



# BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums

**A festive edition of  
BfN News**

**Welcoming new board  
members**

**New neonatal service  
launches in London**

**News from across the  
network and much more...**

**DECEMBER 2021  
WINTER  
ISSUE 82**



Kate Taylor getting into the festive spirit!



Jodie Sanwell's little one keeping warm on a winter walk!



Naomi Nyamudoka and her baby

# HELLO!

DECEMBER 2021  
WINTER  
ISSUE 82

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of BfN News.

We hope the festive season is not too stressful for you and you'll have time to read this packed winter edition of BfN News. We have news from Shereen's recent meeting with Andrea Leadson MP, introductions to our newest board members and details of a brand new neonatal service as well as news and updates from across the network.

On pages 10 and 11 there is a very moving story shared with us by a grieving mother. Please note that this article contains content about baby loss and could be upsetting.

Our cover star this time is Pavlina and her baby, one of many, along with the mothers pictured on the left here, who shared their beautiful photographs with us as part of our 'What Breastfeeding Looks Like' appeal earlier this year.

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

Wishing you a very happy and peaceful festive season from all of us at BfN



# CEO Update

It is encouraging to see the Government commit to investment in breastfeeding support as part of [the Best Start for Life – The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report](#).

In October, I was pleased to meet with Andrea Leadsom Chair for the Review, and her team along with Alison Thewliss MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Infant Feeding and Inequalities. The aim was to discuss what part breastfeeding plays in the Government vision for the 1001 Critical Days and to share the work of BfN and build an understanding of the value of human milk.

[The Government committing an extra £50 million to breastfeeding support](#) is a solid start to investing in evidence-based support that is so vital to anyone breastfeeding or supporting someone to breastfeed. [A more detailed position from us can be found here](#).

With Andrea Leadsom's review focusing heavily on perinatal mental health it was an important opportunity in the meeting to raise awareness with Andrea and her team about the relationship between [breastfeeding and mental health and highlighting the protective aspects that breastfeeding can make towards mental health where good support is available](#).

Andrea was also keen to hear how mothers and parents are supported on the [National Breastfeeding Helpline](#) and how demand has increased massively on social media with the work of volunteers and a small staff team. When asked about the role that virtual support can play in breastfeeding it was important to draw on our experiences and also [latest research in the BMJ](#) that argues virtual support, while commonplace now and convenient should not be a total replacement to face to face support where the biggest differences can be made, especially for mothers and parents least likely to continue breastfeeding.

A compelling point was also shared regarding learning lessons from Scotland where BfN has been involved in supporting breastfeeding through the Programme for Government work - investing in Government leadership and support makes a real difference to breastfeeding rates as evidenced by the [latest infant feeding report in Scotland](#).

We look forward to hearing more detailed plans about the investment and the implementation of the review recommendations.



**Shereen Fisher, BfN CEO**



**it was an important opportunity to raise awareness about the relationship between breastfeeding and mental health...**



**Turn to page 11 to read more about the BMJ research Shereen mentions here.**

# NICE guidelines update on inducing labour

By Emma Thomas  
BfN Information and Policy Officer



The updated NICE guideline on inducing labour was published on 4th of November, and here at BfN we were pleased to see that some of the comments we had made on this during the consultation period (along with other organisations who advocate for women) had been taken on board.

Some of you may have seen the hashtag #notsonice trending on social media a couple of months ago. This was in response to the release of the draft guideline. This draft recommended that for uncomplicated pregnancies, women should be offered induction at 41+0 weeks, with induction taking place as soon as possible, whereas the previous guidelines advised induction between 41 and 42 weeks, and that women who had chosen not to be induced should be monitored after 42 weeks. In addition, the draft guideline recommended: 'Consider induction of labour from 39+0 weeks in women with otherwise uncomplicated singleton pregnancies who are at a higher risk of complications associated with continued pregnancy (for example, BMI 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or above, age 35 years or above, with a Black, Asian or minority ethnic family background, or after assisted conception).' There was considerable backlash to this blanket recommendation, particularly with regards to women of Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds. It is sadly the case that mothers from minority backgrounds and their babies are more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth in the UK than white mothers and their babies, as highlighted by the [MBRRACE Saving Lives, Improving Mother's care report](#) and Perinatal report, and the [FiveXmore campaign](#). However, many people pointed out that simply inducing labour earlier in these mothers would not address the structural inequalities that lead to increases in mortality, and could contribute to further inequalities. At BfN, we were also particularly concerned that increasing the number of induced labours would impact negatively on breastfeeding. Induced labour can be more painful and be more likely to end in an assisted delivery, with forceps or ventouse, and the additional trauma and pain relief medication required can make establishing breastfeeding more challenging.

