

The Autumn edition
of BfN News

BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums

National Breastfeeding
Helpline Full Evaluation

'What Breastfeeding
Looks Like' Campaign

Welcome to our new
CEO, Catherine Hine

SEPTEMBER 2022
AUTUMN
ISSUE 85





HELLO!

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AUTUMN
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Editor's Note

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 edition of BfN News.

After a scorching summer with record temperatures throughout the UK, some of you may be glad to be heading into Autumn soon.

September is often a time of new starts, from those little ones first starting school, bigger ones starting secondary school or even those flying the nest off to University!

This edition, we have some wonderful articles from peer groups about events and groups that have been taking place over the summer. We also have some wonderful celebrations of breastfeeding, with our recent social media campaign of 'What Breastfeeding Looks Like' and events from World Breastfeeding Week 2022.

Lastly, we look forward to welcoming our new CEO Catherine Hine to BfN at the start of October, with her first event being the BfN conference.

Thank you for continuing to share your stories, pictures and articles with us. Please keep them coming, we'd love to hear from you.

Contact josie.fowler@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk with your additions for the next newsletter.



Welcome to our incoming CEO

By Sarah Turner, Chair of the Board

I am delighted to be able to introduce BfN's new CEO, Catherine Hine. It is always daunting having to replace such a senior role in any organisation, and in our case, Shereen left particularly big shoes to fill in leaving to join UNICEF UK. The board were, however, thrilled with the quality of applications that we received for the role. In appointing Catherine, we believe we have found a fantastic replacement, someone with a clear passion for not only the role of breastfeeding in society, but also with proven experience of negotiating the third sector – and in particular, in organisations with a strong focus on the protection of, and promotion of, women and families – for a very long time.

Catherine will be joining us in early October, and her first major event for BfN will be the annual conference.

We are planning for her to introduce herself, and, time allowing, to be on hand to answer any questions you might have. Until she joins, if there are any questions, thoughts or otherwise that you would like to pass on to her, please send them through me, and I will pass them on.

Now, to hand over to Catherine, here is a bit about her, in her own words.

"I would, first of all, like to give a huge thank you to everyone who has supported the transition period over the last few months, and to Shereen for her dedication to BfN and to supporting a smooth transition for me into this role. I'm very much looking forward to getting out and about and meeting the BfN community, and would like nothing more than for you to share with me anything you feel it would be useful for me to know, or have me attend or participate in any events or opportunities to get to understand BfN and the work you do, better."



"My commitment to breastfeeding comes as a result of my own experience of the ups and downs of breastfeeding, and also from serving as both a CEO and advocate in the family and relationships sector, and as a Board member of Smallwood Trust, an award-winning grant-maker tackling women's poverty. My MBA research, which looked at the role of the family as a corporate sustainability issue, informed further research with the RSA and won a new Working Families award.

Beyond this, I have worked for many years in the public and not-for-profit sectors, including as Secretary General for the volunteer-led World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in Europe, lead for Oxford City Council's communities and inequalities activity, and as a former Country Director for the volunteering charity, VSO.

In my current role, and as a mother, I am a passionate advocate for the vital role of a child's earliest experiences to their brain development and later life outcomes. By helping families to have the choice to breastfeed, BfN volunteers and staff play a key role in improving family relationships, and help children to have the best possible start in life. By valuing, yet not romanticising breastfeeding, BfN also has a key role in enabling families to fulfil their potential. I am really looking forward to working with you to build upon the great work of Shereen and the BfN staff and volunteer community."

New service launched on Isle of Wight

By Ginny Dupont

In 2021 the BfN South and East Hampshire project received funding to help us bring Breastfeeding Network peer support onto the Isle of Wight.

It has been an exciting project to get up and running and we now have 4 amazing BfN volunteers providing information and support on the Isle of Wight. We hope to secure future funding to enable us to train more volunteers and expand our services in this region.

