

**The Winter edition  
of BfN News**

# BfN News

**Mums Supporting Mums**

'Southampton Welcomes  
Breastfeeding' Scheme  
Launched

Lunchtime Allergy  
Webinars in Lambeth

Do you want to be a  
Friend of BfN?

**DECEMBER 2022  
WINTER  
ISSUE 86**





# HELLO!

DECEMBER 2022  
WINTER  
ISSUE 86

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of BfN News.

As the nights draw in, this time of year often means more indoor gatherings, hot drinks and cosy meet-ups. Here at BfN, service continues as normal!

This edition of BfN News includes all your favourites, including recognition, updates, news and an update from our new CEO Catherine Hine.

We also have a great article from Southampton on their new 'Welcome Breastfeeding' scheme, feedback from the Derbyshire Conference Hub and an insight into the Lambeth walking group.

If you're not already a friend of BfN, take a look at page 5 to read how you can support the charity each year while receiving some great benefits, information and exclusive offers.

This is my last edition as editor. It has been my pleasure to share BfN News with you over the last year. For now, I leave you in the capable hands of my colleague Claire Dorby!

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 [claire.dorby@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:claire.dorby@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) with your additions for the next newsletter.

Josie Fowler



# CEO Update

Dear volunteers, staff and Friends of BfN,

Firstly, I'd like to wish everyone in the BfN family a very Happy Birthday! It's been so busy over recent months that in the true spirit of getting older, a significant milestone crept up on us all un-noticed! As you'd expect, thinking caps have now been donned and I believe colleagues will be inviting you to celebrate on social media over the coming months. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has played a key role in the Breastfeeding Network over this first twenty-five years. The support provided to women, to families and to babies is transformative. It is only possible because of the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, staff, friends and supporters. Please do take this opportunity to raise a glass of your beverage of choice with me!



It was an enormous privilege to join so many of you at the BfN AGM and Conference in my first week. We heard about the vital services you helped over 65,000 women, their families and babies to access through peer support and the helpline alone this year. The National Breastfeeding Helpline evaluation team from The University of Central Lancashire gave an impressive endorsement of the support you make possible. As they summed up, the team are 'there at those points that make the critical difference to families... It's amazing the impact that you have and the work you do.' According to their findings, 99% of callers would recommend the service and 35% would not have continued breastfeeding without this support. Research tells us about the health benefits and the potential for breastfeeding to support healthy brain development with life-long impact. We can rightly celebrate and be very proud of this work.

At a time when so many women, parents and children are feeling the impact of the cost of living crisis; as councils and health services feel the squeeze on their budgets, we face a collective challenge to maintain and sustain services for those who need our support most.

**Cont.**

# CEO Update cont.

It is very reassuring to see that despite all the pressures on local budgets, local authorities such as Stoke, and the Scottish government continue to commit funding to and champion the value of our outstanding work. This is – again - a reflection both of the quality of the services so many of you shaped and continue to deliver, and their importance to all mothers, families and children.

Over the coming months, the Directors and I will be leading work on the new strategy which helps BfN to build on this fantastic work, and particularly to reach those women, families and children, least likely to access the information and support they need. I am keen to hear from volunteers, staff and supporters throughout our network and to find out about ways in which we can build on the great work of this first 25 years. You can contact me at [ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

Thank you and congratulations!

All the best,

Catherine



**“ This is a reflection of the quality of the services so many of you shaped and continue to deliver, and their importance to all mothers, families and children. ”**

[Read more about the extended funding for Stoke on Trent on page 17](#)



# Want to be a friend of BfN?

 Oh I get by, with a little help from my friends... **By Josie Fowler**

Did you just sing that as well?

The sentiment in this song is very true throughout all of life; a support network of family, friends and associates helps us to work through many of life's challenges.

Here at BfN, we would love to have many friends as part of our support network. As we know, breastfeeding support is vital to so many mums in succeeding with breastfeeding.