However, in response to comments from BfN and many other organisations expressing concern about these new recommendations, NICE have amended the text of the final draft. They now recommend that all women should be made aware "that some risks associated with a pregnancy continuing beyond 41+0 weeks may increase over time" and "that induction of labour from 41+0 weeks may reduce these risks, but that they will also need to consider the impact of induction on their birth experience", but stop short of recommending offering induction at 41+0 weeks to all women. The guidelines also now draw the reader's attention to the increased risk of stillbirth in minority ethnic women and those from deprived backgrounds and highlight that these women "may benefit from closer monitoring and additional support" but they no longer make a blanket recommendation for considering early induction of labour.

We're pleased that NICE has heard us, and to see the guidelines reframed to highlight inequalities without perpetuating them and to help empower women to make their own informed choices regarding labour and birth. Of course, we would have also liked to see breastfeeding and how it can be impacted by birthing experience specifically addressed, but we will continue to engage with consultations on all relevant NICE guidelines, to advocate for breastfeeding parents to be considered and breastfeeding protected wherever possible.

# BfN Conference and AGM

By Clare Farquhar

Building on the success of our first ever online conference in 2020, and due to the ongoing uncertainty around the Covid-19 pandemic, the BfN 2021 annual conference took place online on Saturday 2nd October.

Our experience in 2020 helped us to identify that a reliable streaming platform, with good technical support, was key to delivering a successful event.



We worked with the Royal College of Physicians events team to deliver a series of presentations combined with live Q&A sessions with all of the speakers.

The event was co-chaired by Shereen Fisher, Chief Executive and Clare Farquhar, Central Support Manager.

We were pleased to welcome a wide range of speakers covering various topical subjects:

- Smita Hanciles, UNICEF UK Baby Friendly, Breastfeeding, peer support and perinatal mental health
- Asif Afridi, BRAP, Progressing anti-racism in mother support charities
- AJ Silver, The Queer Birth Club, LGBT+ families and supporting lactation
- Zainab Yate, Help! Breastfeeding makes me feel Bad, Sad or Mad
- Dr Ernestine Gheyoh Ndzi and Dr Anjali Raj, York St John University, Breastfeeding Support: Should UK Higher Education Institutions not be leading the way?
- Dr Wendy Jones, Changes to practice of drugs in breastfeeding in the last 23 years. What did we achieve in BfN?

We also enjoyed hearing from Felicity Lambert who presented the NBH awards to some inspiring NBH volunteers.

Overall, we were joined by 138 people on the day and the recordings were watched at least 94 times following the main event. The feedback was again overwhelmingly positive.

We know that many people are keen to get back to a face to face event in 2022 but at this point in time, we are unable to make any definite plans.

We will let everyone know as soon as possible what the arrangements are for next year. Keep an eye on our social media feeds for a 'save the date' coming soon.

In the meantime, many thanks to everyone who participated and supported this years event.

# All change on the board

**Thank you to Ann Kerr, and welcome to our new Directors!**



We'd like to extend our massive gratitude to Ann Kerr, who has recently stepped down as Chair. Ann has brought both dedication and invaluable public health knowledge to the role, and will be missed!

Shereen Fisher said 'It's been a pleasure to work with Ann as Chair, she has helped bring focus to the big picture, the team and I have been grateful for her leadership, wisdom and professional insights all for the benefit of mothers and families we support'.



**Welcome to our new chair - Sarah Turner!**

Sarah Turner will be taking over the role of Chair from Ann. Sarah has been involved with BfN since 2014, initially as a helper, then supporter, and most recently director, taking a special interest in volunteer support and the role that the internet might play – and has played – in BfN's work.

She's delighted to be given the opportunity to take on this new role, particularly as the charity moves to understand how the pandemic might shape our support for mothers, babies and families in years to come.

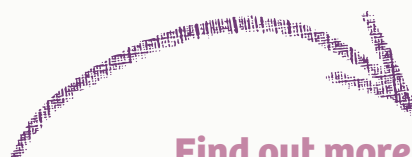
Existing board member (and long standing Tutor, Supervisor and Supporter - BfN member 002!), Joy Hastings, has taken on the role of Vice Chair as Francesca Cherubini-Stoughton steps down after several years of service.