Full details of our services can be found at <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/isleofwight/>



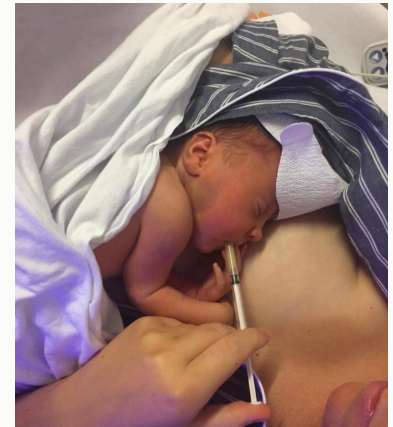
What Breastfeeding Looks Like

By Claire Dorby & Josie Fowler

We recently ran a social media appeal for images of breastfeeding that could be used in our marketing campaigns. We want to ensure that the images we use in our marketing represent the families we support, so we are pleased to now have a huge range of diverse and inclusive images.

Thank you to everyone who sent images and completed the consent form, we received 100s of images showing so many different aspects of breast/chest feeding!

Take a look at some of the images below - we could only share a few within this newsletter but there'll be more shared over the next few months on our social channels.



'Boobs and Brew' team event

By Alexandra Wilkes

After two years of no indoor support groups (but finding lots of creative ways to support families), we were told in late February that we could go back indoors and our volunteers worked really fast to make preparations to do so.

Now in September, we are running regular indoor groups at 14 different indoor venues in addition to outdoor groups at three different parks. That's more than two new venues every month since March!

As such, we really wanted to thank our volunteers and to really celebrate Volunteer Week but our 70 volunteers are spread across 983 square miles so getting together wouldn't be easy...



Derbyshire team on Zoom during their Boobs and Brew event

The idea of Boobs 'n' Brew was born: we sent everyone a party bag with everything they'd need for the celebration and met on zoom so we could all be involved without any travel time. We kicked off the session with everyone's favourite breastfeeding inspired snack (and the winner was yoghurt, honey and fruit) and then played Breastfeeding Bingo and Golden Boobs scratch cards. Prizes were awarded and we reflected on a run-down of everything we've achieved in the last year, which included 620 instances of support! Finally, we looked through feedback we've received in the last 12 months and hopefully filled all our hard-working volunteers with a big dose of oxytocin!

Thanks to everyone working so hard in Derbyshire! You are all tea-riffic!



Testimonial

These ladies not only give their time to support you, if there's a problem they are unsure of they go out of their way to find the answer.

Thank you for understanding. When I heard you were breastfeeding support I thought it wasn't for me cos it doesn't hurt anymore and he's thriving, but it's really helped me to think about telling my family why breastfeeding's important to me





National Breastfeeding Helpline Evaluation

By Hester Schofield

After a year of work including preparation, data gathering and analysis, undertaken by a commissioned team at the University of Central Lancashire, the evaluation of the NBH has been finalised.

Here's an overview of the completed evaluation.

Evaluation Aims:



To identify and compare callers' views & experiences of accessing different modes of NBH support (helpline, social media, webchat, Drugs in Breastmilk):

- 1) to identify key predictors of overall satisfaction between callers who access different types of support,
- 2) to provide recommendations to future proof the relevance and needs for telephone and online support (in general and within the context of global pandemics)

To identify the different types of support that women access for breastfeeding, and why women do and do not choose to access support from national breastfeeding organisations

To capture views and experiences of volunteering among NBH volunteers, and to identify any training or support needs, to help build capacity within the service

Three surveys were undertaken by the researchers:

1. the NBH evaluation questionnaire for NBH service users

2. a survey for NBH volunteers

3. a survey of Types of Support women access for breastfeeding

Four interviews were also undertaken with five stakeholders to augment this work



Overall satisfaction and recommendations to others

- 96.90% were satisfied with the support they received, with similar levels of satisfaction reported across the four different types of support.
- 98.96% said they would use the same NBH service again - only 10 callers to the helpline and one caller who accessed social media said that they would not.
- 99.15% said they would recommend the NBH service they had used to others
- 37.94% considered that the support from the NBH had encouraged them to volunteer with the service.



