Best Start in Life
Perinatal and Infant Mental Health training brochure 2026/2027

Institute of Health Visiting
Excellence in Practice



- Perinatal and Infant Mental Health are a national public health priority
- Rates of perinatal mental illness are increasing
- Mental health conditions remain the leading cause of death in the postnatal period

PREVENTION **EARLY IDENTIFICATION** **INTERVENTION**

Equip your workforce to deliver safe and effective care that makes a difference.

Working together to support the delivery of the Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme

This Brochure sets out how the Institute of Health Visiting's training programmes can support your delivery of the Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme by strengthening workforce confidence, improving early identification, supporting inclusive practice, and building sustainable local leadership in perinatal and infant mental health.

Why this matters for commissioners

The Best Start in Life Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme places perinatal and infant mental health and parent-infant relationships at the heart of support for families during pregnancy and the first two years of life. Commissioners are expected to ensure that local systems can prevent difficulties, identify needs early, connect families to the right support and build joined-up pathways across maternity, health visiting, early years, voluntary sector and community services.

The iHV offer

- The evaluation of our training showed we provide award-winning, evidence-based training that is suitable for multi-agency workforces and can be tailored to local priorities, pathways and delivery models.
- Our training supports commissioners to build a skilled, confident, connected and inclusive workforce, able to deliver high-quality perinatal and infant mental health support through Family Hubs and wider community networks.
- We believe that having the voice of the family at the heart of our programmes is key to their success. Parents are involved at every step, and our lived experience speakers are one of the most highly valued aspects of our training.

All of our training programmes are available in Direct delivery and Champions formats. Training can be delivered virtually or face-to-face. We recognise that no two organisations have the same requirements, therefore we can design a bespoke training package tailored to your specific staff needs.

Both Direct delivery and Champions programmes address the same key objectives. In addition, the Champions programmes (train the trainer) prepare participants to become place-based leaders who seek opportunities to build advocacy for the mental health needs of parents and babies. They are equipped to deliver cascade iHV training, influence stakeholders and services, identify local gaps in services, and improve support available.

To see the full range of the iHV training options, please click here for our upcoming 2026/2027 training calendar.

> *"I find working with iHV incredibly rewarding… iHV is a nurturing, highly professional, and warm organisation to work with, and I come out of every engagement with them feeling confident I have made a genuine difference."*
>
> **Lived experience speaker**

> *"I became much more confident in providing one-on-one support to clients. Over time, I realised that mental health support could be both practical and joyful, with small actions making a big difference."*
>
> **Participant**



PIMH Training Programmes



Emotional Wellbeing Visits Programme



Fathers' Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Training Programmes



Little Sparks, Big Starts



LGBTQI+ People & PMH Training Programmes



iHV Spotlight Learn Series

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BSiL Outcome:	How the iHV can help you to achieve this:
1. Ensure BSiL Family Hubs provide safe, inclusive and supportive environments where parents can discuss their wellbeing and mental health, and where early parent-infant relationships are promoted and supported. **2.** Co-locate perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship support where possible to improve access and integration. **3.** Co-locate perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship support where possible to improve access and integration. **4.** Build on mature perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship systems by increasing integration or enhancing the quality of support and impact where it is feasible and meets local needs. **5.** Provide high-quality, evidence-based support so that perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship needs can be identified early and appropriately addressed. **6.** Empower the workforce by ensuring training and supervision needs are met, so staff can confidently identify and support perinatal mental health and parent-infant relationship needs.	Our Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Champions Training Programme is a credible, effective and scalable approach to workforce development and system transformation. Champions become local leaders, driving improved care through enhanced knowledge, motivation and collaborative practice. Both our PIMH Champions and Direct delivery training programmes include: an overview of common perinatal mental health issues, supporting the parent-infant relationship, questions and tools to support identification, including how to ask about suicidal intent and safely manage the response, including ways to connect families to the most appropriate specialist or community-based support where this is needed. Click to read more about how this helps support daily practice - a PIMH Champion shares their reflections. iHV PIMH Champions/Direct delivery training includes a module on developing high-quality, accessible and inclusive services that covers key components of an effective integrated pathway. The content focuses on adopting a whole family lens, recognising inequalities, and how to advocate for those who may face barriers in accessing high-quality, culturally sensitive, personalised, safe and effective care. Commissioners can strengthen inclusive practice through targeted iHV training on: ■ Fathers and Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, and LGBTQI+ People and Perinatal Mental Health ■ Shorter Spotlight Learn workshops that also address the additional issues encountered by parents who are neurodivergent and those whose babies are born pre-term, sick or with a disability. These programmes help services recognise barriers to care, promote the perinatal mental health of all parents, and embed family-centred approaches that reflect the diversity of local communities. **We are proud of the impact that our training has achieved:** The evaluation of our PIMH Champions programme found that practitioners developed a specific focus on early attachment, infant mental health and whole family wellbeing. This 'perinatal frame of mind' moves practice towards an emotionally attuned, preventative, and relationship-centred approach. Furthermore, the evaluation found that those who receive the training feel more confident in influencing services, improving referral pathways, strengthening multi-agency working, and contributing to service development. Click here to hear more about this from a PIMH champion. **A supported workforce:** Direct delivery and Champions programmes address the impact of practitioner wellbeing on outcomes for families and identify a range of strategies to promote personal wellbeing. iHV PIMH Champions are supported by a well-established, multi-disciplinary Community of Practice and can access quarterly online Forums for regular updates and networking opportunities to share best practice. **FREE TO ACCESS:** Our Little Sparks, Big Starts e-learning programme supports conversations with families around baby brain development. There is also a web-based parent app that can be recommended to families – please click here for further information.

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Why commission iHV?

- **Credible and evidence-informed:** training is grounded in current evidence, practice experience and national policy priorities.
- **Scalable:** the Champions model builds local workforce capability and capacity, and supports sustainable system change - reducing training costs and extending reach in the longer term.
- **Multi-agency:** training supports integrated collaborative working through shared learning and language, enabling joined-up approaches to PIMH working and clearer referral pathways.
- **Flexible:** training delivery can be virtual, face-to-face or bespoke to local outcomes.
- **Inclusive:** specialist content supports fathers, co-parents, LGBTQI+ families, and families who face barriers to care.

> *"I now understand how these mental health conditions present and the importance of asking open questions to assess and refer families to the right support."*
>
> **PIMH Champion, England**

Recommended commissioning options

- **Commission a Champions cohort** to develop local leaders who can strengthen practice, cascade iHV training, support pathway development, and sustain improvement.
- **Commission multi-agency direct delivery training** for frontline practitioners and volunteers across Family Hubs, maternity, health visiting, early years, voluntary sector and community partners.
- **Commission bespoke pathway-focused sessions** to align training with local referral routes, governance arrangements and service models.
- **Commission targeted inclusion programmes and workshops** on fathers, LGBTQI+ families, neurodivergent mothers, and parents of babies who are born with additional needs, to support equitable access and family-centred practice.

Get in touch

for any enquiries and to explore the iHV full training programme please see QR code and for any enquires contact training@ihv.org.uk or visit www.ihv.org.uk.



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