We have recently revamped our Friends of BfN scheme to respond to your feedback while creating more opportunities for us to support parents on their breastfeeding journeys.

Take a look at our new packages below and see how you can become a Friend of BfN!

**"They both gave me an enormous amount of support with the issue I was experiencing, as well as encouragement. It meant a lot to have this from women who have breastfed themselves and who are trained and knowledgeable"**



## Silver £20 yearly

A Friends welcome pack, including a copy of some of our printed information and a lovely BfN badge.

Access to an exclusive Facebook group for Friends, updated with interesting news articles, information and BfN updates

Discounted ticket price for annual conference

Yearly postcard after renewal to thank you for being a friend

## Gold £35 yearly

Everything a Silver friend receives plus:

Opportunity to feature in our newsletter or contribute to articles.

Prize draw for all Gold friends that attend the conference – winner receives a BfN goodie bag

Exclusive Festive card designed just for Friends (from 2023)

A small gift yearly on renewal





## **Pearl** £20 individual / £150 organisational yearly

A welcome letter included with a hard copy of all the DiBM infosheets.

Discounted tickets to attend the BfN conference

A copy of the DiBM Newsletter bi-annually

Exclusive access to a 'Friends of DiBM only' Facebook group with updates on news, information, factsheet updates and more

If you become an organisational Pearl friend, you will also receive a new Moodle training course on safety of drugs in breastmilk along with 5 copies of the DiBM infosheets and an online shop discount of 10% when spending over £100.

## **Platinum** £55 yearly

The ultimate friend - supporting both the Breastfeeding Network and Drugs in Breastmilk information service

All of the benefits of being a Gold and Pearl friend combined!



"Everyone I received support from was open minded and knowledgeable. I can say 100% that the speed of response when I first contacted the service during a feeding crisis meant that I was able to carry on breastfeeding"

**Watch our launch video here!**

**To find out more, take a look on the Friends webpage here**

### **£20...**

Could fund a volunteer to offer support to new mums on the maternity or neonatal ward



### **£50...**

Could fund a weekly support group, providing somewhere new mums can get support from trained volunteers, while meeting other mums to help them feel part of a supportive network



# Board Updates

By Sarah Turner, Chair

We were very sad to say goodbye to three long-serving directors in the past few months: Ann Kerr, Grace Edghill and Francesca Cherubini Stoughton. All three were extremely valued members of the board, bringing particular skills that served us well over the years.

Ann was Chair for a number of years, helping to shape the board's membership and direction – and along with it, that of BfN as a whole. Grace brought significant organisational knowledge given her years of volunteering with the charity, as well as working as a tutor and supervisor. Drawing upon her professional experience in financial services, Francesca was an excellent Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk committee, as well as being Vice Chair, supporting Ann.

I, and the rest of the board, are extremely grateful for all the time, care and insight that Ann, Grace and Francesca gave to the charity, and wish them all the best as they move on!

We recently welcomed 3 new board members following the October AGM, here's a little more about them.

## Nicola Lando

I am passionate about breastfeeding and its role in parent and infant wellbeing, and spent five years breastfeeding my two children. Breastfeeding was desperately hard for months of my first child's life. During those early months I was supported by the Breastfeeding Network (BfN) via the National Breastfeeding Helpline, for which I cannot thank you enough.

Professionally, I started my work-life in a strategy consulting firm, and then a growth-capital fund. In both roles I worked across a broad spectrum of topics: strategy, risk management, customer research, big data analysis, and pricing. Ten years ago I founded my own e-commerce business. As CEO, I lead and manage the business. My day job is to review financial performance and legal contracts, lead marketing and PR, as well as taking the role of financial and data analyst. I also serve on the BBC Editorial Review Board for food publishing.

I look forward to bringing these unique experiences to the trustee role at the BfN – am excited to support the organisation as it continues to deliver important services.



