrying about being judged. Everything will be done to keep me and my baby together where possible. If I need to be admitted to hospital for mental health treatment, I have the right to be admitted with my baby.**
- 7. I'm confident my family are given the support they need to help me and get help for themselves if they need it.**
- 8. I'm supported to bond with my baby.**

*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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** The term woman/women has been used as this is the way the majority of those who are pregnant and having a baby will identify. For the purpose of this document, this term includes girls and people whose gender identity does not correspond with their birth sex or who may have a non-binary identity.

