Press Release

Maternal Mental Health Scotland welcomes MBBRRACE-UK’s publication ‘Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care’, the latest report into deaths of women during pregnancy and the postnatal period in the UK and Ireland. Maternal Mental Health Scotland notes that, while overall death rates have declined, there has been no decrease in those deaths due to indirect causes, of which psychiatric deaths, and suicide in particular, are one of the leading causes.

Almost one in 5 women who died from any cause had a mental health problem, and one in 7 women died by suicide. For those women who died by suicide, there was evidence that services could have done more to recognise the seriousness of their condition and to ensure that women received the appropriate level of specialist care. Many of the women dying from mental ill health had very complex needs but their care was characterised by poor co-ordination and lack of communication between services.

Elaine Clark, Chair of Maternal Mental Health Scotland, said: “Scotland has done much to improve the care of women experiencing mental health problems in pregnancy or the postnatal period but this report highlights more which can be done. All health professionals working with women at this time have a duty to enquire about mental health issues and to refer promptly to specialist services where appropriate. Scotland still lacks specialised perinatal mental health services in a number of regions. I particularly welcome the recommendation that clinical networks are established to ensure that women, their infants and families get the best care they deserve.”

Notes for editors:
‘Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care 2015’, launched on 8th December 2015, is the latest publication of the Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths. The full report, and a lay summary, can be found at https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/mbrrace-uk/reports (from 08.12.15).

Maternal Mental Health Scotland is a charity which promotes education and service development for women, their children and families, who experience mental illness during pregnancy and the postnatal period.
http://maternalmentalhealthscotland.org.uk