

Sara and Alaw's Story

I am now 10 weeks into my breastfeeding journey and it has been one of the most empowering journey's I've been on.

Before Alaw was born I was determined to breastfeed. It's always been something that has come across as the natural thing to do, however having heard so many people's stories of struggling to breastfeed I was anxious that I wouldn't be able to do it. Despite these concerns I refused to buy any formula for my hospital bag as a "just in case".

Alaw's first feed happened very naturally and she didn't need much support, however as the day went on, she didn't seem to be feeding much. When she was ready to feed, I realised it wasn't as easy as I had expected. Alaw was a very sleepy baby and would not wake for feeds, so the midwives encouraged me to wake her to feed every 3 hours. She was so sleepy that sometimes she would fall asleep mid-feed. I stayed in Llifon ward for 2 nights after having her to establish her feeding. The midwives and support staff on Llifon ward were supportive, encouraging and helped us establish a good latch and feeding. They taught me how to hand express so that we could get the colostrum and then feed it to her with a syringe.

When we were allowed home Alaw could only feed while I was lying down. Again, I was surprised at how difficult it was to learn other feeding positions and actually adjusting to using them. The community midwife was fantastic and said she would send someone to help me the next day. Helen from Penrhos Stanley came the next day and was so incredibly helpful and supportive, she was with me for over an hour and when she left Alaw was comfortably feeding on the left boob lying across my stomach. Helen's simple "tummy to mummy, nipple to nose" phrase stuck with me. She said she would come over the next day to make sure we could feed this way from the right boob as-well. When she turned up the following day, I answered the door and we were already feeding on the right boob, thanks to her help from the previous day.

From then on we have carried on learning. We learn how to feed in a rugby ball hold position but I have also learnt when she wants to feed and sometimes when she has had too much. I've been able to overcome problems such as cracked nipples and engorgement by using various lansinoh products. We've had to adjust to feeding in public which initially I was worried about, but I've never had a problem. There are so many different products out there that can help you, whether it's a pillow for positioning, products for the physical effects or a nice nursing top. I treated myself to a couple of nice nursing tops, that's really helped boost my confidence when feeding in front of others. Alaw is growing brilliantly and I've really enjoyed my time feeding her as it has created a really special bond between us. It has been difficult at times, particularly during periods where she has been cluster feeding, but then it can also be a great excuse to put my feet up for a day! With the right support from my husband, friends and family and all the staff at the hospital and community we've been able to persevere and I am so glad I have.