## Laura Thorne

I first encountered BfN in 2018, while experiencing breastfeeding difficulties with my first child. I know from first-hand experience just how important it is to receive breastfeeding support and information. I was lucky to receive this from BfN and local breastfeeding support groups during both of my breastfeeding journeys. I feel passionately that this should be available to all mothers and families across the UK.

I volunteer as a peer supporter with a local independent support group, helping people to meet their breastfeeding goals. I also have a decade of experience in public affairs and strategic communications, specialising in health policy.



## Fiona Stewart

I joined the infant feeding world as an NHS peer support volunteer on the post-natal ward of my local hospital after leaving my career in finance to stay at home with my children. I returned to paid employment in the third sector just over two years later to set up a brand-new breastfeeding peer support project where I live. There are no BfN projects local to me, so I trained online with the BfN as a Helpline Supporter. I am active on the National Breastfeeding Helpline taking calls and also answering messages as a member of the social media team.

I work for my local NHS trust as a Breastfeeding Support Worker.

My passion to support families to breastfeed was born from my own feeding experiences - one was straightforward, one was not. The drive to keep pushing for change and to keep reaching as many people as possible grows with each family I support. I firmly believe that every family and every baby deserve to live in a society that not only supports but protects, promotes and fully recognises the value of breastfeeding.



To find out more about all our board members, take a read of [Who's Who](#) on our website



# Portsmouth Service Update

By Louise Bolton

The last few months have been a busy time for Portsmouth groups, with some changes and developments in our services locally. Here's some of our latest updates:

- Lou Bolton, new Service Manager, has been in post since September: thanks to everyone for making me feel so welcome and helping me get to grips with the role.
- Jess Day has been in post as Peer Supporter since September and will be focusing on home visiting families from some underserved communities in the city.
- We have established a text message service to breastfeeding families within 48 hours of discharge from hospital after the birth of baby to let them know about BfN services.
- Social media reach continues to increase.
- We had a stand at a local GP study day at the end of November to promote the work of Portsmouth BfN.
- A Helper training course started in September so we will have a new cohort of trained helpers in a few weeks.
- Megan facilitated a stand at a local community event run by the council in the Autumn (pictured on right).
- On Friday 4th November for the Boobie Bake Break, we held a coffee morning as an opportunity for volunteers and staff to get together and catch up.
- We received a really lovely thank you letter with fab feedback and a £2000 donation from our friends at Beach Dubbin', an event we attended on Southsea Common in the summer: "Hi gang, Apologies for the delay but we would like your bank details to donate £2000 to you guys! Firstly because you guys are amazing, and secondly, we wanted to make up for the last 4 events. Let us know how we can pay this in! We all nominated you as our secondary charity this year and we wanted to make sure you had a decent amount. We also have several publications coming out where you guys will have a mention too - hopefully will spread the name and the cause a bit more. Honestly though, we owe you a massive thanks for all you do for us every year and we can't thank you enough for playing such a big part in making our event so family friendly - it is beyond breastfeeding support".





# National Breastfeeding Helpline Update

By Hester Schofield

I love this service and find the information and support given surpasses that of other services. I used to spend considerable amounts of time in forums and search engines finding answers but they varied so much and we're never straightforward. Here I get straightforward, honest responses which I know I can trust.

We have had another busy few months on the helpline with both BfN and our helpline partners ABM, welcoming in new volunteers to take calls and messages. We are also half way through training a new cohort of volunteer pharmacist for the Drugs in Breast Milk Service increasing the capacity of that team. We really value all of the volunteers who put time aside to support families getting in touch with the helpline for support.

Following the evaluation of the Helpline this year, we have been working behind the scenes on a plan of how to work towards the suggested recommendations. The recommendations were grouped in the following areas:

- Technical changes to service delivery
- Further promotion of the NBH services
- Widening opportunities to access the helpline
- Training, supervision and Support
- Integration and promotion of the service at the strategic/policy level.

