



Chair of Trustees Candidate Pack



**The Gatehouse Centre, Hareclive Road
Bristol, BS13 9JN**



Our Story

The story of Mothers for Mothers starts with brave forward thinking women who had survived a perinatal mental illness. In 1981 before peer support was recognised as a useful tool, these brave women decided what would have helped them recover would have been the opportunity to talk to others who had suffered and recovered. These mothers in North Avon felt their emotional needs were not being met following childbirth. They were supported in setting up the self help group by Bristol Maternity Hospital and started with a helpline. Much of the original operations took place in members' homes.

In 1987 an office was set up at Barton Hill Settlement following a grant from Bristol City Council's Women's committee. Over the next five years the self help group developed and moved to offices at 66 Gloucester Road. The group ran a helpline, visited mothers in the Mother and Baby unit at Barrow Hospital and in their own homes. Pauline Markovits presented a paper at the Marce Society Conference in September 1990.





Also in September 1990 Mothers for Mothers purchased their first Amstrad computer and a printer; and in 1994 an IBM computer and a photocopier. By 1991 the helpline received between 40 to 50 telephone calls per day and volunteer training was held twice a year at Bristol Maternity Hospital. The group began to provide support at local mother and baby groups and monthly meetings for Mothers and Volunteers which included creative dance and relaxation sessions. Soon weekly group sessions were established at Gloucester House, Southmead Hospital and Bristol Maternity hospital. Volunteers also provided support to Mothers in Bath, WestonSuper-Mare and Clevedon. Also in the 1990s the first counselling service specifically for Perinatal Mental Illness began at Mothers for Mothers offices.

The tenth anniversary study day was attended by 60 health care professionals and 40 Mothers. Moving onto the 2000s, a move to Colston Street and the start of our peer support groups, Bedminster in 2002 and Barton Hill in 2005. We started a new home visiting service and we celebrated our 35th birthday in 2016 with a big party at Bristol Zoo.





In 2017 we moved to the New Fulford Family Centre. We opened two new support groups, one in Staple Hill and another in Hartcliffe. Our counselling service developed to offer a specific service for Dads and Partners and to offer Art Psychotherapy.

Over the years many women and their families have been supported and many women have helped on the support team, as trustees, volunteers and staff. There were times when our road was straight, times when it was winding, sometimes we navigated potholes and faced mountains. The twists and turns enriched our story and gave us new experiences which prepared us for the journey ahead. In 2018 we were the very proud winners of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance Perinatal Peer Support Award. We felt this award honoured those trail blazing women of lived experience who started this charity just over 40 years ago.





During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic our services remained open, some of our support moved to virtual platforms such as daily zoom peer support groups and zoom parenting courses, videocalls and other support sessions available through our social media.

We started our first antenatal support and wellbeing in pregnancy group and we began to offer one to one and group support in Weston-Super-Mare again.



For Mothers who were unable to access our support digitally we visited on the doorsteps, often providing essential items for the family. When restrictions allowed we began Wellbeing and Nature walk and talk groups.

We had hoped to hold a big celebration for our 40th anniversary but were unsure whether this would be possible so instead we celebrated by launching our 'From One Mother to Another celebration'.



40 Mothers who have used our support call service received gift packages and on Mother's Day 2021 40 Mothers received flowers. In June 40 women walked 40km in one day and we had lots more than 40 women plunge into cold water for a swim in Clevedon.



We have stayed true to the vision of those brave women of 1981 as we continue to support families affected by Maternal Mental Illness across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We offer support to women during pregnancy and until their youngest child attends school, from illness to wellness, through four arms of our support services: Reach helpline/support calls, Home Visiting, Art Psychotherapy and Counselling, and Peer Support Groups / Antenatal Groups. Our services are delivered by women with lived experience of Maternal Mental Illness.

“It’s ok not to be ok. And it’s ok to ask for help.”



We aim to achieve the following outcomes for the women and families we work with: Improved confidence, resilience and relationships with children and family, leading to faster recovery.

- Improving children's emotional development by supporting mothers to be sensitive and responsive in their relationships with their children.
- Reduced social isolation and improved social and support networks.
- More awareness of Maternal Mental Illness and the support available.- Improved care and services for maternal mental illness.





