

**RAISING THE PROFILE AND DURATION OF BREASTFEEDING IN SOUTHERN HEALTH
FOUNDATION TRUST**

- ***Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme***
 - ***Electronic Newsletter***
 - ***Antenatal Contact***
- ***Breastfeeding Training***

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Purpose of Document

This case study focuses on an improvement in service quality, innovation or a new way of working, specifically along one or more of the strands of the health visiting service vision and family offer

**Community
Universal
Universal Plus and
Universal Partnership Plus**

Brief Description of our Project

It is well recognised that breastfeeding is instrumental in providing key health benefits for both mother and baby including prevention of infections, obesity, and enables staff to deliver improved integrated key public health outcomes.

Global and national evidence is unequivocal that breastfeeding services are a cost effective intervention, contributing to NHS savings from GP attendances to hospital admissions.

Recognising and revisiting breastfeeding as a major public health priority in Southern Health Foundation Trust and supports our vision of improving the long term health and wellbeing of all the children of Hampshire, and is a key building block to delivering the Healthy Child Programme.

Challenges

Southern Health Foundation Trust (SHFT) is geographically the largest trust in England. It includes most of the Hampshire county with diverse demographics including small cities, market towns and vast rural areas. The Trust serves a predominantly white, English-speaking population; other languages identified as being spoken include Nepalese, Mandarin, Polish, Turkish, Urdu, Arabic and Slovakian. Within SHFT there are two distinct areas with a high population of military families.

Specific challenges that this project addressed included

The projects discussed are an integral part of our Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) application that has enabled identification of localities where breastfeeding rates in SHFT (at 2 weeks and 6-8 weeks) are below the national and regional average.

How we addressed the challenges

We have developed a number of interventions to both raise the profile and support of breastfeeding specific to local needs, working in consultation with:

- Health visiting managers and team members
- Children centre and voluntary sector colleagues
- Local authority and commissioning bodies
- Maternity partners
- Service users

- Communications teams
 - Information technology and data analyst experts.
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Lessons Learned

This will enable us to plan future breastfeeding services by ascertaining which of the projects are relevant to cascade across the rest of SHFT.

Summary of Achievements

Breastfeeding welcome scheme

- We worked with Eastleigh borough council to develop a community level scheme to promote venues that adhere to a set criteria to offer a warm welcome for breastfeeding.

Tasks included:

- Mapping the pilot area
- Devising service criteria
- Contact with and monitoring the venues
- Promotion of resources to support and promote the scheme
- Evaluation processes.

Antenatal/ postnatal electronic newsletter

- We worked with colleagues and partners in the Rushmoor area to develop an electronic resource that parents to be and new parents subscribe to, to receive regular information about breastfeeding relevant to their stage in pregnancy or age of the baby. It is anticipated that this resource would complement the current universal services.

Tasks included:

- Pre intervention focus group
- Devising content of newsletter
- Piloting the initiative on a small group of antenatal ladies
- Evaluation processes.

Antenatal Contact

- Health visitors in the Andover area are working towards re-framing the antenatal contact in terms of achieving this universal consultation between 28-32 weeks of pregnancy and maternal and baby emotional attachment with infant feeding choices.

Tasks included:

- Negotiating and planning with midwifery colleagues
- Raising staff knowledge – provision of resources
- Re-organising and time management of team work load
- Evaluation.

Breastfeeding Training

- We provided two day breastfeeding management course for all Health Visiting team members, with provision for children centre colleagues to access as well.

Tasks included:

- Organising and facilitation of the programme
- Provision of practical skill review after the taught days
- Monitoring attendance and collating evaluations
- Planning updates.

- We offered an E learning package to all General Practitioners (GP) within SHFT area.

Tasks included:

- Liaising with GP colleagues
- Facilitating the upload of learning package
- Monitoring the uptake/ collation of the evaluation and audit of the resource
- Offering follow up training as needed.

- We delivered a Breastfeeding Network (BfN) Helper Training - this 12 week course has been provided for mothers who have previously breastfed or who are still breastfeeding and children centre colleagues to enable peer to peer breastfeeding support. The two courses have been delivered in South East localities with the lowest breastfeeding rates Leigh Park in Havant and Rowner in Gosport to provide a community service

Tasks included:

- Pre course liaison with BfN facilitators
- Discussion and planning re role/ tasks on qualifying as BfN Helper
- Monitoring evaluation and local breastfeeding rates.

