

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee  
Wednesday 26 November 2025  
18th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

## PE2017: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year

### Introduction

**Petitioner** Margaret Reid

**Petition summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

- amend section 24 of Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal mental health support beyond one year,
- introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health boards,
- introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet Perinatal Quality Network Standard Type 1 across all health boards, and
- establish a Mother and Baby Unit in North East Scotland

**Webpage** <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE2017>

1. [The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on 22 January 2025](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport.
2. The petition summary is included in **Annexe A** and the Official Report of the Committee's last consideration of this petition is at **Annexe B**.
3. The Committee has received a new written submission from the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, which is set out in **Annexe C**.
4. [Written submissions received prior to the Committee's last consideration can be found on the petition's webpage](#).
5. [Further background information about this petition can be found in the SPICe briefing](#) for this petition.
6. [The Scottish Government gave its initial response to the petition on 2 May 2023](#).
7. Every petition collects signatures while it remains under consideration. At the time of writing, 683 signatures have been received on this petition.

8. [At its meeting on 24 September 2025, the Committee took evidence on thematic healthcare issues](#) that have been raised in multiple petitions, including this petition.

## **Action**

9. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

**Clerks to the Committee**  
**November 2025**

## **Annexe A: Summary of petition**

**PE2017: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year**

### **Petitioner**

Margaret Reid

### **Date Lodged**

3 April 2023

### **Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to:

- amend section 24 of Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal mental health support beyond one year,
- introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health boards,
- introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet Perinatal Quality Network Standard Type 1 across all health boards, and
- establish a Mother and Baby Unit in North East Scotland

### **Previous action**

I contacted one of my North East regional MSPs in December 2021 who raised the situation during First Minister's Questions. I contacted another North East regional MSP, Tess White MSP, in early 2022 about maternal health services and she has been supporting us on the issues raised in this petition in the intervening period.

### **Background information**

A member of my family who lives in NE Scotland, developed postpartum psychosis and relapsed after receiving initial treatment at a Mother and Baby Unit. Her experience shows that difficulties with maternal mental health are not just confined to the first year of motherhood.

After being diagnosed with postpartum psychosis, she and her baby were admitted to the Mother and Baby Unit in Livingston. They received exceptional care, while her family were kept up-to-date with her treatment and progress.

However, she experienced a relapse some months later and was sectioned in a mental health unit. Her experience was profoundly different to the MBU where she had made so much progress. She said to me that 'it was like living a nightmare; the whole experience just didn't seem real.'

To watch someone you love be so ill, to put her in the hands of a system with people you should be able to trust, and be let down so badly is one of the hardest experiences of my life. It has driven me to make change.

## **Annexe B: Extract from Official Report of last consideration of PE2017 on 22 January 2025**

**The Convener:** Our next petition is PE2017, which was lodged by Margaret Reid. It calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to amend section 24 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 to extend maternal health support beyond one year; to introduce a family liaison function at adult mental health units across all health board areas; to introduce specialised perinatal community teams that meet perinatal quality network standard type 1 across all health board areas; and to establish a mother and baby unit in the north-east of Scotland.

We are joined for our consideration of the petition by our colleague Tess White. Good morning, Tess.

We most recently considered the petition at our meeting on 17 April, when we agreed to write to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport. We requested an update on publication of the options appraisal report, and the minister stated that it would be published in due course. However, we understand that, notwithstanding what the minister said, no report has yet been published.

09:45

The minister's response also highlights that development of a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services has been identified as a priority area. The minister states her intention to provide £85,000 "in this financial year"—the clerks have confirmed that that means the financial year that we are currently in—to support the first phase of work to develop intensive treatment services for perinatal women, their infants and their families in the north of Scotland.

Before I ask colleagues for their comments, I invite Tess White to address the committee.

**Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con):** I thank the convener and the committee for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. It is fortuitous, because the petition was once again in the press last week, when it received coverage in The Courier.

This is a difficult and emotive topic. I pay tribute to the petitioner, Maggie Reid, who is a constituent of mine, for her on-going work to improve perinatal mental health support for women in the north-east and across Scotland.

As the convener will know, this is the third occasion on which I have appeared before the committee on the petition. However, frustratingly, the Scottish Government has made little progress towards advancing its key aims. It seems that we are no closer to extending the period for which specialist perinatal mental health support is available, and we still do not have a mother and baby unit in the north-east. The recommendations of the Strang report on Tayside's mental health services have still not been satisfactorily implemented. Worryingly, stakeholders have advised that, since the dissolution of the perinatal and infant mental health programme board in 2023, there have been no clear plans for the long-term strategic planning and

monitoring of specialist perinatal mental health services. I have also been advised that there are no clear timescales for completion on meeting the recommended service models for different parts of the country.

At the core of Maggie's petition is the premise that new mothers who suffer mental ill health should be kept safer—much safer than they are now. The committee will recall that Maggie's sister Lesley was sectioned because of postpartum psychosis, and she was placed in a mixed ward at Carseview psychiatric unit. I ask members to imagine how they would feel if their own daughter, niece or mother had to go through that. Thinking about that prospect brings it home to you. Lesley was already vulnerable, and she was—understandably—absolutely terrified.

I raised the issue of mixed wards in Carseview with the First Minister at First Minister's question time last week, following reports of sexual assaults and rapes taking place at the unit. This issue needs much greater scrutiny.

