

Speak up for babies

Stakeholder communications pack

#IMHAW2024



First 1001 Days Movement



What is Infant Mental Health Awareness Week?

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week (IMHAW) provides an annual opportunity to discuss the importance of supporting babies' mental health and wellbeing. The Parent-Infant Foundation has supported Infant Mental Health Awareness Week for eight years, during which time it has grown into a global event. This year, because it is a general election year in the UK, our focus is on raising awareness among political candidates.

Why 'Speak up for Babies'?

As we head towards a UK General Election, we don't want babies to be forgotten. Babies don't vote of course, so it's easy for politicians not to consider what support they might need. IMHAW 2024 will make sure babies' voices are heard. We are asking candidates standing in the 2024 general election, from all parties, to join our campaign and 'Speak up for babies'. And we are encouraging politicians to learn about infant mental health by visiting a local service that supports vulnerable babies and their families.



Speak up for Babies - In a nutshell

- At least 1 in 10 babies in the UK experiences fear and distress because of disrupted or unpredictable care
- Although the number of teams is growing, we are still far short of reaching every baby in need, and several funding streams are due to end in less than a year
- The best way to help politicians understand what infant mental health is, and the importance of the work that services do, is to visit a local service
- We need politicians to understand what's at stake, and agree they will 'Speak up for babies'



Key messages for UK politicians

- At least one in ten babies in the UK is living in fear and distress. These babies are scared and overwhelmed by disrupted relationships with their parent or main carer. [ref: p81 [Start for Life guidance](#) and explain using your clinical experience].
- Without help, these babies are more likely to develop mental health conditions in childhood. [ref. Royal College of Psychiatrists, [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health report](#)]
- But the NHS is not reaching enough vulnerable babies and families with support. [ref: Our [map of Teams](#) shows there are 46 parent-infant teams in the UK. We estimate a tenfold increase is needed).
- Early intervention makes economic sense. Late intervention is costing taxpayers £16 billion a year. [ref: [LSE/Royal Foundation research](#)]
- This Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, we are calling on MPs and parliamentary candidates from all parties, across the UK, to ‘Speak up for babies’.

Policy context in England

- Start for Life funding has supported several existing parent-infant relationship teams, and is helping create new teams too, but the funding currently only runs until 1 April 2025.
- The most common source of funding for teams in England is the NHS, but still many mental health trusts do not accept referrals for children under two.
- We estimate a tenfold increase in the number of teams is needed to realise Start for Life's vision of supporting babies at risk of disorganised attachment.
- Experts are recommending a national target for the NHS in England to support 60,000 babies over the next five years. [First 1001 Days' Movement's [Manifesto for Babies](#)]



Recent public awareness campaigns like 'If they could tell you' (pictured) are welcome, but we also need to scale up services

Policy context in Scotland and Wales

- The Scottish Government has a plan to support development of Parent-Infant relationship services. But our map of specialist teams shows there are just 4 parent-infant relationship teams currently in Scotland. Although babies may also receive help from perinatal and other services, we remain far from reaching every baby in need.
- In Wales, First Minister Vaughan Gething appointed a new Minister for Mental Health and Early Years, *"to ensure Welsh government delivers in the first 1,000 days of the life of every child."*
- Wales' draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy proposes, *"strengthening public and professional understanding of the importance of parent-infant relationships, infant mental health..."* But we also need it to commit to reaching more babies. Our map of specialist teams shows there are currently just 2 parent-infant relationship teams in Wales, and one more is emerging. Although babies may also receive help from perinatal and other services, we remain far from reaching every baby in need.

How to support #IMHAW2024

- As a charity the Parent-Infant Foundation does not favour any political party over another. We are writing to candidates from all the main parties asking them to support the campaign.
- If you work with babies and families, please email your MP and political candidates too, and ask them to 'speak up for babies'.
- If you can do even more, then invite your local MP to visit your service and meet local families.



Hosting a visit – invite your MP now!

- This is Gill Furniss MP visiting Sheffield PAIRS in March 2024
- Gill met families (who had given consent to appear in this photograph), and spent time talking to the team about their work
- The Parent-Infant Foundation liaised with Gill's office to organise the visit and attended on the day to talk about national policy
- To invite your local MP to visit, please email them now, ahead of IMHAW. More info and a template email is included in our [MP visit guide](#)



Ask your local MP to 'speak up for babies'

- If it is not possible to invite your MP to visit, then you can still write to them and ask them to support the campaign. See our advice on how to find your MP's details and what to include [here](#)
- If your MP is standing down at the election, or your seat is likely to have a new MP, we can help you contact the new candidate/s
- If your MP agrees to back the campaign, we can post a 'Speak up for babies' plaque to their office. Please email us at BabyPM@parentinfantfoundation.org.uk







Tim Loughton MP committing to 'Speak up for babies'

Webpage of MPs and candidates who are speaking up for babies

- Our [Campaign page](#) shows which MPs (and parliamentary candidates and Peers) have promised to 'Speak up for babies'. You can search for your MP or candidate either by name, constituency or political party.
- If you encourage your MP (and parliamentary candidates) to join the campaign, they can have their name and photo included on our photo wall.