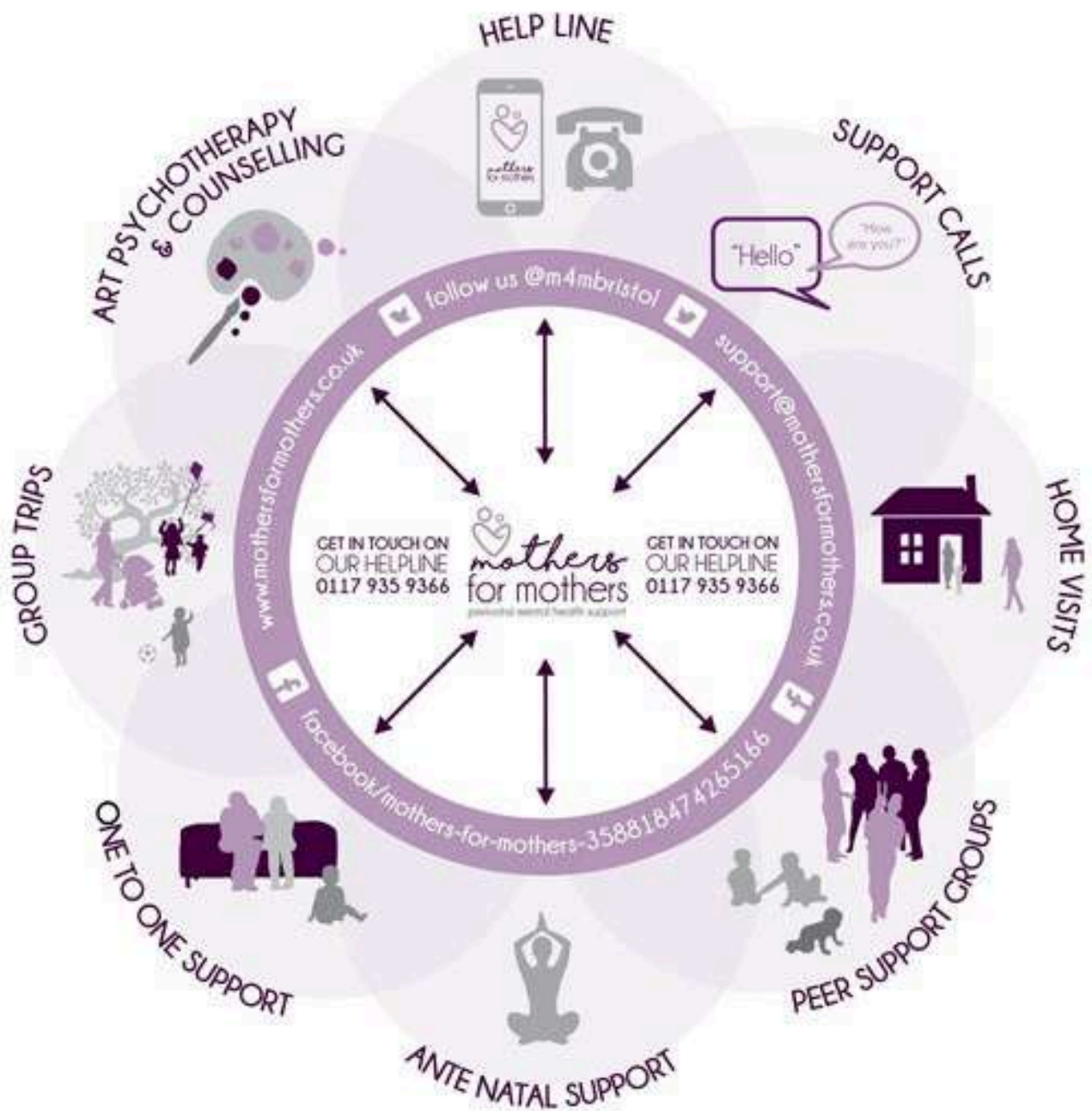
We draw our inspiration from the vision of our founding members every year, but none more so than the last 5 years, which have been the most challenging faced by pregnant women and new mothers in our lifetimes. Mothers for Mothers has continued in their footsteps providing support, a space to be heard and connections within the community for those who have struggled with their emotional wellbeing during these most difficult of times.

At Mothers for Mothers, we offer services to help women and their families on the road to recovery. It can be a great comfort to have someone available to talk to, who understands what you are going through. If someone is suffering from anxiety, depression, loneliness, fear or isolation during or after pregnancy, or are a concerned partner, family member or friend we look forward to talking to them.

Please click on the link below to view our animation video that tells you all about Mothers for Mothers and our services.

<https://vimeo.com/641488117/49871967ac>

Our Services





We offer support to women, their partners, family members and friends. Our aim is to encourage women experiencing anxiety, depression, distress and/or isolation during pregnancy and/ or after the birth of their baby to easily REACH out to us for immediate support. We have many different ways in which we can REACH them. Support is also available to fathers who themselves are depressed. Friends, family and health care professionals may also use our service to make referrals and obtain information.



5 DAY HELP LINE

The help line provides an opportunity to talk to someone who understands what you are going through. It can be a lifeline for women suffering from PNI. It can help to 'normalise' the symptoms and their reassurance that 'you will get better' is validated by their own recovery. Our help line is often the first step for a mother in accessing other services provided by Mothers for Mothers or in their community. We can also sign post to other services when appropriate.



