



UMPH

UNMASKING PARENTHOOD

— *you matter too* —

UNMASKING PARENTHOOD - NEW PARENTS MEDIA TOOLKIT



Buckinghamshire
Council





Unmasking Parenthood

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Supporting the mental health of new parents is a priority in the new Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and was also identified as a priority for Buckinghamshire's Suicide Prevention Group. Nationally, up to 20% of women experience mental health difficulties during pregnancy or within the first year after giving birth, with depression and anxiety being the most common conditions. Sadly, suicide remains the leading cause of death for women in the period of 6 weeks to 12 months post birth. 10% of fathers globally experience postnatal depression, and non-gestational parents, including adoptive and foster carers, may also face emotional strain during the transition to parenthood.

This campaign aims to reduce stigma and provide vital support to parents during what can be an overwhelming time for some. By 'unmasking' the experience that many new parents face, we hope this campaign will resonate and engage new parents to prioritise their mental health, seek help when needed, and consequently support the wellbeing of their family.

How You Can Support The Campaign and Use The Toolkit

◆ Help amplify the campaign by sharing key messages through your organisation's communication channels and professional networks.

◆ Consider using:

Newsletters and internal bulletins

Articles or blog posts

Social media platforms

Online forums and discussion boards

Meeting agendas and minutes

Staff wellbeing and internal communications

Links with related projects or workstreams

Every share helps spread the message further and strengthens our collective impact.



This toolkit provides you with assets and information to support the Unmasking Parenthood campaign:

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UNMASKING PARENTHOOD
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Campaign Webpage:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/unmasking-parenthood/>

The link is also attached to the logo on the left



Support in your back pocket (mums) – business cards (2 designs available) with conversation starters and information on where to get help, to keep in your back pocket for when talking to a friend you are worried about, or to use if you need support yourself



Support in your back pocket (dads) – business cards (2 designs available) with conversation starters and information on where to get help, to keep in your back pocket for when talking to a friend you are worried about, or to use if you need support yourself



Double sided A5 Flyer for sharing



A5 Tri Fold Leaflet



A4 Poster



DIGI Screen Images



Social Media Post Suggestions

Please be sure to tag @BucksCouncil, @BucksMind, and @OxfordHealthNHS on any social media posts and use #ParentingUnmasked



Has someone in your life recently become a new parent? Do you know the signs that could indicate they're struggling and may be having suicidal thoughts?

- These are some of the key flags to look out for:
- becoming withdrawn
 - missing healthcare appointments
 - using alcohol or drugs excessively
 - exhibiting reckless behaviour
 - being irritable, angry or aggressive
 - talking about death or suicide (even jokingly[RK1]).

If you notice any of these behaviours, ask them, listen without judgement, and support them to reach out for professional help via their GP, health visitor, or mental health service.

If you believe they are in crisis, call 999 or take them to the nearest A&E.

For more information, visit: Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood

#YouAreNotAlone #ParentingUnmasked



Having thoughts of suicide doesn't make you a 'bad' or unfit parent; it simply means you're human and going through a tough time. Seeking help for these thoughts shows you care deeply about your baby's wellbeing. Taking that first step and asking for help is crucial for creating a brighter future for you both.

Reach out to your GP, Samaritans or Talking Therapies service. If you are in crisis, call NHS 111 and select option 2 for mental health. Alternatively, you can visit Safe Haven - a safe and supportive alternative to A&E for adults (18+) in Bucks experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Bucks Safe Haven between 6 pm-midnight, 7 days a week:

- Aylesbury: 01296 453017
- High Wycombe: 01494 218098

If you or someone you know might be at immediate risk of harm, please call 999.

For more information, visit: Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood

#YouAreNotAlone #ParentingUnmasked

Social Media Images



Continued Social Media Posts



Please be sure to tag @BucksCouncil on any social media posts and use #ParentingUnmasked



Are you worried about a loved one who recently became a new parent? Do they seem overwhelmed, hopeless, or disconnected? If so, it's time to talk. Asking directly about suicidal thoughts can reduce isolation and hopelessness. Listen without judgment and encourage them to seek help from their GP, health visitor, or mental health service.

For more guidance, visit our webpage: Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood

#YouAreNotAlone #ParentingUnmasked



Becoming a parent can be overwhelming. Behind the smiles, family photos and social media posts, many new parents feel overwhelmed, anxious, or low. These feelings are common but when they become persistent or intense, it's important to seek help.

If you need help for a mental health crisis you can get advice from NHS 111 and select option 2 for mental health. Alternatively, you can visit Safe Haven - a safe and supportive alternative to A&E for adults (18+) in Bucks experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Bucks Safe Haven between 6 pm-midnight, 7 days a week:

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If you or someone you know might be at immediate risk of harm, please call 999.

For more advice, visit our webpage: Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/unmasking-parenthood

#YouAreNotAlone #ParentingUnmasked

Social Media Images



Newsletter Content Suggestions

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Organisation Newsletter Suggestion:

Unmasking Parenthood: Join the Campaign Supporting Parental Mental Health

Buckinghamshire Council has launched the Unmasking Parenthood campaign to raise awareness of the mental health challenges faced by new parents. For World Suicide Prevention Day (10th Sept) and World Mental Health Day (10th Oct), the campaign highlights the importance of parents taking care of their mental health with the strapline 'You matter too'. Suicide is the leading cause of death in new mothers from 6 weeks to 12 months after giving birth, and up to 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience mental health difficulties during pregnancy or postnatally. It's therefore important that parents are aware that support is available.

