



# INEQUALITIES SENSITIVE PRACTICE INITIATIVE MATERNITY PATHWAYS

## Women Living in Poverty



## Standard of Care

### Antenatal Care

1. Maternal history taking, particularly private time, should be actively utilised by midwives to undertake sensitive enquiry into the woman's personal social circumstances and life context, in order to identify sources of stress and/or additional social care need e.g. emotional and psychological wellbeing, relationship issues, financial and housing matters. Any issues that have a bearing on individual, family or child health and wellbeing should be explored and options for support discussed. Discussion and related actions should be documented appropriately.
2. Midwives should introduce the financial support needs section of the pregnancy record by enquiring more generally about any money concerns and the challenges of making ends meet with a new baby in the family. Offering information on the Baby Bond and how this can be accessed can provide a comfortable introduction to the subject matter. Further enquiry should be made with regard to employment status and related maternity benefits to ensure that families are aware of their maximum entitlement.
3. Where financial concerns are identified women should be reassured and encouraged to seek advice and support from financial inclusion services. Financial Inclusion Services can offer support with benefit maximisation, debt and potential debt support and budgeting skills. Contact information for local services should be given and where appropriate a referral facilitated. (1)

### Ongoing Care

4. Midwives should be sensitive to changes in a woman's social circumstances throughout the maternity episode. Where concerns are identified these should be discussed with the woman and options for support discussed. An action plan could include: mobilising family/social support, facilitating links to community support agencies, referring on to financial inclusion services and informing the health visitor.
5. Parent education programmes for women on low income should provide information and advice on sources of support in the local community.

## Staff Competencies

- Midwives should be skilled in conducting sensitive enquiry into financial and housing needs, discussing issues of concern and facilitating referral on.
- Midwives should have a basic knowledge of Baby Bonds, the benefits available to pregnant women and to low income families and referral pathways to local sources of support e.g. financial inclusion advisors, the GAIN helpline. (1)
- Midwives should be aware of the relationship between poverty and stress and its impact on family wellbeing and be competent to identify and address wider health and social care issues e.g. social isolation, mental health particularly anxiety and depression, money and housing matters.

## References

1. Glasgow Information and Advice Network (GAIN) Helpline number 0808 801 1011.

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## Pathway: Women Living in Poverty