Caroline Polley is our new FAR Chair (a role previously held by Francesca) and Ernestine Gheyoh Ndzi is now our Caldicott Guardian (previously Sarah Turner).

## New faces on the board

**We're delighted to welcome some new members to our director team - Emily, Jes and Claire - turn to page 7 and 8 to find out more about them.**

**With thanks to all our board members for their ongoing support of BfN.**



**[Find out more about all our board members here...](#)**

# New faces on the board



**Emily Carpenter**

'I have over ten years experience in the third sector with a fundraising and project management background. I have worked for several national charities and currently support small charities to start, grow and strengthen their fundraising income, products and processes.'

I discovered BfN in March 2021, days after giving birth to my daughter. After a tricky start to breastfeeding and very inconsistent midwife support, I was fortunate enough to lean on a friend who suggested BfN as a great starting point to learning more about breastfeeding and to guide me through all those enormous questions you have in the early days.

From there, my passion grew to learn as much as I could about breastfeeding and to understand the huge inconsistencies in support I had received, to help advocate better for myself and my friends.'

'As a first time mum in 2019 I was lucky to have BfN support throughout my whole breastfeeding journey, from my antenatal classes to support when weaning my now toddler. My local BfN Peer Supporters were a major support in the biggest change in my life. The main thing that stood out to me about BfN, was the independence I had to make my own decisions. I felt in control in an otherwise overwhelming situation. Following my experience, I was inspired to support others and I trained as a Helper in 2020. During the pandemic I continued to work in both Sandwell and Wolverhampton projects as a Helper, to deliver continued support for all our parents and families. I provide support to families in the Panjabi language, and have been training to be a Peer Supporter and NBH volunteer over the last 6 months.

Alongside working part time as a BfN Helper, I also work as a Commercial Property Solicitor. My role involves drafting intricate legal documents, negotiating and advising clients, as well as financial management of transactions.

My professional skills require me to work pragmatically to balance the needs of all involved, and often to "think outside of the box". I have experience of project management which lends to my analytical and strategic skills. I am keen to use such skills to review BfN's operations, and assist in working towards achieving our goals as an organisation.

I'm keen to share my interest in breaking down boundaries in society relating to breastfeeding and progressing the BfN's commitment to inclusivity and diversity. I would like to work to ensure that we as an organisation continue to have an appreciation of cultural differences in society so that the support we provide is truly inclusive, that our services are accessible to all, and that we are representative of the diverse communities we support. I'm lucky enough to also have insight into how local projects work, and this will be invaluable experience when considering proposals and policies as a Board member.

I'm proud to be a member of BfN as the organisation's values sit very closely with my own personal and spiritual ethos as a Sikh; respecting the choices of all without judgement and ensuring such support is accessible for all aligns with my spiritual beliefs of 'seva' (selfless service), social justice and equality.'



**Jes Johal**

## New faces on the board cont.



**Claire Fradley**

'As a former breastfeeding counsellor, peer supporter and a mother of two children, I'm excited to be involved once again in supporting breastfeeding mothers and families to make informed parenting choices with the Breastfeeding Network. I spent seven years training and working first as a peer supporter and then as a breastfeeding counsellor when my own two children were small, after receiving amazing support and making life changing friendships at a local breastfeeding group. As a breastfeeding counsellor I facilitated NCT antenatal groups, worked on their breastfeeding helpline and worked at weekly drop-in groups. I did this alongside my role as a Civil Servant until the time was right for me to step away from breastfeeding counselling seven years ago, as my children had grown and my career was taking me in a new direction.

However, expertise I gained as a breastfeeding counsellor came to the fore in my Civil Service career in ways I did not expect – my ability to facilitate groups, set clear personal and professional boundaries, to listen with meaning and care and to lead with empathy and authenticity. And my passion for supporting others in making informed choices has never waned! I've been in the Civil Service for 17 years now and I think that I have a unique combination of expertise; knowledge, experience, and passion for supporting families and mothers on their breastfeeding journey and expansive experience enabling informed government policy making and creating and delivering high level strategies. I hope to be able to combine the two things as a trustee for the BfN'.

## New staff within the central team

Welcome to our new Marketing Officer

Josie is taking up the reins from Leanne Rayner who left BfN in September after a busy 18 months. Josie is new to BfN. She will be working closely with Clare in the central team, Alyson on social media and with projects across the country. She'll also be in charge of the newsletter from next time!

Here's what she has to say about joining BfN:

'I'm really excited to be working with The Breastfeeding Network in the role of Marketing Officer. As a mum to two young boys, based in Essex, I know the challenges that new mums can face when breastfeeding. I also understand the challenges that parents have faced in the last two years, having been pregnant and given birth during the COVID pandemic myself.

I'm really happy to be able to provide support and information to help new parents, support networks, health professionals and more.

For the last 10 years, I have worked within the charity sector in both sales and marketing roles, but my passion lies in digital marketing.

I'm looking forward to working with you all, please do get in touch directly on [josephine.fowler@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:josephine.fowler@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) for any marketing or comms needs.'



**Josie Fowler**



# Tutor Training Class of 2021



**By Eleanor Johnson  
Tutor & Supervisor**

**We are incredibly excited to be welcoming eight new Tutors from across the breadth of the UK to the team, with one more soon to be qualified too. .**

Debbie, Sophie, Lindsey, Marie-Claire, Alys, Timea, Cara, Sally and Fiona have been working incredibly hard this past year and in November completed the final assignments for Tutor Training. They are the second cohort to complete the new OCN accredited module of the course, 'Developing your Assessment Skills'.

We have thoroughly enjoyed delivering the training and are excited to have eight new incredible colleagues joining the talented, passionate and dedicated Tutor team over the coming weeks, with one more to follow shortly. We know they will bring lots of insight, compassion and intuitive ideas to the courses we deliver, as well as some wonderful micro-teaches for supervisions.

Well done to each of you on this epic achievement.

Aurore, Joy & El

# The story of a grieving mother

**Content warning:  
baby loss/stillbirth/lactation after  
baby loss**

**This piece by Hannah Inman was first posted as a blog as part of Baby Loss Awareness Week 2021.**

You spend time preparing for them. Studying childbirth, hypnobirthing, breastfeeding, harvesting colostrum, bouncing on the birthing ball, helping encourage baby into the correct position, buying all the essentials you require and all the ones you desire.

When I heard those words – there is no heartbeat – my world fell apart. I did not expect to find joy in the days that followed and yet I did.

Upon hearing those words you enter a whole new world of information – there are new rules. Rules I did not study – trusting the health professionals around me to educate and guide me. Trying to digest what I could while adjusting to navigating this new landscape.

I was 39 weeks pregnant, having regular false starts to my labour and desperate to meet my baby soon. Unable to walk far with pelvic girdle pain and all the usual aches and pains you get in the third trimester, I was ready. I was harvesting colostrum just in case – my first son had to go to special care at birth, missing the golden hour and having to agree to formula if required. While donor milk is now available, expressing helped give me a purpose. I was preparing for my baby in every way I knew how.

While we knew that we had lost our baby – he still had to be born and the drug options were slightly different than what we covered in my antenatal class. While I was induced the amazing midwives did what they could to keep my labour as non medicalised as possible. I discussed my wishes to be mentally present – knowing how precious meeting my sleeping baby would be and my pain relief options were discussed in relation to my needs.

I should add that the second you lose your baby – you get 5 star treatment. Everyone wants to help in any way they can but no one can bring your baby back so they give you all the comfort and support they can. Thanks to the charity Simba and the staff's amazing fundraising the labour rooms are amazing and kitted out.

Some women say they prepare more for birth than the baby. This was so true for me. It also feels cruel to birth a baby who you know you have lost – however this process was extremely cathartic for me and I was able to heal some wounds from my previous labour.

I expressed the wish to save some milk to make into jewellery – as a memento, perhaps with a lock of his hair. A kind midwife suggested I could express drops of colostrum and put them onto R's lip as a gesture. I was keen not to miss any opportunities and make all the memories I could. Other midwives were concerned that expressing would encourage more milk to come in – how would this affect me and could it cause mastitis?

I also got offered some medication to help suppress my milk – not being in a place to think straight, my friend advised me to check the side effects. We had learnt the BRAIN acronym in antenatal class and unable to decide I stuck to the N for 'do nothing'.

**cont...**

## Hannah's story (continued from p.9)

Breastfeeding my firstborn had been such a challenge and I was so convinced I would be better educated this time. Whether to suppress my milk with meds was the first real CHOICE I could realistically say no to. I was hesitant to take any drugs I didn't have to. I had just spent 9 months nauseous so why would I take a drug that I didn't have to with that side effect?

My caregivers were concerned – a postpartum Mum grieving her baby with her milk coming in. Would that be too much? I knew my boobs though – oversupply was not a problem I had previously had. I also wasn't afraid of milk.

