



Buffy Williams, MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament,  
Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Dr Nicola Canale and Dr Paddy Martin  
Parent Infant Network Cymru

Dr Liz Gregory  
The Parent-Infant Foundation  
Office 7, 35-37 Ludgate Hill  
London, EC4M 7JN

1<sup>st</sup> July 2025

Dear Buffy Williams, MS,

**Re: Serious concern regarding Perinatal Services in Wales**

Parent Infant Network Cymru is a network of professionals who either work in Specialist Parent Infant Relationship Services, or who have an interest in developing Parent Infant Relationship services across Wales. We collaborate closely with the Perinatal Network's Clinical Lead as there is much common ground. Parents with mental health issues are at a heightened risk of facing difficulties in their relationship with their babies, with significant implications both for perinatal mental health, and for babies' development

We aspire to similar goals too. These include national clinical leadership for Parent-Infant Relationships, equitable provision of specialist support for Parent-Infant relationships, and the development of professional standards across specialist Parent-Infant Relationship teams. These aspirations are outlined in the Golden Thread report<sup>1</sup>, jointly written by the Parent-Infant Foundation, the NSPCC and the Perinatal Clinical Lead.

Along with colleagues across the maternity and the early years sector, we are deeply concerned by the recent proposal by NHS Wales Performance and Improvement to disband the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network and National Clinical Lead role and replace it with a Community of Practice/Peer Group. In addition to the issues comprehensively outlined in the letter written by the NSPCC, Home Start Cymru and the Maternal Mental Health Alliance (which PINC fully endorses), we have additional concerns about the Parent Infant Relationship element of Perinatal Services. We are concerned that this could put at the risk both recent achievements and future progress, given how early we are in the important journey to reach and support more vulnerable babies. We note that:

- The provision of specialist therapeutic support for parent-infant relationships to parents and their babies who are referred to Perinatal Mental Health Services is currently inequitable across Wales. The loss of National Leadership presents a risk, both to

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<sup>1</sup> The golden thread A Case for Developing Specialist Parent-Infant Services in Wales. Available at: [The-Golden-Thread-Report-DIGITAL.pdf](#)



current provision, and future developments to ensure equity in this important aspect of specialist intervention for vulnerable babies and their families.

- The Perinatal Clinical Lead has been an important advocate regarding the development of Specialist Parent Infant Relationship services at a national level, linking Parent Infant Network Cymru with key networks and developments across the sector. The loss of representation through this role will pose a significant risk to the development of Parent Infant Relationship Services, as there is currently no formal mechanism for PINC to remain connected to and influence the wider system.
- The achievements in Perinatal Mental Health under the leadership of the Clinical Lead have provided an aspirational model in both the development of specialist services alongside a wider focus on a whole system approach, including pathways and training. Without national leadership there is a significant risk this will not be maintained – particularly as regional services find themselves under increasing pressure to focus on acute demand.
- This year has seen the publication of the All Age Mental Health and Well-being Strategy<sup>2</sup> which aims to create a whole system approach; and place emphasis on the importance of the First 1000 days. In addition Wales has recently declared ambitious plans to be the first “Marmot” Nation<sup>3</sup>. These recent developments require a dedicated focus across all sectors on giving every baby the best start in life. The loss of the National Clinical Lead role, alongside the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network represents a significant step backwards in achieving these stated aims.

Parent Infant Network Cymru are therefore calling on Welsh Government and NHS Wales Improvement and Performance to retain the National Clinical Lead role and the Perinatal Clinical Implementation Network; recognising their importance in supporting the wider maternity and early years system alongside their key role in developing, maintaining and improving Perinatal Mental Health Services.

Yours Sincerely,

*Nicola Canale*

**Dr Nicola Canale and Dr Paddy Martin**

Joint Chairs On behalf of Parent Infant Network Cymru

*E Gregory*

**Dr Liz Gregory**

Wales Development Lead, The Parent-Infant Foundation

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2025) The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035. Available at: [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2025) Wales to become world’s first ‘Marmot nation’ to tackle health inequalities. Available at [Wales to become world’s first ‘Marmot nation’ to tackle health inequalities | GOV.WALES](#)