Benefits of support

Following the call:

- 93.08% agreed to feeling 'less worried'.
- 92.56% agreed to feeling 'less stressed'.
- 96.17% agreed to feeling 'reassured'.
- 85.87% agreed to feeling 'more knowledgeable' about breastfeeding.
- 92.25% reported being able to put into practice the information provided*.
- 81.37% agreed that the support had helped resolve their breastfeeding issues*.
- 35.00% would not have been able to continue breastfeeding without NBH support*.
- 81.81% felt more determined to continue breastfeeding.
- 88.88% felt the support had encouraged them to continue breastfeeding*.

(*Significantly more likely for those who messaged on social media when compared to those who contacted the helpline.)

"My daughter is nearly 5 months old & we have BF from the start and are still going strong! I can't thank the volunteers enough for their kind words, advice and familiar experiences shared."

"The quality of support was on this occasion, as it has been every time, of the highest quality. I have phoned over the years with a range of breastfeeding issues and every time the support I've received has both been practically useful and has made a huge difference to my mental health and how supported I have felt. I'm so grateful for it and have benefitted hugely – as have my children!"



Preferences for different types of support

- Callers who expressed a preference for using helpline support valued the opportunity to talk directly to a real person in real-time.
- 19.66% reported using social media due to being unable to get through to the helpline.
- 31.25 % reported using webchat as they were 'unable' to use the telephone (for example, due to disability).
- 12.79% who used social media support felt that the helpline would have been too difficult to use for reasons such as caring responsibilities.
- 11.25% preferred to use online methods due to a lack of confidence in using the phone related to language skills.

" The helpline has always given me confidence & reassurance and without it I'm not sure I would still be breastfeeding now. Thank you, I truly appreciate every volunteer."



Moving Forwards

As well as highlighting the fantastic support offered by volunteers on the National Breastfeeding Helpline, the report also detailed recommendations for development of the service. We are in the process of putting an action plan together based upon this and working through the different areas with the aim of ensuring the support offered by the helpline remains sustainable and relevant moving forwards whilst maintaining the fantastic standard set!

The areas of recommendations we will be working on include:

Training, supervision and support for volunteers

Technical changes to service delivery

Further promotion of NBH services

Integration and promotion of the service at the strategic/policy level

Widening opportunities to access services:

- a) Languages
- b) Opening hours
- c) Appreciation for volunteers
- d) Additional volunteers
- e) Improve access for women who are traditionally less likely to access support

THANK YOU!

We are so happy that the amazing support volunteers give families on the NBH has been highlighted through the information in this report and want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for all the volunteers who take calls, webchats and social media enquiries on the helpline!

Annual Conference & AGM

Don't miss out on an incredible day of training, information, news and more.

Plans are coming together for the annual conference and AGM on Saturday 8th October 2022. We have some great speakers and segments to the day, it's shaping up to be an unmissable event!

The booking system is already open to obtain your tickets, make sure you book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. If you are not able to attend on the day or for the whole day please register as normal, you'll have two weeks to catch up on anything you have missed. <https://www.ecevents.uk/bfn/registration>



Confirmed speakers and subjects include:

- Pamela Morrison – Breastfeeding and HIV
- Sarah Ojar – Positive about Down syndrome
- Gill Thomson & Marie-Clare Balaam – NBH evaluation
- Dr Rachel Brown – Breastfeeding Cuts Research
- Catherine Hine – Incoming CEO, BfN

LinkTree Creation

By Gemma Skinner

The NHS Board for the Lothians is just that – NHS Lothian. However, there are four distinct areas within the Lothians: Edinburgh City, West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian.

