



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Perinatal Mental Health

Thank you for contacting me about this vital issue.

I share your concern over the suffering mental health problems can cause during and after pregnancy. The Government understands the importance of tackling perinatal mental health problems and wants to hear from all those affected about their experiences whether as patients or health care professionals.

The Government's Health Visitor Programme funded the Institute of Health Visitors to train almost 600 perinatal mental health visitor champions whose task is to enable health visitors to identify perinatal depression and other maternal mental health conditions and to support the mothers affected. In addition, the Government has invested £365 million in improving perinatal mental health services in England over five years, with the aim of providing enough resources to support and care for at least 30,000 women by 2021.

To help ensure that parents are supported as much as possible, the Government has increased the number of midwives by over 1,800. Furthermore, by the end of the Health Visitor Programme in April 2015, there were almost 4,000 more Health Visitors compared to May 2010, an increase of around 50 per cent, with 1,000 HV students in training. Health Education England is ensuring sustainable development of the HV workforce over time and there are presently over 800 HV student training places commissioned.

Confidence that facilities and procedures are safe can be a factor in ensuring good mental health and emotional well-being. That is one reason why the Government has invested £2.24 million in new safety equipment. I understand that £1 million has been invested in improved training for staff to help deliver healthy babies more safely. Since 2010, £35 million has been spent partly on improving birthing environments and partly on bereavement rooms at nearly 40 hospitals.

Of course, these are complex and developing questions and I hope you and others will continue to let us know what issues concern you in the future.

If you have not already done so, you may be interested to read the NICE guidelines on postnatal care, which can be found on this webpage: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg37>.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP