

Infant Feeding Strategic Group Brief

Welcome to our first briefing updating you about the BCUHB Infant Feeding Strategy.

It is almost 2 years since the strategy was launched and despite the challenges, significant progress is being made to improve our approach to the health and wellbeing of our babies and toddlers in North Wales. The past year has been particularly difficult for many people, but it is clear that infant feeding has continued to be a high priority, with many initiatives still going forward.

Below are some examples of the progress that is being made to support every child in North Wales to have the best start in life.

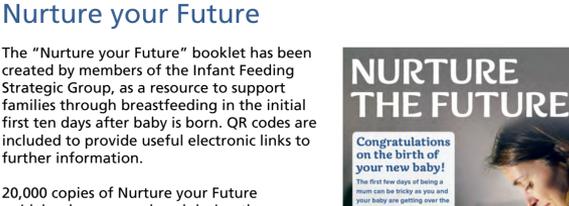
Liz Fletcher Chair of BCUHB Infant Feeding Strategic Group



Maternity services

Within all Maternity Units in North Wales, we now have a named Infant Feeding Lead midwife to over-see service improvements and ensure that we improve the knowledge and skills of staff.

We are investing in further breastfeeding training for hospital maternity support workers to improve the quality of early breastfeeding support.



Improved information sharing with mothers & families

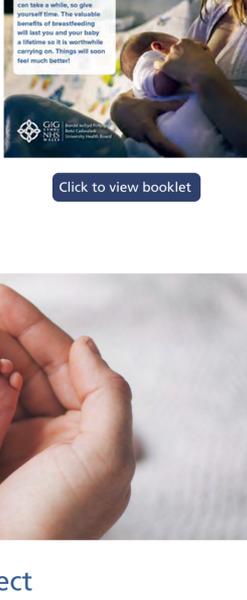
Our monthly UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) Care Standards auditing seeks to listen to the views of mothers and families on the care they have received.

Subsequent to audit results in 2020, we have developed a new resource tool to support more effective early post-natal conversations with mothers and families.

Nurture your Future

The "Nurture your Future" booklet has been created by members of the Infant Feeding Strategic Group, as a resource to support families through breastfeeding in the initial first ten days after baby is born. QR codes are included to provide useful electronic links to further information.

20,000 copies of Nurture your Future guidebook were produced during the summer of 2020, with 6000 copies to each of the 3 hospitals in North Wales and 2000 copies provided to Community Midwives to provide after home births. The guidebook is also available to download from the BCUHB Breastfeeding page.



[Click to view booklet](#)



Quality Improvement Project

One of the actions required by the BCUHB Infant Feeding Strategic plan is to use the Improvement in Practice approach to enhance services provided in hospital with a view to improving breastfeeding rates at discharge from hospital and at 10 days. As part of a 12 month pilot project, three Infant Feeding Support Workers were appointed in January 2021 at Wrexham Maelor Hospital to enhance early infant feeding support to mothers. The plan is to learn and evaluate the project to help improve support across North Wales.

Paediatric Units

Within the Hospital Paediatric Units, we have made a very positive start on our journey towards achieving the new UNICEF Baby Friendly Care standards for Children's ward settings. We have commenced training of identified lead nurses who will lead the roll out of the BFI project in acute children's ward settings under the guidance of the Infant Feeding Coordinator. Greater emphasis has been made to ensure all Paediatricians complete the UNICEF BFI bespoke on-line training as part of their induction.

Neonatal Units

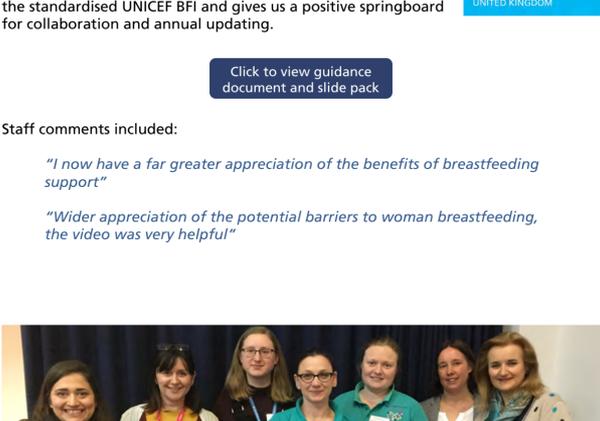
The Neonatal units across BCUHB have a multidisciplinary approach to infant feeding strategies in order to promote the evidenced based practice for the neonatal population and their families. BCUHB neonatal units have achieved UNICEF BFI Stage 1 accreditation and are in the progress of working towards BFI Stage 2 accreditation.



Health Visitors

Health Visiting Teams across North Wales have maintained their Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) accredited status. The Infant Feeding Lead Health Visitor role has been developed within the East & West teams and the Central team are actively currently progressing this service development.

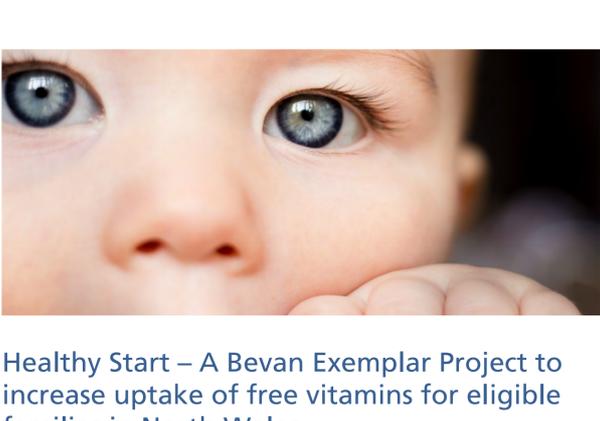
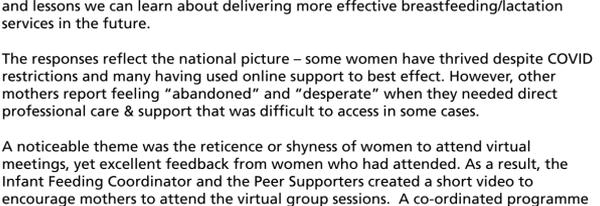
Health Visitors with identified clinical interest have been funded to pursue additional breastfeeding/lactation training to further increase the profile of this important work in our teams across North Wales and create greater knowledge & skills in health visiting teams.



Midwifery Undergraduate Education - Supporting Infant Feeding at Bangor University

Currently the undergraduate Midwifery programme at Bangor University is the only one in Wales with UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) accreditation. BFI University accreditation ensures that student midwives qualify with a firm foundation of evidence-based knowledge in relation to breastfeeding, and ensuring that future midwives qualify with excellent knowledge and skills to support women to breastfeed.

Inspired and supported by the BCUHB Infant Feeding Strategic Plan, students and staff have embraced opportunities to share this knowledge and commitment by organising study days and getting involved in infant feeding initiatives, working alongside colleagues from other areas to get important public health messages about infant feeding out there.



Dietitians - Infant Feeding and Lactation training

In September 2020, over 20 staff from across the BCUHB Public Health and Paediatric Dietetics services accessed a half day standardised training session with the BCUHB Infant feeding Coordinator (Sharon Beward).

Training focused on key themes and learning outcomes within the standardised UNICEF BFI and gives us a positive springboard for collaboration and annual updating.

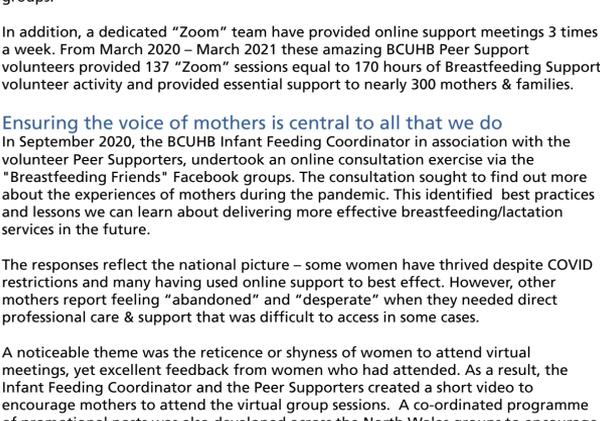


[Click to view guidance document and slide pack](#)

Staff comments included:

"I now have a far greater appreciation of the benefits of breastfeeding support"

"Wider appreciation of the potential barriers to woman breastfeeding, the video was very helpful"



North Wales Breastfeeding Peer Supporter volunteers

Our team of volunteers, under the supervision of the Infant Feeding Coordinator, have provided high quality online breastfeeding support consistently throughout the pandemic. Across North Wales there are five teams for five geographical groups answering queries and supporting mothers all day & every day on the five Facebook groups.

