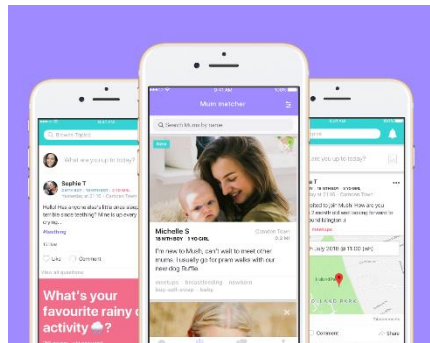


# mush



## Implementation Toolkit

### Mush

Mental Health

A free app enabling mums to be part of their local mum community, to seek advice arrange meet-ups and to make friends for life.

#### What is the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA)?

- An award-winning national accelerator supporting committed individuals ('Fellows') to scale high-impact, evidence-based innovations across the NHS and wider healthcare system
- An NHS England initiative delivered in partnership with England's 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) and hosted at UCLPartners
- Launched in 2015 to support the delivery of the Five Year Forward View, the NIA is highlighted in the NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019



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## What is it?

Mush gives all parents the opportunity to find their local network of support, based on the age of the children, how close they are, and shared interests. As well as building an online community, the app encourages mums and dads to meet in real life, with thousands of meet-ups arranged on the app every week. Mush directly addresses the mental health challenges that many parents experience during and after pregnancy by providing vital access to a community who understands.

Mush offers a safe, supportive, local forum where users can seek out advice, or search for advice via 'interest tags' (including 'mum advice', 'pregnancy' and 'teething'). Offering a reassuring, funny and relatable voice, 'Mush Guides' are articles written by top journalists who are also mums and provide light-hearted but informative articles on all things motherhood. Users are contacted weekly, to investigate their experience of the app and to check up on their well-being.

## What's the problem?

- One in four women suffer poor mental health during pregnancy and beyond. Postnatal depression is a common problem and is characterised by a persistent feeling of sadness, lack of energy and withdrawal from social contact.
- Poor maternal mental health is an important public health issue because of its prevalence, burden on the individual, burden on society, and potential rippling effect on other family members, especially children.
- Medical support for new mothers is stretched, and health visitors and midwives can only provide so many visits.
- 43% of mums say having a peer support network helped them recover from mental ill health ([PANDAs Foundation](#)). Mush connects mums together 24/7 to feel supported, connected and happy.

## What's the evidence?

- Research has demonstrated the association between maternal mental health and social networks where mothers with more supportive networks experience better mental health outcomes ([Balaji et al., 2007](#))
- Mush was included in the UK government strategy for tackling maternal loneliness ([gov.uk](#)).
- Recent evaluative reports conducted from users indicates: 88% of mums feel safe and supported, 60% feel more confident to speak to other mums and 40% felt less lonely after one week of use.
- Mush has a score of [83% on the ORCHA library](#), which uses a combination of manual and automated assessment processes to evaluate apps against a set of criteria including effectiveness, regulatory approval, safety, privacy, security, usability, interoperability, technical stability and change management.
- A health economics study is currently underway with the Self-Care Academic Research Unit (SCARU) at Imperial College London, which will report at the end of 2019.

## How can I adopt Mush?

Mush is completely free for users to download and there is no cost to any user, or adopter. Information packs and digital toolkits are sent out to midwives and health visitors free of charge which contain information to pass onto mums. These can be set up to be received on a monthly basis if required. 'Mum Ambassadors' are also recruited to spread the word in their local area and hold meet-ups for local mums.

If a GP, CCG, Health Visitor or other health care professional wants to move forward and adopt Mush, please contact [Saskia Roddick](#) and an information pack can be sent over with details containing case studies, evaluative reports and FAQs.

## Who else is using it?

Since launching Mush has had hundreds of thousands of downloads, and 1.9 million friendships formed. With 25,000 daily active users and 100,000 monthly active users, individuals can log on anywhere in the UK and will have mums online near them. Therefore, Mush is in a prime position to scale nationwide across the NHS and has everything needed to support large technical growth and high user numbers.

## Endorsements

“Mush helped build my confidence as a mum! It gave me the boost to meet new people and go out and try new things.” - **Mollie, Mum and Mush user**

“Mush helped me find my mum gang when we moved to a new area. I didn’t know many people and Mush helped me meet a great group of mums who were like me... down to earth and up for a laugh!” - **Rebecca, Mum and Mush user**

“I soon started speaking to a range of mothers, some older, some younger. Some were stay-at-home mums and others worked full-time. It didn’t really matter – we all shared a common bond of raising our family. Through Mush, I’ve met other people like me, and it’s totally transformed my life.” – **Abby, Mum and Mush user**

“As a midwife of 40 years, I know first-hand the isolation that women sometimes feel following the birth of a new baby. Mush is an invaluable platform for childbearing women” - **Sheena Byrom OBE**

Endorsement has also been obtained from the [Institute of Health Visiting](#) and the [Royal College of Midwives](#).

Mush has had extensive media coverage: [Meet the women behind this ground-breaking app for mums who want to network](#) and [Setting up Mush was far from child’s play](#).



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