

Breastfeeding Support Service

Delivered by **Health for All** from **October 2018 – March 2024**

The Breastfeeding Support Project helps families meet their breastfeeding goals in their own homes, and in their own language, through trained, employed peer supporters.

It is a non-judgmental service supporting families practically and emotionally through all stages of breastfeeding and mixed feeding, from preparation before birth to 6 months. It helps mothers deal with early challenges, discomfort, establishing breastfeeding and self-care.

Project staff also work with other voluntary sector agencies such as Bradford Baby Bank, Bradford Foodbank and WomenZone to ensure that families receive the wider support they need to continue breastfeeding.

The project feeds into and forms part of the Bradford District Breastfeeding Strategy.

♥ How it was delivered

Peer supporters provide tailored, one-to-one support through home visits, over the phone or via video calls. The team receive referrals from Perinatal Project Administrators based at Bradford Royal Infirmary, and families can also contact the team directly to request support.

Support is also delivered on the postnatal ward, where families meet friendly peer supporters in the immediate postnatal period. From there, families can receive additional support by phone, text messages or home visits.



1766

families have been supported by this project families



6892

support calls have been made to families

54%

of women were contacted whilst still at hospital over the lifespan of the project



174

breast pump loans since October 2021

♥ Why this project was developed

Breastfeeding rates in the Better Start Bradford area are low, with fewer than half of mothers continuing to breastfeed by the time their baby is 6-8 weeks old. Local data reveals a significant decline in breastfeeding within the first two weeks after birth. Many mothers indicate that they stop breastfeeding earlier than they intended. Families also report inconsistent and unreliable breastfeeding support. Although more than 70% of women in the Better Start Bradford area begin breastfeeding, the majority stop within the first days or weeks, often before they are ready to.*

The core objective was to allow women to breastfeed for as long as they wanted to.

♥ Project aims

- More babies in the Better Start Bradford area would be fully or partially breastfed (measured 6-8 weeks and at 6 months)
- Families would give their babies fewer breastmilk substitutes without direct clinical need (measured as rates of artificial feeding)
- More mothers and babies would achieve successful physical establishing of breastfeeding (mother's milk changes from colostrum to second stage milk and baby puts on weight normally, physical problems like sore nipples or engorgement are minimal)

*Royal College of Midwives (2014) Infant Feeding – supporting parent choice

♥ Impact and findings**

- 44% of those supported were still exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months compared to the district average of 30.85%.***
- 45 (3% of participants) received more than ten support visits.
- Families are now able to get support immediately after birth as the team are embedded in the postnatal ward. This supports families at the most crucial time and assists midwifery colleagues.
- The project has always provided a seamless pathway to support, including for staff to refer into the service. Being embedded on the postnatal wards means all families birthing at Bradford Royal Infirmary will receive initial feeding support irrespective of their postcode.
- The service now covers 11 of 30 wards in the district as part of the Start for Life programme, expanding their support to more families and babies in the district.
- Additionally, as part of the Start for Life contract work, there are 2 drop-ins for families to attend in the City and West areas, allowing families to attend an in-person friendly group informally.

**This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project

***Office for Health Improvement and Disparities - Breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks: quarterly data for 2023 to 2024