In addition, a dedicated "Zoom" team have provided online support meetings 3 times a week. From March 2020 – March 2021 these amazing BCUHB Peer Support volunteers provided 137 "Zoom" sessions equal to 170 hours of Breastfeeding Support volunteer activity and provided essential support to nearly 300 mothers & families.

Ensuring the voice of mothers is central to all that we do

In September 2020, the BCUHB Infant Feeding Coordinator in association with the volunteer Peer Supporters, undertook an online consultation exercise via the "Breastfeeding Friends" Facebook groups. The consultation sought to find out more about the experiences of mothers during the pandemic. This identified best practices and lessons we can learn about delivering more effective breastfeeding/lactation services in the future.

The responses reflect the national picture – some women have thrived despite COVID restrictions and many having used online support to best effect. However, other mothers report feeling "abandoned" and "desperate" when they needed direct professional care & support that was difficult to access in some cases.

A noticeable theme was the reticence or shyness of women to attend virtual meetings, yet excellent feedback from women who had attended. As a result, the Infant Feeding Coordinator and the Peer Supporters created a short video to encourage mothers to attend the virtual group sessions. A co-ordinated programme of promotional posts was also developed across the North Wales groups to encourage engagement with the Zoom support meetings.

[Click to view video](#)



Healthy Start – A Bevan Exemplar Project to increase uptake of free vitamins for eligible families in North Wales

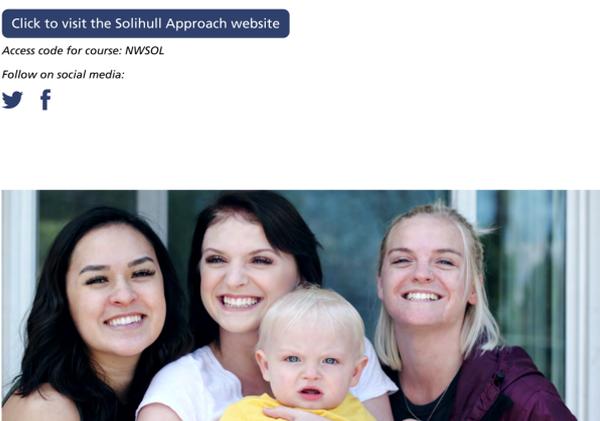
Healthy Start is a UK scheme providing food vouchers and free vitamins (including vitamin D) to eligible pregnant women and families with children under 4 years old.

Current uptake of the scheme across North Wales ranges from 47-56%, with numbers accessing the free vitamins aspect thought to be even lower.

Our BCUHB Infant Feeding Action Plan identified a need to improve uptake of the free vitamins for families. To support this, the Public Health Dietetics team with the support of the Infant Feeding Strategic Group submitted an application to the Bevan Commission to progress the work as an 'Exemplar Project'. The application was successful and work commenced in October 2020.



[Click to visit Healthy Start website](#)



Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby

The Solihull Approach antenatal online course is accessible to North Wales residents. Developed by registered Midwives, gives parents practical information about pregnancy and birth, whilst at the same time introducing them to their baby.

It explains how and why those around this baby are so important, whether they are the mother, father, partner, grandparent or birth partner. It integrates the traditional information given on an antenatal course with a new approach to starting their relationship with this baby before the baby even makes an appearance.

To date across North Wales 867 people have accessed the English version of the course and 14 the Welsh version. Of those completing pre and post evaluation, 22% report an increase in their intention to breastfeed their baby

To access the course and for more information, open the link below.

[Click to visit the Solihull Approach website](#)

Access code for course: NWSOL

Follow on social media:

Maternity Voices

Maternity Voices is a multi-professional committee, which brings together women and their partners who have had a baby recently and local people with an interest in improving the maternity services with midwives and doctors who work in maternity services in BCUHB.

The purpose of Maternity Voices is to contribute to the development and provision of quality services, which meet the needs of our community by ensuring that women and their families are at the center of everything we do.

Maternity Voices always welcomes any feedback from women and their families of their experience of the Maternity Service here in North Wales. This can be fed back directly through your Community Midwife, Patient and Carer Experience team or through Patient Advice and Liaison services (PALS).

We meet four times a year and are always looking for new members.

If you would like to join us or find out more you can send a message through our Facebook page Maternity Voices BCUHB.

[Click to visit the Facebook page](#)