In the days that followed I expressed small amounts and had the support of a BfN mothers supporter and other midwives, who reminded me babies feed 12 times a day. Expressing once a day was not going to cause big problems. Expressing my milk felt good, I was and am so proud of my body. This was the right choice for me.

Sadly I was unable to donate to the milk bank due to my medication but I know some other mothers who have successfully donated following baby loss and found great comfort in this.

There are lots of firsts I have missed out on with my baby, but the precious memories will stay with me forever. Breastfeeding creates a bond between mother and child and by producing milk I was able to fulfil part of my mothering need.

### Further information

If you or someone you know needs support with lactation following the loss of a baby (whether choosing to express milk or stop the supply), these links may be helpful:

[www.llli.org/commonly-asked-questions-about-lactation-after-loss](http://www.llli.org/commonly-asked-questions-about-lactation-after-loss)

<https://kellymom.com/bf/concerns/mother/lactation-after-loss>

## British Medical Journal article on the value of breastfeeding peer support

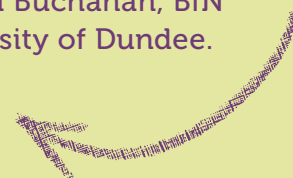
**BfN was really pleased and proud to see this article '[Providing effective evidence based support for breastfeeding women in primary care](#)' published in the paper version of the BMJ on the 13th November. It was requested by the BMJ as an invited peer reviewed article to help GPs and other primary care health workers better support breastfeeding mothers.**

To create the article, women and breastfeeding peer supporters were asked by a BfN peer supporter what aspects of breastfeeding support they thought it was most important for primary care professionals to know. The responses were used to inform the focus of the article.

Responses were also invited from GP's which backed the need for remote support alongside rapport building and some face to face assessments where possible.

The report was authored by Joyce Marshall, Midwife & senior lecturer in midwifery at University of Huddersfield; Sam Ross, GP & honorary senior lecturer at University of Glasgow; Phyll Buchanan, BfN Supporter, Tutor & Supervisor and Anna Gavine, Lecturer in health sciences at University of Dundee.

**[The paper copy has been shortened so it's worth taking time to read the full article here:](#)**



# Update from the National Breastfeeding Helpline

By Fliss Lambert, NBH Manager

We continue to receive and answer very high levels of calls on the helpline and we are seeing particularly large increases on our social media message support service. The social media volunteer team are doing an amazing job managing the numbers of messages coming in. Thank you to all of them!

We attended our first face to face event in nearly two years in November, with Kirsten and Caroline heading to Murrayfield Stadium to meet hundreds of students at the Scottish Maternity & Midwifery Festival. Fliss joined virtually to make a presentation on our response to the pandemic.



Our Scottish Volunteer Development Officer, Cara went on maternity leave this month and we wish her all the best! We welcome Rebecca Reeves to the team who is taking on this role while Cara is off this year.

I'm sad to say this will be my final update as NBH Manager, a role I have held for more than eight years now. My kids were babies when I started working for BfN, and now I have one at secondary school! I will be moving on at the end of this year, I feel it's time for me to do something different now. I am so so grateful for the amazing experience I have had working at BfN. The staff and volunteers are such an inspiring, wonderful group of women and I am constantly in awe of what they are able to achieve.

I'm so proud of how the helpline has grown and developed over the years and I look forward to seeing what the future has in store.

With love and thanks from the bottom of my heart for all you do for BfN, and particularly to all the helpline volunteers who make a difference every single day.

Fliss xx



**[Click to check out the NBH website](http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk)**

**[www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk)**

# Launch of a new neonatal service

By Janine Hewitt

Volunteer Coordinator, St George's Hospital Neonatal Peer Support Team



In late 2020 the neonatal charity First Touch, who support the level 3 surgical neonatal unit (NNU) at St George's Hospital in Tooting, SW London, advertised for volunteers with the goal of creating a peer support team to aid parents with infants in NNU. The training they were funding would commence in spring 2021, potential volunteers could choose from a specially tailored helper course or a champions course depending on the amount of time they had to commit to training and/or their level of breastfeeding/expressing experience. Both courses pilot schemes for BfN.

As the mother of a baby born at 32 weeks at St George's, I was inspired to sign up and undertake the helpers course. Being in NNU is a stressful time and often quite isolating. I frequently wished for the opportunity to talk to others who had been through a similar experience so the idea of a peer support network struck a chord, especially as I had recently starting counselling my brother and sister-in-law who were, at the time, at St George's with their baby born at just 26 weeks.