Across the Lothians, so far only one NHS drop in service has re-opened since the pandemic began, which means the vast majority of breastfeeding support in this large area is provided by the third sector. There are multiple groups supporting families in the Lothians including:

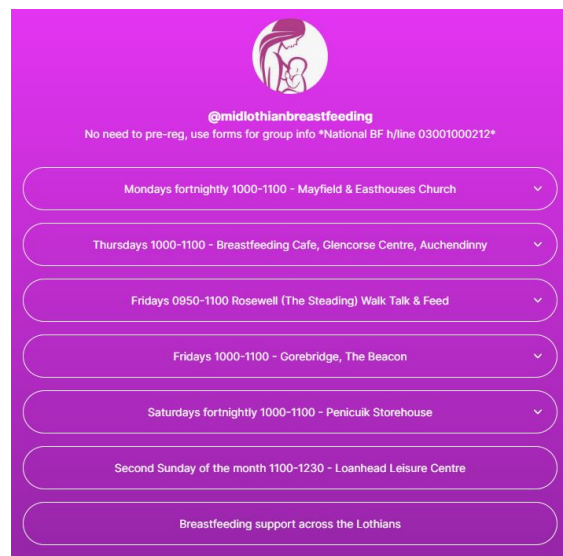
NCT, La Leche League, Pregnancy & Parents Centre, Midlothian Breastfeeding Alliance in partnership with BfN, La Leche League, Breastfeeding Lens and ABM.

As the incoming coordinator for the Midlothian project, I was introduced to the linktree that we already had. This had been in use for some time and during the pandemic was a great way to point mums to a registration form, so we were able to keep all the data we needed for track and trace.

In my first week, I joined a third sector meeting, where representatives from other breastfeeding charities and relevant NHS staff come together and discuss the current themes around breastfeeding support. Discussion turned to how we could pool our resources together to make sure all breastfeeding support groups across the Lothians were easy for anyone to find and that information is kept up to date. Lothian Breastfeeding Buddies (NCT) also had a linktree, and we started discussing what a joined up approach might look like.

Alongside planning a joined up “unbranded” event to celebrate #SBAW22, the idea of a bigger Linktree project grew. We realised we would need multiple Linktrees in order for this to work, and that we could use this as an opportunity to gather some breastfeeding resources and put them all in one place.

This is approximately what we started with. The existing Linktree looked very much like this, a clear list of groups by day, with times and locations.





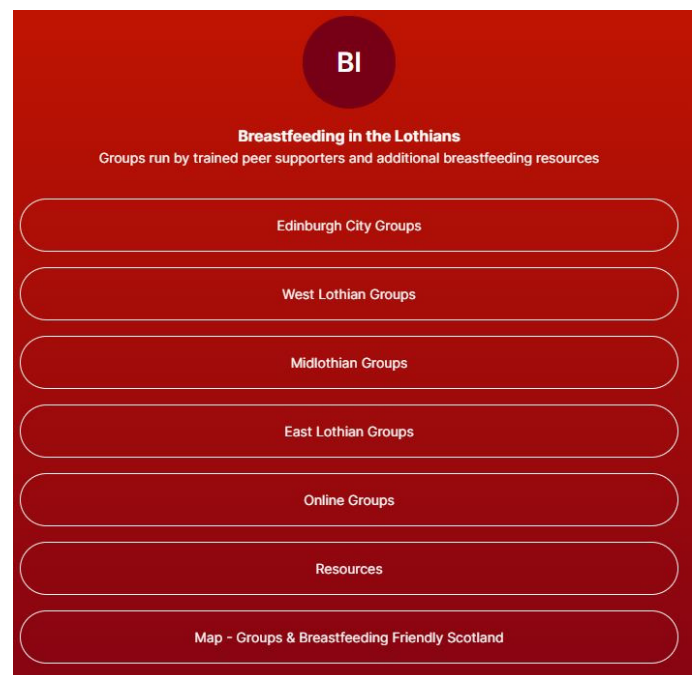
We decided to add a link at the bottom of each “county” Linktree that would bring us to the top level tree, which is where all the other county Linktree pages are collated, along with a tree for approved resources and also a link to the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland map.

Each tree was created and access shared with the relevant people, with a couple of pre-existing trees being used and the formatting brought in-line so they were all as clear as they could be.

The ultimate aim was a clear and easy to use resource that could be kept up to date by the teams who are facilitating the groups, and so far, we think we have achieved that.