HOME VISITING



Our Home Visiting Service is aimed at women who are too unwell to attend a group or access counselling but feel the need for face-to-face support. Our Home Visitors can offer you listening and planning visits and work with you to decide what will be most helpful for your individual circumstances.

This service can help increase emotional wellbeing and resilience, and have a positive effect for the whole family. We will help you to increase your confidence and progress to accessing other services such as our support groups or other activities in your own communities.

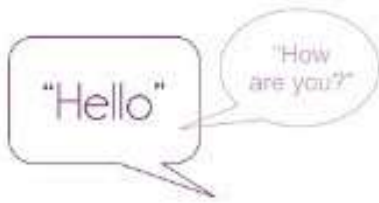


ONLINE SUPPORT

Online support is provided via social media, direct messaging, email and moderated discussion on our closed Facebook group.

TELEPHONE AND TEXT SUPPORT

The support line offers women a regular weekly support call or text. This is a confidential listening and planning service. The calls also work to increase resilience to enable you to access the most appropriate services available to meet your current needs.



Mothers for Mothers can facilitate where possible to identifying other services you may find helpful and we can help to establish contact.

GROUP TRIPS

We have four group events a year: two trips to local family attractions and two parties. These events provide an opportunity to build your social circle outside the group you attend and give all the children a wonderful fun day. Being away from home with the safety of our support can help build confidence and increase self-esteem.



The women attending the groups decide on the location, usually a local attraction such as Avon Valley Country Park, Bristol Zoo and We the Curious. Our trips take place during school holidays and of course we welcome older siblings to join us. Transport is also provided.



SUPPORT GROUPS & ONE TO ONE SUPPORT

We have five weekly support groups (Bedminster, St George, Hartcliffe, Staple Hill and Weston Super Mare). Our support groups provide a safe place for you to come and talk about how you feel with others who understand, gain support and make social connections.



Our groups provide much needed support to women and can improve the lives of the children who attend. The opportunity to attend a group where you feel welcome, safe, understood and able to connect with other women having similar experiences helps promote a more rapid recovery from illness. We have support workers who can talk on a one-to-one basis with you, offering support, information and advice. There are also opportunities to access therapies or activities such as crafting. Our play worker engages children in activities such as arts and crafts and we have a wide variety of toys. Our groups offer you the opportunity to make supportive friendships and give your children the opportunity to socialise.



ART PSYCHOTHERAPY

Art Psychotherapy is a talking therapy in which the art making is used as a key tool for expressing and making sense of feelings. It can help support clients to take ownership of their experiences and change in their view of current challenges they may face. The art psychotherapists offer clients non-judgemental and compassionate support through the process.



Some clients can feel nervous about using the art materials, perhaps because they aren't familiar with them or fear that they are not good enough, however many find that they build in confidence and enjoyment using the materials and some continue using these new skills after the therapy has ended.

COUNSELLING

Counselling is a talking therapy that involves a counsellor listening to and supporting a client whilst helping them find ways to deal with personal issues. Clients are encouraged to talk about their thoughts and feelings with the counsellor, who will listen and support without judgement or criticism. Talking to a counsellor can help you gain a better understanding of your feelings and thought processes and help you find solutions to your problems.





THERAPEUTIC SERVICES/THERAPIES

How we may be coping...



Having a baby, whether it's the first or the fifth, fundamentally changes our lives; our sense of identity, bodies, relationships and lifestyle. This process of change and finding a new normal, is full of wonderful and challenging moments. For some however, this conflict and change, alongside perhaps life stresses or distressing experiences can pose barriers to adjusting and tolerating difficult feelings such as anxiety, loss and isolation etc.

Why we may wish to think about accessing therapy...

If you feel that your mental health is impacting on your enjoyment of relationships, bonding with your baby/children, personality, and everyday activities or interests, you may wish to seek some support. Speaking with a psychotherapist or counsellor in a safe, non-judgemental environment can enable us to develop clearer understanding of and abilities to cope with difficult feelings. Many families have benefitted and made meaningful changes in their lives as a result of utilising the therapeutic services at Mothers for Mothers.



ANTENATAL AND WELLBEING IN PREGNANCY GROUP

Every Tuesday evening we run an online group created specifically for pregnant women and birthing people who are experiencing anxiety, depression, low mood and/or isolation. It is a welcoming and relaxed group where you can access antenatal, birth and postnatal information and meet other women and birthing people facing similar experiences. The sessions have a strong focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing, with themes and discussion topics informed by the issues the group consider to be important and useful. We look at the helpful coping strategies available to women and birthing people during pregnancy and discuss ways to positively improve our responses to the ongoing demands of the perinatal period.

