**Laura Seebohm, CEO Maternal Mental Health Alliance**

**Abstract:**

It is estimated that 1 in 5 women develop a mental illness during pregnancy or within the first year after having a baby. If left untreated, this can have a devastating impact on women, babies and families. Yet we know that common mental health problems during the perinatal period are often unrecognised, undiagnosed and untreated.

The Maternal Mental Health Alliance ambition is that all women are able to access high quality support and compassionate care for their mental health during the perinatal period. Our ‘Make All Care Count’ campaign focuses on increasing access to treatment for women and the importance of an integrated model of care with is multi-agency, with universal services at the centre.

This presentation will explore a model of service delivery in which mental and physical health care are integrated into universal services and explore the vital role of specialist midwives and health visitors in detection, diagnosis and treatment. Not only will we will make an economic case for this model of care, we will also show how it is these health professionals who are best placed to tackle inequalities and stigma which can be so detrimental to accessing the right support at the right time for so many women, babies and families.

**Biography**

Laura has 25 years’ experience in the statutory and voluntary sectors. Prior to joining the Maternal Mental Health Alliance as Chief Executive, Laura worked at Changing Lives, a national charity supporting people experiencing challenging times such as homelessness, addiction and trauma. Laura set up women’s services for Changing Lives, before becoming Executive Director for External Affairs, leading on public affairs, policy, communications and innovation across the organisation. True to the MMHA’s roots, Laura believes in engaging closely with people who have lived experience to amplify their voice and influence decision makers at a local, regional and national level.

Before joining Changing Lives Laura worked as a qualified Probation Officer and her background brings specialist expertise of supporting women with experience of the criminal justice system, sexual exploitation, and domestic abuse. Laura has experience of policy at a national level, multiple peer research projects and system change practices.  She sits on several boards, including as Chair of the Millfield House Foundation, and is an active member of the Better Way Network.