Show per page Search:

| Name | Constituency | Political Party | Photo |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Munira Wilson | Twickenham | Liberal Democrat |  |
| Sharon Hodgson | Washington and Sunderland West | Labour |  |
| Nick Fletcher | Don Valley | Conservative |  |
| Caroline Ansell | Eastbourne | Conservative |  |

Host a local event

- If you are hosting a local event, you may want some assets to help with engagement.
- The 'Speak up for babies' campaign leaflet gives a brief overview of the campaign and directs people to our website.
- There are two versions of the leaflet available to download and print in the assets folder [here](#)



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First 1001 Days Movement

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week 2024

Why 'Speak up for babies'?

At least one in ten babies is living in fear and distress, at risk of disorganised attachment.

Too often babies are overlooked during elections - they can't vote or speak up for themselves. So Infant Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 will make sure babies' voices are heard.

Find out more about the **Speak up for babies** campaign and **#IMHAW2024** here



www.parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/IMHAW



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Assets to show support and help promote IMHAW 2024

We have created a number of assets for you to use, to make the most out of IMHAW 2024. Some are available now and there will be additional images available once IMHAW has started so please check back in June too. They are available from [this folder](#) If you have any issues accessing the folder, please let us know IMHAW@parentinfantfoundation.org.uk

Assets available include:

- Speak up for Babies campaign images and boards
- Email Footers and Social media images
- A leaflet to use at events (for professional audiences)
- A guide to help you plan and host a political visit to your service
- Our 'Ask your MP' [webpage](#) has advice on how to find out who your MP is and ask them to 'Speak up for babies' (if you can't host a visit).
- Baby PM film - At the start of IMHAW we will launch a short, funny video about a 'Baby Prime Minister'. This is to get the point across that babies can't vote, but politicians should still think about their needs, and invest in them. Please share our 'Baby Prime Minister' film once we have launched it during IMHAW.



Other planned activities

- **Calendar** – we will promote a calendar of events on our website page in the run up to the week, please email IMHAW@parentinfantfoundation.org.uk if you have an event you'd like us to add.
- **Social Media** - We will be using X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn as our main social media channels during the week; @parentinfantfdn and @first1001days. There will also be content on the Parent-Infant Foundation website. We will be using the hashtags #IMHAW2024 and #SpeakUpForBabies
- **Baby PM Film** - We will launch our new 'Baby PM' film on our [YouTube](#) channel during IMHAW.
- **Blogs and media** - We are looking for blog and media opportunities to raise awareness of infant mental health and explain why politicians need to speak up for babies. If you have any communications opportunities, please get in touch.



Suggested copy for social media posts

Below are some generic social media posts that you might want to use as a basis for your social content during IMHAW. Graphics to accompany these tweets can be found in the Google folder [here](#)

- It's #IMHAW2024 At least 1 in 10 babies in the UK is living in fear & distress. Too often babies are overlooked. We want to make sure babies' voices are heard! With an election looming, we are calling on politicians from all parties to #SpeakUpForBabies bit.ly/4bljZBU
- We are supporting Infant Mental Health Awareness Week and the call for politicians from all parties to #SpeakUpForBabies Too often babies are forgotten about during elections. We want babies' voices to be heard! Support the campaign here: bit.ly/42nUI63 #IMHAW2024
- I am supporting Infant Mental Health Awareness Week and calling on politicians from all parties to #SpeakUpForBabies . Too often babies are forgotten about during elections. Help make their voices heard and support the campaign: bit.ly/42nUI63 #IMHAW2024
- At least 1 in 10 babies is living in fear and distress. Without help, they are more likely to develop mental health conditions in childhood. But we can make a difference. This Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, ask MPs to #SpeakUpForBabies 👉 bit.ly/4bljZBU #IMHAW2024



FAQs

Q. Who is behind Speak up for babies?

A. The Speak up for Babies campaign is being coordinated by The Parent-Infant Foundation as secretariat of the First 1001 Days Movement

Q. Does a commitment to 'Speak up for babies' involve making a policy or spending commitment?

A. No. Speak up for babies is a campaign to raise awareness of infant mental health. Political parties may make policy or spending commitments that support infant mental health in the run-up to the general election, but MPs taking part in the awareness campaign are simply promising they will speak up for babies and not overlook them.

Q. If a MP supports the 'Speak up for babies' campaign, does that mean they are supporting the 'Manifesto for babies' policy recommendations?

A. No. The policy recommendations of the Manifesto for Babies are wide-ranging, so we appreciate MPs cannot sign up to all them. While we hope that MPs and candidates will read the Manifesto for Babies, the Speak up for babies campaign is separate.

Q. Who is the Baby PM?

A. The identity of the Baby PM will be revealed during Infant Mental Health Awareness Week 10-16th June. Spoiler alert, this is not any adult politician, this is a real baby!

Thank you for helping us
Speak up for babies

#IMHAW2024



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