



## Official Statistics Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth (Experimental Statistics)

### 2016/17 Quarter 4 and previous quarter(s) revised Statistical Commentary (July 2017 release)

#### Main findings

- The aggregate breastfeeding rate for England for Quarter 4 2016/17 (January to March 2017) is 44.3% (with confidence intervals of 44.1 – 44.6%) This is based on 142 out of 150 reporting local authorities submitting a return and passing initial validation.
- This compares to 43.7% for Quarter 4 2015/16, based on revised data. See details on revision of data on Page 3.
- Breastfeeding prevalence at a PHE centre level can be published for two PHE Centres.
- Breastfeeding prevalence can be published for 71 local authorities (passing all 3 stages of validation) and percentages range from 22.2% to 77.4%.

This statistical commentary should be considered alongside the 2016/17 Quarter 4 Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth statistical release, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/breastfeeding-at-6-to-8-weeks-after-birth-2016-to-2017-quarterly-data>.

*Please treat the figures with caution. Where totals are presented for England and PHE centres, these are aggregate totals of the areas that submitted information and passed initial validation.*

## Background

In October 2015, the responsibility for commissioning children's public health for the 0-5 years' population transferred from NHS England to local authorities. To support this transfer Public Health England established an interim data collection for a number of key performance indicators associated with these services which it is critical to monitor and report. The strategic reporting solution hosted by NHS Digital, the Children and Young People's Health Services (CYPHS) Dataset, is collecting relevant data items directly from providers' systems and in time will take on reporting of these indicators.

The breastfeeding information within this publication has been obtained via the interim reporting system to collect health visiting activity at a local authority resident level. Quarter 1 of 2015/16 was the first reporting period and the information contained within this report was submitted to Public Health England by local authorities on a voluntary basis. The full data publication can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/breastfeeding-statistics>.

The decision has been taken to publish this information as 'experimental statistics' on the basis that there has been a significant change to the reporting methods, both in units of collection and the mandatory/voluntary nature.

## Data Collection Method

An interim reporting system was hosted on the Local Government Association (LGA) website to collect the data on health visiting indicators. The reporting window for Quarter 4 data was 22 May to 16 June 2017.

To support local authorities to submit data, detailed full guidance was circulated to explain what analysts and commissioners in local authorities needed to do to submit health visiting indicators. A dedicated mailbox ([interimreporting@phe.gov.uk](mailto:interimreporting@phe.gov.uk)) has also been in place to respond to questions and comments.

Once the collection window closed the data received was centrally collated, validated and reported.

## Joint Submissions

Following the publication of Quarter 2 2015-16 (January release) information was received to confirm that Hackney and City of London would be making a joint submission of the data. Also, any data that had been submitted in previous quarters for Hackney also included City of London residents.

As the data submitted for the Isles of Scilly shows very small numbers which in some cases would have needed to be suppressed, these have been combined with Cornwall.

## Revision of data from Norfolk

In February 2017 Norfolk advised of a significant error in data covering Q3-Q4 2015/16 and Q1-Q2 2016/17. The proportion of infants totally or partially breastfed was revised down in each of these quarters. In some quarters the revised data failed validation. This has had an impact on the values for the East of England and the overall England value. The changes for 2015/16 are detailed below:

	Q3 2015/16		Q4 2015/16		2015/16	
	Original	Revised	Original	Revised	Original	Revised
<b>Norfolk</b>	55.5%	47.3%	54.0%	n/a	50.1%	45.8%
<b>East of England</b>	n/a	n/a	48.8%	47.7%	n/a	n/a
<b>England</b>	43.0%	42.9%	43.9%	43.7%	43.2%	43.1%

The one-off revisions to Q1 and Q2 2016/17 have been incorporated into this publication in the usual way and are included in the accompanying statistical release, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/breastfeeding-at-6-to-8-weeks-after-birth-2016-to-2017-quarterly-data>.

## Data Quality Findings

The following data relates to Quarter 4 2016/17.