This is what the main centralised interface looks like:

We are hoping to use this as part of the new baby packs that mums receive at hospital after they have given birth. In NHS Lothian, the standard way to distribute details about breastfeeding resources is a printed sheet of white paper with a list of some of the groups. This is very difficult to keep up to date, so we have come up with the idea of a printed postcard with a typed link and a QR code that takes mums to the Breastfeeding in the Lothians tree. This means information is far less likely to be out of date. This should be up and running in the next few weeks.



One of the plans we have for the future include a calendar where we can plot all of the upcoming groups as recurring events, which would probably be colour coded to make it clear what area each group is run in.

It has been wonderful to be involved in this project. If you work in an area that has representation from more than one breastfeeding charity, I would definitely recommend taking things further and seeing what you can do as a collective. Whilst there are different boundaries and approaches from charity to charity, the similarities between the groups are usually far bigger than the differences. We all offer free, trained breastfeeding support and we are all passionate about making sure access to this support is as straightforward as possible.

Staff news

By Josie Fowler

We are excited to launch a new section to our BfN newsletter - Staff news! We will be introducing you to some central members of staff, welcoming new staff and saying goodbye to those moving on, from the central team and project leads.

This edition, we had a chat with our two HR members of staff, Julie and Martine.

Julie Muir - HR Manager

How long have you been working at BfN?

I joined in 2015 so 7 years!

What made you want to get involved with BfN?

To be honest, when I joined I didn't know much about the organisation - it was a short term mat leave cover post... but then as I started to get involved with developing the HR, payroll and recruitment functions and began working with such a dedicated and hard-working team, I wanted to stay. There has been a lot of change in the organisation in the time I have been here and although it has sometimes been challenging, it has always been worthwhile.

The ethos of the organisation in supporting families, staff and volunteers is amazing.

What's your favourite part of your role?

The variety and challenges of the work and providing support to managers, staff and volunteers. There is never a dull moment We are quite a small support team but always try to do our best and to support each other. Having Martine on board to help with HR and to expand the capacity of the team is great. I am also looking forward to working with Catherine our new CEO and continuing to develop and improve HR and staffing strategy in the future.

What do you enjoy doing outside of BfN?

I am involved in my local Book Festival. sing in a choir and regularly walk on my local beach. I also love spending time socialising with family and friends.

Tea or Coffee? Tea - I usually have at least 3 cups before 10am!

Favourite snack? Lets just say I am the one in the office who keeps the biscuit tin stocked.

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? The ability to teleport.



Martine Duorak - HR Assistant

How long have you been working at BfN?

I have been working at BfN for 3 months now, loving learning all the ways of working and diving right in at the deep end.

What made you want to get involved with BfN?

When looking up BfN while looking for jobs, the first thing that popped out to me was the ethos of the organisation and how much they value their staff. Retaining loyal employees is hard and I think BfN offers so much in terms of flexibility and support and the fact that everyone is so kind and caring really encourages me to enjoy my role here

What's your favourite part of your role?

At the moment, my favourite part is learning new things within BfN and the different ways in which it works, being challenged and working on projects. (My manager isn't too bad either!)



What do you enjoy doing outside of BfN?

Outside of BfN, I have 2 young sons who keep me busy. I also have a very large family, who I spend most of my time with; socialising with friends and exercising are 2 things I regularly try to fit in around my busy every day schedule.

Tea or Coffee? Coffee (Caramel lattes are my favourite)

Favourite snack? Crisps and dip!

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? I would choose invisibility

"Talent wins games, but teamwork wins championships." – Michael Jordan

If you are part of the central team or a project lead and would like to be featured in our next newsletter, contact Josie Fowler to secure your slot!

Boobie Bake Break!

By Josie Fowler

Boobie Bake Break



Some of you may remember our yearly autumnal campaign 'Big Tea Break', encouraging you to grab a drink and treat with someone you know.

For 2022, we are celebrating the Drugs in Breastmilk Service and giving it a fresh reboot with a new name...

Say hello to the Boobie Bake Break!

This year, we want everyone to get involved - whether that's inviting family/friends over for a drink and piece of cake, organising a coffee morning or bake sale, or maybe you can challenge your colleagues to a 'bake-off' style competition!