Impact

- **Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme**

- Women will feel more comfortable breastfeeding when out and about thus increasing the duration of their experience of breastfeeding
- Normalisation of breastfeeding – for society and the next generation of parents
- Venue owners will want to continue supporting the scheme and breastfeeding as business improves.

- **Antenatal /postnatal electronic newsletter**

For parents (to be)

- Consistent and complementary information of all other breastfeeding resources
- Realistic preparation for early days of breastfeeding
- Ongoing and consistent access to information online
- Signposting to existing breastfeeding support.

For staff

- Opportunity to work creatively
- Multi-disciplinary working.

- **Antenatal Contact**

Parents to be have the opportunity to

- Receive further information to make an informed decision about infant feeding
- Anticipate realistic preparation for early days of breastfeeding
- Understand the support networks available.

Staff will benefit from being able to commence a health assessment with families in anticipation of future health needs.

- **Breastfeeding Training**

- Post-course evaluation and correspondence demonstrates a high level of breastfeeding knowledge obtained having direct and immediate relevance to the work place
- Audit processes support staff knowledge, competence and retention of information offering both universal service an awareness of sourcing universal plus and universal partnership plus expertise.

Benefits

Recognising that most of these initiatives are still at the implementation stage and that an effect on breastfeeding duration rates will be a later observation, it is observed that benefits so far include shared learning outcomes with colleagues. Examples of these include:

- Consistency of breastfeeding knowledge and support
- Creative partnership working with a number of colleagues
- Recognition and increased understanding of colleagues' roles and remit within breastfeeding support across all levels of universal to partnership plus care
- Opportunity for students from a range of disciplines to participate in exciting pieces of work, to raise the profile of breastfeeding and contribute to their study requirements.

Long-term benefits derived from the project:

- Increased duration of breastfeeding include cost efficiencies to the NHS in terms of reduced GP attendances and hospital admissions, avoiding poor health outcomes such as gastroenteritis, asthma and breast cancer. This will also reduce the work loads for health visiting teams who would have been involved in post illness/acute/chronic support
- Improved maternal wellbeing and mother-child interaction, reducing later behavioural issues – thus reducing the potential need for support or counselling in the future
- As more women breastfeed, the wider effect of this is to bring a cultural change to the community, establishing breastfeeding as a familiar and acceptable mode of feeding, which will encourage longer term sustainability of the project

What is making or has made the project successful:

- All projects are aligned to the ethos of our Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) accreditation processes which includes chief executive commitment
- All projects have obtained multi-agency sign up and joint working
- Increased hours for the Baby Friendly Lead from 15 to 30 hours per week
- Time and permission to look at local needs
- Recognising and utilising local staff expertise and interest including
 - Development of a small breastfeeding training team to cascade the programme
 - Recognition of the breastfeeding champions' role – offering universal plus expertise for families and colleagues
- Additional tasks have been embedded in current health visiting team's role
- Robust evaluation process and ongoing audits
- Planning for future increase in health visiting staff whilst recognising challenges in the interim
- Including breastfeeding in induction programmes as a means of raising awareness amongst key members of staff.

Innovations

This project offers

- Opportunity to pilot several different interventions across a large organisation
- Recognising how local needs, communities and partnership working can be influential in the successful sustainability of breastfeeding.

The most important thing the project is achieving is raising the profile of breastfeeding as the normal and natural way to feed a baby.

Personal Narrative Story

Both the service users and the staff have benefited from the introduction of the breastfeeding scheme. Below are some comments highlighting the impact of the programme:

- Quotes from local families

'Since my first baby was born, I have noticed a difference in breastfeeding support. We have more groups now and the nurses have been really helpful with my breastfeeding questions'

'I have been involved in the Breastfeeding Welcome project and have been asked about places to breastfeed in public. I think it is great to be asked my view on local services'

- Quotes from staff who have attended the Two Day Breastfeeding Management Course

Children's Centre Worker

'Many thanks for my certificate – I just wanted to help mums and babies with their breastfeeding. Only yesterday, I was able help a mum achieve a pain-free feed – it was wonderful for both of us!'

Health Visitor

'Excellent course, very interesting, a good update with lots of new details and very useful for my job. It was good to spend time with Children Centre colleagues.'

Resources used to welcome breastfeeding in Southern Health Foundation Trust

We developed information leaflets to raise awareness and provide information to local families about the service. We also developed signposting designed to promote the use of breastfeeding in public spaces, so that mothers will feel encouraged and welcome to breastfeed.

Below are examples:



**Breastfeeding is
welcome here**