📍 What's Happening Across Buckinghamshire

Campaign materials are being shared in GP surgeries, libraries, children's centres, and with antenatal groups.

Physical packs are being shared with organisations and partners across Buckinghamshire and include posters, flyers, leaflets and support cards.

Digital content is available for screens in community settings and for use on social media.

Bespoke mental health training is being delivered to professionals and community groups working with parents, with a focus on cultural competency and inclusion.

👉 How Your Organisation Can Get Involved

We've created a toolkit to help partners and organisations shape their own campaign activity.

You can:

✅ Share campaign content on your social media channels and use the #parentingunmasked.

📌 Display posters and leaflets in your public-facing spaces

👤 Encourage staff to attend mental health training (<https://www.bucksmind.org.uk>) or promote the bespoke training sessions

💬 Encourage staff to check in with one another and familiarise themselves with available support and crisis pathways in Buckinghamshire

🔄 Join us in resharing posts from @BucksCouncil, @BucksMind, and @OxfordHealthNHS

🔗 For more information visit the campaign page: [Unmasking.parenthood | Buckinghamshire Council](#). Materials are also available via email please contact us at PHadmin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



Newsletter Content Suggestions

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Resident Facing Newsletter suggestion:

Unmasking Parenthood: You're Not Alone

Becoming a parent is often portrayed as a joyful, picture-perfect experience smiling babies, glowing parents, and picture-perfect milestones. But behind the smiles, many parents are quietly struggling.

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for mothers in the first year after giving birth, and up to 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety during pregnancy or the postnatal period. In recognition of this reality, Buckinghamshire Council has launched a powerful new campaign: Unmasking Parenthood.

The campaign shines a light on the real experiences of parenthood and encourages open conversations about mental health. Whether you're a birth parent, foster carer, or adoptive parent, support is available.

💬 What You Might Be Feeling

Struggling to cope?

Feeling disconnected or irritable?

Worried you're not doing a good job?

These feelings are more common than you think, and you don't have to hide them. It's when these feelings become persistent or start to affect daily life, it may be a sign that more support is needed.

💖 Where to Get Help

Visit <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/unmasking-parenthood/> for:

Tips on recognising signs of distress

Local support services

Advice for friends and family

👥 Community Support

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency, don't wait.

☎ Call NHS 111 and select the mental health option for immediate advice and assessment.

🏥 You can also request an urgent GP appointment or go directly to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).

🚒 If there's a risk of harm to yourself or others, call 999 immediately.

💬 If you're struggling with suicidal thoughts, you're not alone.

For adults (18+) in Bucks, Bucks Safe Haven offers a safe and supportive alternative to A&E during a mental health crisis.

🕒 Open daily from 6pm to midnight:

- Aylesbury: 01296 453017
- High Wycombe: 01494 218098

📘 You can also reach out to Samaritans for free at 116 123 or visit <https://www.samaritans.org> for more ways to connect.



Newsletter Content Suggestions

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Resident Facing Newsletter suggestion:

Unmasking Parenthood: Supporting the Mental Health of New Parents in Buckinghamshire

Parenthood is a joyful journey, but it can also be overwhelming. Some new mums and dads experience anxiety, low mood, or isolation, especially in the early days. These feelings are common but if they become persistent or start to affect daily life, it may be a sign that more support is needed. That's why Buckinghamshire Council has launched the Unmasking Parenthood campaign: to raise awareness and offer support to parents who may be struggling.

It's also important to know that suicide remains the leading cause of death for mothers in the first year after giving birth, and up to 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety during pregnancy or the postnatal period.

As someone who may be a grandparent, neighbour, or trusted member of the community, you can play a vital role in helping new parents feel seen and supported.

What You Can Look Out For

New parents may feel:

Exhausted or tearful

Disconnected from their baby or loved ones

Guilty or like they're not coping or maybe an unfit parent

Spotting the signs early and encouraging someone to seek help could save a life.

How You Can Help

Start a conversation: Ask how they're really feeling.


Share resources: Point them to the campaign website.

Offer practical support: A listening ear, a cooked meal, or help with errands can make a big difference.


Visit <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/unmasking-parenthood/> for advice, local services, and ways to get involved.


Community Support

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency, don't wait.

 Call NHS 111 and select the mental health option for immediate advice and assessment.

 You can also request an urgent GP appointment or go directly to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).


 If there's a risk of harm to yourself or others, call 999 immediately.

 If you're struggling with suicidal thoughts, you're not alone.

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Unmasking Parenthood Contact and Assets

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✓ Request for Materials

Any questions, or for hard copies of materials, please contact:
PHadmin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Please include your address and how many copies of the assets you require.

✓ Toolkit and Digital Materials

The toolkit and digital material can be found here: [Unmasking Parenthood Comms Toolkit](https://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelId=5828)
(<https://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelId=5828>)

✓ Campaign Webpage

The campaign web page Unmasking Parenthood (<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/unmasking-parenthood/>) provides details on:
How to spot the signs of suicide in new parents
Need to Talk? - Support Services Available
How you can help others

Thank You For Supporting Unmasking Parenthood

Together, we can reduce stigma and create a supportive environment
for new parents.