The helpers course had to be specifically tailored to suit the needs of a neonatal unit. The vast majority of babies in NNU are too small or unwell to be able to feed directly from the breast. Most are fed through an oral or nasal gastric tube, as such much of a mother's time is spent expressing. It is not unusual for a parent to spend several months expressing for her baby before they even get a chance to try breastfeeding directly. Many babies are also offered donor milk to make up for any shortfalls the mother has expressing as some babies are too small or unwell to tolerate formula.

There is also so much more to be aware of when talking to families of babies in NNU. Consultant Neonatologist Laura de Rooy and Registrar Neonatologist Amy Douthwaite had intentions for the service to not be limited to giving parents assistance with feeding and expressing but to support a parent through all aspects of neonatal life; the issues babies face with breathing assistance, illnesses only affecting premature babies, occasions when term babies may be admitted to NNU and much much more. This is also why it was decided to additionally pilot a champions course; three training sessions taking extracts from the helpers course such as active listening, empathy vs sympathy and a section on expressing and storing breastmilk. This course would allow mothers with limited breastfeeding experience and fathers to join and give support to the unit alongside the helpers. Trainer Joy Hastings tutored both courses and drew on her own personal midwifery experience; working with parents of sick and premature babies on the postnatal ward and in the community.



Pictured L-R with their babies, some of the team, Annabelle, Rita and Billy. Far right, Janine & Nanette

New Neonatal service continued from page 12...

After our course completed I applied for the role of Volunteer Coordinator and am now proudly heading up our wonderful team of volunteers. We comprise of 11 women who completed the helpers course and 6 champions including one father. All of us have had infants go through neonatal care at St George's and have a wealth of experience between us. Our babies range in gestation from 40 weeks to just 23 weeks and as a collective we've faced many of the issues, illnesses, problems and hurdles that parents, and of course the babies, have to surmount. It is this knowledge, along with the training provided by the BfN, that will enable us to provide much needed support to families during their stay in NNU and beyond.

We have now reached the point of launch; unfortunately Covid is preventing us from working directly on the wards, however we have set up a weekly zoom group for parents to gather informally for a chat with us, giving them the chance to meet other parents on the unit. We also have regular opportunities for parents to come and find us in the hospital café for a 1-1. Going forward we hope to be able to work directly in the unit, giving assistance to families beside their baby's cot, in the expressing rooms or family spaces. It is hoped that we will also be able to visit parents in antenatal if they know their baby is likely to be admitted or in post-natal if a mother needs some emotional support or help with hand expressing for her baby in NNU. We also have ambitions to create a graduate group for families after they have been discharged so that we really can assist families beyond their time in hospital.

## Congratulations to the new Sutton Community & St Helier Hospital Helpers group

By **Fay Brooks**  
Volunteer Co-ordinator

**Big congratulations to the very first cohort of BfN trained helpers for Sutton community and St Helier Hospital.**

This group finished their Helper training via Zoom in January this year! They set up and delivered online Zoom sessions; this was a challenge with which they coped brilliantly. Then finally in May they were able to start volunteering in the hospital!

They are now supporting at an already established breastfeeding group and have set up another in one of the local children's centres and are enjoying supporting parents on the postnatal ward.



Trainees pictured (from top left): Charlotte Fisher, Lauren Cooper, Steph Green, Louise Lomax, Sarah Bright, Jo Spiers, Charlene Judge, Sally Hodgeson, Fay Brookes

# New Milk Bank Hub in Derbyshire

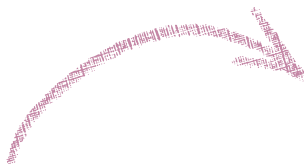
By Sophie Waters  
Supervisor - Derbyshire

BfN Derbyshire representatives were delighted to be invited along to the opening of a new breastmilk hub in Langley Mill. Several of our groups in Derbyshire are within 5 miles or so of this exciting new hub. The project, which is a collaboration between East Midlands Free Wheelers and Hearts Milk Bank, has been funded almost entirely by a lottery grant.

The East Midlands Free Wheelers team, managed by Neil Tilley and Samantha Dakin (pictured below with BfN volunteers, and Gillian Weaver and Dr Natalie Shenker), have been delivering blood and plasma on a voluntary basis to NHS Hospitals across the country for several years. The group have also been collecting human milk from donors across the country and delivering it to hospitals for some time, too. The team of volunteers also deliver pasteurised breastmilk from approved donors to mums and families who meet the criteria to receive donations.