On Friday 4th November, we're asking you to take a Boobie Bake Break with BfN, and help raise money for our Drugs in Breastmilk service. Pop the kettle on, open the biscuits (or the cake tin!) and spend some time catching up with friends.

To find out more information, download recipe cards, fundraising ideas and sign up to take part, take a look here:

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/boobie-bake-break/



Queen Elizabeth memorial

We are hugely saddened to hear of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and send our deepest condolences to the Royal Family.

What an incredible woman, paving the way for normalising breastfeeding by nursing all 4 of her own children and in doing so, giving freedom for future generations of royals to do the same. All while serving her country for over 70 years.



Climate-smart Infant Feeding

Resources

By Emma Thomas & Josie Fowler

After the scorching summer days many of us have experienced this year, Climate change is strongly on the global agenda. Climate-smart infant feeding resources have been produced in conjunction with Healthcare Without Harm, for the Nurses climate challenge. Emma Thomas, BfN Information and Policy Officer, was a co-author on the first part (of three) articles written for health care professionals to discuss Climate-Smart Infant Feeding. Take a look at all three articles here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/publications-leaflets/>

Dr Elizabeth Smith, the lead author of all three, has a blog post here:

<https://www.qnis.org.uk/blog/climate-change-and-infant-feeding/>

Here's an extract from the blog:

"I quickly recognised that breastfeeding is the most environmentally sustainable method of feeding, no need for farming, no use of freshwater, no power, no plastic, storage, or transport. In times of emergency, it can be lifesaving and protects babies and older children from infection."



Completion of helper training

By Nikki Gallagher

BfN Stoke-on-Trent were delighted to welcome local Cllr Lorraine Beardmore to their Friday group at Westfield Children's Centre.

Lorraine is a breastfeeding advocate in the city after feeding both her own children and attending support groups when her children were younger. She came along to present certificates to the second group who qualified in their Breastfeeding helper training.





Take a look at some fabulous events that took place for World Breastfeeding Week 1st - 8th August 2022



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2022

Congratulations

A huge thank you to everyone that makes BfN what it is



Helpers

Laura Smith
Jude Rook
Chloe Steggles
Amy Sharman
Liz Sands
Diane Murkowski
Cassie Lay
Cate Bartram
And their tutors:
Joy Jones / Sally Carter

Sharon Caskie
Ieva Downie
Abbie Mcgonigal
Nathália Nascimento
Sarah Quilter
Lindsey Robertson
Katherine Thomson
Fiona Wilson
Kathryn Taylor
And their tutors:
Eleanor Johnson /
Alys Vaugh Williams

Jennifer Brown
Lauren Jamieson
Anneka Smullen
Arlene Milne
Marisha McKay
And their tutor:
Carolanne Lamont

Mhairi Douglas
And her tutor:
Kirstin Worsley

Hannah Brown
Sarah Paton
And their tutor:
Crystal Golding-Smith

Kirsten Mitchell
And her tutor:
Alison Garrod

Eilidh Brown
Caitriona Cassidy
Charlene Hughes
Emma Briggs
Sarah-Jane Hill
And their tutors:
Carolanne Lamont /
Marie-Claire Ronaldson

Amy Neilson
Melissa Cartaya Mendez
And their tutor:
Naomi Waters

Emma Whalley
And her tutor:
Lydia Murtagh

Helpline Supporters

Nicola Smith
Mairi Thomson
And their tutor:
Kirstin Worsley

Supporters

Nicky Gunter
Alice Bygraves
Sara Modino
Chloe Cornelius
Scarlet Hayward
Amy Stock
Lisa Jones
And their tutors:
Alison Garrod /
Eleanor Johnson

All of the individuals listed here have completed training with BfN in the last 3 months, enabling them to support families across the UK as a volunteer



**Thank you to all our
helpers - supporters - tutors - supervisors - staff - friends
- fundraisers - donors and funders.**

We value each and every one of you!

If your name is missing from this list, please accept our apologies.
Contact us to ensure that you are included next time. Thank you for your understanding.