149 reporting local authorities submitted a return for the interim reporting collection for Quarter 4 2016/17. The local authority that did not submit data is:

Local Authority	PHE Centre
Richmond upon Thames	London

A set of three validation rules was applied in order to calculate the breastfeeding measure.

### Stage 1 Validation

*Definition: Local authorities to submit integers for the 'number of infants totally breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks' and/or the 'number of infants partially breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks' and the combined total must be lower than or equal to the integer for the 'number of infants due a 6-8 week check'. If there are DK "Don't Knows" in the combined total or the denominator the area will automatically fail validation.*

142 local authorities successfully passed stage 1 validation by providing information on the number of infants recorded as being totally or partially breastfed at 6-8 weeks after birth.

The seven local authorities that failed stage 1 validation are listed in the table below.

Local Authority	PHE Centre
Cumbria	North West
Enfield	London
Hounslow	London
Lambeth	London
Newham	London
Southwark	London
Waltham Forest	London

The values for areas that did not pass stage 1 validation are excluded from their respective PHE centre and the England aggregated calculations.

### Stage 2 Validation

*Definition: The value submitted for infants due a 6-8 week review must be within 20% of the resident population of babies aged zero for that local authority. In a change to the validation that was applied for previous publications, this is now based on the 2016 mid-year ONS population estimates by local authority for babies aged zero, as these became available in June 2017 and are more relevant to the denominators being considered. The annual figure is divided by four to provide a quarterly estimate. Any values within 20% tolerance of the mid-year population figure for the quarter will pass this check.*

Of the 142 submissions that passed stage 1 validation, 136 went on to pass stage 2.

The six areas that failed are:

Local Authority	PHE Centre
Essex	East of England
Barnet	London
Hammersmith and Fulham	London
Kensington and Chelsea	London
Tower Hamlets	London
Westminster	London

Please see the section 'Data Quality Notes' towards the end of this commentary which provides further details.

### Stage 3 Validation

*Definition: The percentage of infants whose breastfeeding status was recorded must meet the data quality standard of 95%, being between 95% and 100%. This means the sum of those infants totally breastfed, partially breastfeed and not breastfed should be greater than or equal to 95% of the number of infants due a 6-8 week review.*

*The threshold of 95% coverage applies to local authorities and PHE centres, but for the aggregated England value the threshold is 85%.*

Of the 136 submissions passing stage 1 and stage 2 validation, 71 went on to pass stage 3 validation.

The 65 local authorities that failed stage 3 validation are:

Local Authority	PHE Centre
Gateshead	North East
Hartlepool	North East
South Tyneside	North East
Stockton on Tees	North East
Blackburn with Darwen	North West
Blackpool	North West
Cheshire West and Chester	North West
Lancashire	North West
St Helens	North West
Trafford	North West
Barnsley	Yorkshire and The Humber
Calderdale	Yorkshire and The Humber
Kingston upon Hull	Yorkshire and The Humber
Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber
Rotherham	Yorkshire and The Humber
York	Yorkshire and The Humber
Leicester	East Midlands
Leicestershire	East Midlands
Lincolnshire	East Midlands
Northamptonshire	East Midlands
Rutland	East Midlands
Dudley	West Midlands
Shropshire	West Midlands
Solihull	West Midlands
Staffordshire	West Midlands
Walsall	West Midlands
Wolverhampton	West Midlands
Hertfordshire	East of England
Milton Keynes	East of England
Norfolk	East of England
Barking and Dagenham	London
Bexley	London
Brent	London
Bromley	London
Camden	London

Croydon	London
Ealing	London
Greenwich	London
Hackney and City of London*	London
Haringey	London
Harrow	London
Havering	London
Islington	London
Kingston upon Thames	London
Redbridge	London
Sutton	London
Wandsworth	London
Brighton and Hove	South East
Kent	South East
Medway	South East
Portsmouth	South East
Surrey	South East
West Sussex	South East
Windsor and Maidenhead	South East
Bath and North East Somerset	South West
Bournemouth	South West
Bristol	South West
Dorset	South West
North Somerset	South West
Poole	South West
Somerset	South West
South Gloucestershire	South West
Swindon	South West
Torbay	South West
Wiltshire	South West

*\* Joint submission*

Each local authority has to pass all three stages of validation in order for its values to be shown.