The addition of this hub in Langley Mill means there is a safe and clean storage facility for donations to be held on their way to or from hospitals. Hopefully, there is a possibility of further investment to allow pasteurisation on-site in time. Due to the vulnerability of the babies receiving the donated milk, the highest standards of cleanliness must be maintained at all times, so the installation of secure fridges and steel work-surfaces was essential.

While BfN are not directly involved in this project, we were really excited to talk to the East Midlands Free Wheelers volunteers about how we might be able to signpost and support mothers and parents who may want to either donate breastmilk, or be considered as recipients of donor milk. Dr Natalie Shenker and Gillian Weaver, who founded Hearts Milk Bank, were also there... it was a real joy to talk about protecting breastfeeding at a societal level with so many committed individuals. We look forward to supporting this new project in any way we can. It was a great opportunity to network and make connections with other groups who are offering a priceless service to families giving (or thinking of giving) breastmilk.



[Click here to watch the Notts TV segment on this work](#)

Neil Tilley and Samantha Dakin with BfN volunteers, and Gillian Weaver and Dr Natalie Shenker  
Photo by Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser - used with permission.



# We need you!

## Join our BfN Advisory Panel

By Emma Thomas  
Information and Policy Officer

**At BfN, as well as providing support to mums and families through our peer support projects and the National Breastfeeding Helpline, we also provide information on all things breastfeeding-related through our website, leaflets and training courses.**



We respond to consultations by the government and organisations like NICE on guidelines, policies and strategies that impact on mothers and breastfeeding. To help with this work, we are recruiting an advisory panel; people who have experience or expertise in a wide range of fields, who could help us make sure our information and consultation responses are as good as they can be.

We hope this panel will help us keep our information independent, accurate, up-to-date and evidence-based. We also want to be inclusive, making sure our information and responses consider all mothers and breastfeeding parents, and that whenever possible, they have been created with input from someone with real-life, relevant experience, so we would like our panel membership to be as diverse as possible.

We know that among our volunteers, staff and members that there are many people from diverse backgrounds with knowledge, expertise or life experience that could help us achieve these goals, and we would love to tap into this if possible. Are you, for example, a doctor, nurse, midwife, lactation consultant, nutritionist or researcher? Or do you have a lived experience that you would be willing to share, such as neurodiversity, breastfeeding through illness, breastfeeding multiples, inducing lactation or raising children in a non-conventional family unit?

If you think you have something to offer, and would like to be involved in creating or updating our information or responses, please email our information and policy officer, Emma Thomas ([emma.thomas@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:emma.thomas@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)) with some information about yourself.

We appreciate that donating time and expertise without remuneration might not be feasible for all. If you would be interested in taking part, but this would be a barrier for you, please do get in touch so we can discuss how we can facilitate your participation.





## An amazing volunteer achievement

By **Rebecca Reeves**  
Supporter and Supervisor

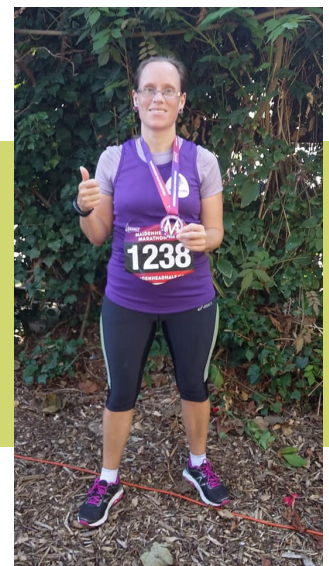
### Long Service 10 year award for a WAM volunteer, Joanne Rainer

Joanne joined the BfN in March 2011 and has been a role model and key contributor ever since. She is a very valued and experienced member of the BfN WAM (Windsor and Maidenhead)) project who many look up to.

There have been a lot of changes during her time as a volunteer but Jo has adapted and continued to volunteer her time on a regular basis with ease supporting mothers and families in a calming, supportive manner.

I really hope Jo realises how appreciated she is by us all in WAM and how valued her skills and knowledge are.

Thank you Jo!



Joanne Rainer has been a volunteer for WAM for 10 years.

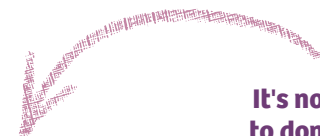
Our annual autumnal fundraising campaign took place in November this year, and, thanks to Covid 19, for the second year running we were unable to encourage people to get together in person to share a tea break and help us raise funds.