All of our therapies are:

Person Centred

We believe that the client's experiences and needs are individual to them. The therapy relationship is based on honesty, respect, compassion and equality.

One to one

The client and therapist can meet either face to face or via Zoom.

Short Term

We offer a minimum of six sessions with the potential to extend.

Low Cost

Clients are asked to donate a weekly amount affordable to them.

Confidential

Clients feel safe and are comfortable knowing that what is discussed is always confidential



The Role

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Mothers for Mothers are seeking a dynamic individual with strong leadership, governance and change management experience.

Role Summary

The Chair of Trustees is expected to:

- Provide leadership and direction to the Board of Trustees and enable the Board to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall governance and strategic direction of the organisation.
- Ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document, charity law, company law and other relevant legislation/regulations.
- Work in partnership with the chief executive, senior staff members and support the employees, helping them achieve the aims of the organisation; and to optimise the relationship between the board of Trustees and the staff.
- Facilitate the Board of Trustees in stimulating excellent, well-rounded and carefully considered strategic decision making.



Main responsibilities of the Chair In relation to the Board:

- Formulate strategic plans and regular review of long-term strategic aims of the charity.
- Develop organisational policies, define goals, targets and evaluate performance against agreed targets.
- Approve the annual cycle of the board meetings, meeting agendas, chair and facilitate meetings, monitor decisions taken at meetings and ensure they are implemented.
- Liaise regularly with the Treasurer to maintain a clear grasp of the charity's financial position and to ensure full and timely financial transparency and information disclosure to the Board.
- Lead and mentor other Board members to fulfil their responsibilities and enable access to training/coaching/ information to enhance the overall contribution of the board.
- Annually review the Board structure, role, staff relationships and ensure implementation of agreed changes/ developments are carried out.
- Encourage team working among Board members and encourage them to identify and recruit new trustees as required.
- Create a strong, profitable and fulfilling working relationship with trustees and the Chief Executive through review and self-reflective evaluation of contributions and effectiveness of the board.



In relation to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO):

- In participation with the board, appoint the CEO and lead the process of appraising and constructively guiding the performance of the CEO.
- Consult with CEO on matters of strategy, governance, finance and HR.
- Oversee the CEO's activities in the context of the implementation of Board's strategy and policies.
- Maintain careful oversight of any risk to reputation and/or financial standing of the organisation.
- Receive regular progress reports of the organisation's work and financial performance through the CEO.

In relation to the community and code of conduct:

- The Chair will uphold the code of conduct by modelling the values of the organisation in all their dealings.
- Represent the organisation as a spokesperson at appropriate events, meetings or functions.
- Protect and manage the property of the organisation.
- Lead the Board in fostering relations with potential clients and potential funders/donors.
- Act as final stage adjudicator for disciplinary and grievance procedures if required.
- Facilitate change and address conflict within the Board of Trustees, within the organisation and liaise with the Chief Executive to achieve this.



- Undertake review of external complaints as defined by the organisation's complaints procedure.
- Ensuring adherence and compliance around key policies to e.g. Equality of Opportunity, Health & Safety and in all decisions and discussions of the Board and its sub-committees.
- Attend and be a member of other committees or working groups when appropriate in role as Chair.
- In order to perform the above role, the Chair should have reasonable access to all staff and information, in line with the board's fiduciary duties.





Person specification

Essential:

- Strong leadership, governance and change management experience.
- Commitment to the charity's objectives, aims and values and willingness to devote time to carry out responsibilities.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship and adhering to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Strategic and forward-looking vision in relation to the charity's objectives and aims.
- Good, independent judgement, political impartiality and the ability to think creatively in the context of the organisation and external environment.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to respect the confidences of colleagues.
- Balancing tact and diplomacy with willingness to challenge and constructively criticise.

Desirable:

- Leadership experience in the charity sector
- Understanding of the local community



As an organisation we are particularly keen to ensure that our Board members are fully representative of the community in which we work and at the current time we would warmly welcome applications from people with a diverse range of background, ethnicity, gender, culture and physical ability.

What's in it for the volunteer?

This is an exciting time to join Mothers for Mothers. We have recently celebrated our 40th year, received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and developed operationally to include a Senior Leadership Team to match the growth and need. We are now looking forward to future development, and the implementation of a new 5-year plan.

What impact will you have?

Your leadership will enable our Board to continue supporting Mothers for Mothers with efficient strategic insight, which will have a direct positive impact on the lives of mothers experiencing mental health difficulties.

Time commitment

The time commitment required for the role is approximately 2/3 days a month. Board meetings take place quarterly usually lasting 2 hours in the evenings. The Chair should also be available on the phone/email to the CEO on an ad hoc basis.



How to apply

Please provide your CV, along with a covering letter stating why you wish to work for the organisation, how your skills would add value to the board and any other relevant information to maria.viner@mothersformothers.co.uk