Last year, Maggie and I met the Deputy First Minister to discuss maternal mental health and the petition. The Deputy First Minister undertook to see Carseview for herself, and last week she visited it with the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport. That makes me all the more surprised that she has not found the money that she promised. We await detailed feedback on the visit.

I would like to finish with Maggie's own words, which I will leave with members. She said:

“this is not just for my sister, it's for women in general and I hope the Scottish Government will do something about it.”

We cannot wait any longer.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much, Tess. That was very helpful.

Given the letter that we received back in April after our consideration of the petition last year, and the matters that Tess White has just raised, I think that the minister has some explaining to do. I do not like to put it so bluntly, but it does not seem to me that progress has been forthcoming. Do colleagues have any suggestions?

**David Torrance:** Could we consider writing to the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport to ask for a specific publication date for the report from NHS National Services Scotland on the options appraisal process on mother and baby unit provision in Scotland? We could highlight that the report has been expected since 2023, request a timeline for the draft services specification for perinatal mental health services, and ask whether the petitioner's concerns will be considered as part of that work.

**The Convener:** Are we agreed on that? If colleagues agree, I would like to refer to the response that we received from the minister at the time. We could say that we accepted her response in good faith and are a little disappointed to find that neither of the things discussed in that response as being imminent has actually happened. That is of concern.

**Fergus Ewing:** I entirely agree. It is symptomatic of a wider malaise about repeated delays and failure to meet timelines that have been promised to Parliament.

Therefore, I wonder whether we might also write to the permanent secretary and ask him what he is going to do about it. I am not defending ministers here—they are ultimately responsible—but they act on the basis of advice, and they will have had advice from senior officials that this could be done in this length of time. However, there has been repeated failure. Indeed, this is just one instance among a plethora of things.

I have never seen the permanent secretary—he is Mr Anonymous, is he not? We never see him, and I think that he is going anyway, but perhaps he could do us the service of explaining to us this endemic delay in the process of government, because it just brings us all down.

We need only contrast that with what the new President of the United States has been saying; we will see what happens, of course, but he is promising to do things straight away. I am not supporting him at all, but it is no wonder that people get fed up with Government when nothing happens for years after the date by which people were promised that things would happen. Of course people are disappointed about that. I really think that the permanent secretary has a bit of explaining to do, convener.

**The Convener:** Well, we obviously want to make the Scottish Parliament great again, Mr Ewing.

**David Torrance:** That is not the line you used last night. [Laughter.]

**The Convener:** A way forward on your latter point might be for me to raise the matter with the Conveners Group and find out whether other committees and conveners have been finding the same thing, and, if that is the case, to explore with them whether they think that it might be an idea to write to the permanent secretary. Could we perhaps approach your suggestion in that way?

**Fergus Ewing:** So, the compromise is that we make the Scottish Parliament great again, slowly. That is fine with me.

**The Convener:** Are we agreed on the wider set of suggestions, colleagues?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms White.

## **Annexe C: Written submission**

### **Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport written submission, 27 February 2025**

#### **PE2017/F: Extend the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available beyond one year**

Thank you for your letter of 31 January on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee. Following your meeting held on 22 January to discuss the period that specialist perinatal mental health support is made available, you requested an update on the following issues:

- a specific publication date for the report from NHS National Services Scotland on the options appraisal process on mother and baby unit provision in Scotland
- a clear timeline for the draft service specification for perinatal mental health services
- information on whether any of the £85,000 for Intensive Treatment Services has been allocated and the Scottish Government's plans to allocate any remaining funding by the end of this financial year

I am pleased to provide an update to your specific points below:

#### **1. Publication of the Mother and Baby Unit Options Appraisal**

As you know, I have been considering the Mother and Baby Unit Options Appraisal from NHS National Services Scotland. This has been impacted by financial restrictions, which prevented new capital spend by Boards.

As those pressures may begin to ease somewhat, I would hope the Options Appraisal could be published in coming months.

#### **2. Timeline for a draft service specification for perinatal mental health services**

The Joint Strategic Board for Child and Family Mental Health has identified the development of a service specification for clinical perinatal services as a priority area within one of their workstreams.

A Project Specific Group has been established to progress the writing of the specification. In addition to COSLA and Scottish Government officers, membership includes representatives from:

- Professional groups working in NHS perinatal mental health services;



- Professionals working in relevant local authority services (Social Work and Early Years);
- Perinatal Mental Health Network Scotland (PMHNS);
- Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland

The Group has sought input from those with lived and living experience to ensure it meets the needs of women and families in Scotland. It is incredibly important to us that service provision is led by the needs of women, young children and families, building on good practice and learning from positive and negative experiences of current services.

The Project Specific Group has met 3 times so far and will take their draft specification to the Joint Strategic Board on 26 March for their approval, before it is ultimately submitted to me for sign off. We anticipate that the specification will be published this year.

### **3. Intensive Treatment Services in the North of Scotland**

As you mentioned, we allocated an initial £85,000 to develop Intensive Treatment Services in the North of Scotland to assist in delivering care to the most severely ill women in the perinatal period, closer to home. I also secured an additional £205,000 of funding, bringing the total investment to £290,000 in this financial year.

We have allocated part of this money to NHS Grampian, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and NHS Lothian, and look to them to make progress. The aim is to further support regional provision which will enable increased joint working around admissions and support care in remote and rural areas.

I remain committed to improving access to mental health provision for women, infants and their families throughout pregnancy and during the postnatal period and appreciate the Committee's continued interest in this area of important work.

With best wishes,

**MAREE TODD MSP**