This didn't stop us though and this year we really focused on fundraising for our Drugs in Breastmilk Info service via our social media channels. The DIBM service currently receives no external funding - we rely on fundraising to be able to continue offering this support, which in some cases can be lifesaving.

Throughout the week, we shared stories from some of the thousands of people who have used the service, from mums to healthcare professionals.

The week culminated with an online chat involving three of our DIBM team, Amanda Da Costa, Sally Carter and Jessi Jones about the service and the important role they play supporting families. [If you didn't catch this at the time, you can catch up on the video via our Facebook page here.](#)

Our supporters dug deep and we raised hundreds of pounds via JustGiving and our text donate number. Thank you so much to everyone who got involved and donated!



It's not too late to donate if you want to!

[www.justgiving.com/campaign/BfNTeaBreak21](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/BfNTeaBreak21)

# Congratulations

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

## Helpers

Amy Bertaut  
Emma Louise Hughes  
Beverley Kirby  
Raakhi Kaur  
Samantha Ward  
Jennie Powis  
Gaëlle Konak  
Tamsen Oatey  
Sunayana Mittu  
And their tutor:  
Diana West

Annabelle Durrant  
Emma Lewis  
Janine Hewitt  
Fleur Dubbelboer  
Louise Hunter  
Rebecca Wright  
Amy Callaby  
Aurora Zoff  
Chinelo Oganya  
Nanette Brew-Butler  
Rita Ghatala  
And their tutor:  
Joy Hastings

Deborah Provan  
And her tutors:  
Melanie Woodward/  
Nikki Blanch

Natalie Ann Harlow  
Hannah Mitson  
Gemma Shawkat  
Bethany Hickenbottom  
And their tutor:  
Donna Ebanks

Alex Cham  
Katy Daniels  
Carla Davies  
Rachael Holt  
Sioned Johnson  
Emma K Mills-Wallace  
Katie Ward  
Isabelle van Heeswijk  
And their tutors:  
Shruti Arora/Lydia Murtagh

Abby Brown  
And her tutor: Esther Pierce

Jessica Cottee  
Leslyanne De-Ste-Croix  
Charlotte Horton  
Lex Ives  
Rowena Mellish  
Lauren Ward  
Hannah Stevens  
Tara Baker  
Samantha Brown  
And their tutors:  
Eleanor Johnson/  
Crystal Golding-Smith

Melanie Appleby  
Claire Cohen  
Charlotte Dubois-Berto  
Marisa Gillan

Emma Hillel  
Stella Kayaga Kassner  
Jo Wallis  
And their tutors:  
Sarah Sehgal / Jane Neesam

Nicole Button  
Hannah Stuart  
And their tutor:  
Lydia Murtagh

Lisa Chilton  
Detta Edwards  
Alexandra Hackett  
Melanie Grice  
Erin Kirk  
Laura Amy Williston-Davis  
Jordan Chance-McNally  
Stephanie Buckman  
And their tutors:  
Donna Ebanks /  
Lydia Murtagh

Alyson Dufton  
Lisa McKechnie  
Jacqueline Fairlie  
Valerie Gray  
Amanda Andrew  
Jordan Milligan  
Aimee Kate Etherington  
And their tutor:  
Carolanne Lamont

Laila Khawaja  
And her tutor:  
Nicola Blanch

**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.**

# Congratulations

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

## Supporters

Leanne O'Donnell  
Katrona Templeton  
Alyson Baillie  
Elise Miller  
Holly Gibb  
Lynsey McLuckie  
Pamela Jamieson  
Kirstine Dymott  
Ainara Pérez  
Gemma Louise Hamilton  
Amber Munnoch

And their tutors:  
Carolanne Lamont /  
Esther Pierce

## Helpline Supporters

Zoe Gardner  
Kasia Kropidlowska  
Clara Rutter  
Charlie Tighe  
Carla Montaldo  
Marthe Danzin

And their tutors:  
Esther Pierce /  
Naomi Waters / Joy Jones

Stacey Leigh Dean-  
Bridgland

And her tutor: Joy Jones

Miriam Bannan  
Esmeralda Andrade  
Fernandez  
Marion Edith Presle  
Fay Brookes

And their tutor:  
Naomi Waters

Sam Griffin

And her tutor:  
Kirstin Worsley

**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.**