Full information is published in the statistical release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/breastfeeding-at-6-to-8-weeks-after-birth-2016-to-2017-quarterly-data>) for 71 local authorities that passed all validation:

Local Authority	PHE Centre
County Durham	North East
Darlington	North East
Middlesbrough	North East

Newcastle upon Tyne	North East
North Tyneside	North East
Northumberland	North East
Redcar and Cleveland	North East
Sunderland	North East
Bolton	North West
Bury	North West
Cheshire East	North West
Halton	North West
Knowsley	North West
Liverpool	North West
Manchester	North West
Oldham	North West
Rochdale	North West
Salford	North West
Sefton	North West
Stockport	North West
Tameside	North West
Warrington	North West
Wigan	North West
Wirral	North West
Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber
Doncaster	Yorkshire and The Humber
East Riding of Yorkshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
Leeds	Yorkshire and The Humber
North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
Sheffield	Yorkshire and The Humber
Wakefield	Yorkshire and The Humber
Derby	East Midlands
Derbyshire	East Midlands
Nottingham	East Midlands
Nottinghamshire	East Midlands
Birmingham	West Midlands
Coventry	West Midlands
Herefordshire	West Midlands
Sandwell	West Midlands
Stoke on Trent	West Midlands
Telford and Wrekin	West Midlands
Warwickshire	West Midlands
Worcestershire	West Midlands

Bedford	East of England
Cambridgeshire	East of England
Central Bedfordshire	East of England
Luton	East of England
Peterborough	East of England
Southend on Sea	East of England
Suffolk	East of England
Thurrock	East of England
Hillingdon	London
Lewisham	London
Merton	London
Bracknell Forest	South East
Buckinghamshire	South East
East Sussex	South East
Hampshire	South East
Isle of Wight	South East
Oxfordshire	South East
Reading	South East
Slough	South East
Southampton	South East
West Berkshire	South East
Wokingham	South East
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly*	South West
Devon	South West
Gloucestershire	South West
Plymouth	South West

*\* Joint submission*



## Data Quality Notes

When making a submission local authorities have the opportunity to enter comments in a free text box to explain any issues with reporting. During the Quarter 4 submission 26 comments were received from local authorities, of collective interest:

- Issues with validation and accuracy: Six reports related to technical issues with breastfeeding data, either due to incomplete data or validation errors caused by local difficulties.
- Missing data: Seven reports related to incomplete datasets and missing data, for example from neighbouring areas.
- System issues: Five reports related to implementation of new IT systems, or systems unable to deliver the data as required.
- Revision of previous quarters' data: Eight reports stated that they had revised previous quarters' figures to improve data quality and validation.
- Where areas are unable to separate out 'totally' and 'partially' breastfed (because of local processes or data collection), it is still extremely useful for them to report the combined total, as this forms the numerator of the breastfeeding prevalence indicator. The following area was identified as having reported a combined total for Quarter 4 2016/17:

Local Authority	PHE Centre
Wolverhampton	West Midlands

## Next steps

Local commissioners are encouraged to ensure that health visiting elements of 0-5 Healthy Child Programme delivery metrics and outcomes indicators are covered in contracts or 'in-house' arrangements in a way which:

- Supports local data collection in the standard national format.
- Ensures the local service benefits from the operation of a Child Health Information System (or equivalent) and that the standardised data is made available to this system
- Ensures that NHS Digital is informed of every health visiting service provider commissioned by their local authority so coverage of data submissions can be monitored and uptake supported (enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk).
- Ensures that the standardised data flows from the local Child Health Information System (or equivalent) to NHS Digital via the CYPHS dataset on a monthly basis.
- Ensures that local information sharing agreements are in place for the sharing of performance data between providers and commissioners where necessary.

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