We look forward to sharing more about this soon!

I am so grateful for the support offered by the helpline. I find family and friends are not helpful at all as they just give their own opinions and what they would do in situations whereas I was looking for information instead. I love speaking to someone who is friendly and respectful and empathises with me.

# Lambeth Walking Group

By Carla Agulhas

The Lambeth project started a monthly walking group in October 2021 at Brockwell park alongside two of our Leap (Lambeth Early Action Partnership) service partners.

These are, The Parent Champions (trained volunteers and members of the community who support families to engage with local services) and The Healthy Living Platform (run by volunteers and a paid team who connect communities through food across Lambeth).

During the pandemic, we were hearing from families how isolated they felt and how they wanted to meet other families, so the idea of the walking group came from there. Families could socialise, find out about their local community, exercise and enjoy a healthy home cooked meal.

This initiative is for everyone - partners, grandparents, toddlers, older children are all welcome. The walk is led by volunteers and every month we are joined by a guest from another service that will come and share with the families what they do and how they can be reached. At the last walk we had a worker from Home-Start who brought some of their families along. After the walk, everyone gets together at the Community Greenhouses. This is a little gem at the heart of Brockwell park where the Food Ambassador from the Healthy Living Platform will serve an exquisite menu of vegetarian delights. Everyone gets together around a big table, sharing food and talking like a great big family! This initiative is amazing.

Some of our families joined the group while they were pregnant and keep coming every month. Everyone has a great time and the feedback from volunteers and families is fantastic! Families feel it is a great way to normalise breastfeeding and a place where families who may not be sure about joining a feeding support group will be encouraged and welcomed. It's an amazing group where we share, food, knowledge, friendship and love. Some might say these are all linked... we think they are!



# Boobie Bake Break!

By Josie Fowler



On Friday 4th November, many staff, volunteers and supporters of BfN gathered together in groups to celebrate our Drugs in Breastmilk Information service, as part of a Boobie Bake break. Some groups hosted coffee mornings, some created a bake-off style competition at work and others met with a friend or two to share a drink and something sweet to eat.

Thank you so much to everyone who organised a local event and donated so far. We're so grateful for your support. There's still time to make a donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/boobie-bake-break>. We're grateful for any donation you, your friends and contacts feel able to make. The Drugs in Breastmilk service rely on donations to maintain and future proof the service, giving evidence-based medical information to mums, parents, carers and health professionals about the safety of taking medication and undergoing treatments while breastfeeding.



# Strong Appetite for Lambeth Lunchtime Allergy Webinars

By Lisa Whipp

Some of you may have joined us in the past few months at one / both of the lunchtime allergy webinars Lambeth Peer Support has co-hosted with Dr Tom Marris and his colleagues from London hospital Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT).

Dr. Tom is a Consultant in Paediatric Allergy at the Evelina Children's hospital, a Director of the Allergy Academy, King's College London and Secretary to the Paediatric Allergy Committee, British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.



Concerned by the amount of misinformation about allergies linked to infant feeding and the resulting prevalence of formula being wrongly prescribed, Dr. Tom contacted Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) earlier this year with the idea of co-hosting a series of webinars focused on infant feeding and allergies, aimed at Health Practitioners, Early Years professionals and all those supporting families with infant feeding to educate and ultimately reduce the costs incurred when families are - often unnecessarily - prescribed specialist formula.

14% UK parents suspect their child has CMA (Cow's Milk Allergy), yet the prevalence of CMA in the UK is just 2.4%. In the London boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth, with a combined annual number of 7,000 births, just 150 - or 2.14% - of these babies are diagnosed with a milk allergy. It's also worth remembering that very few exclusively breastfed babies present with CMA, due to the extremely low rate of transfer through breastmilk.

Each free CPD-accredited session has been designed to run over a lunch hour to reach as many health and early years professionals as possible.

**Cont.**

Lambeth Peer Support present on what is seen at Lambeth Peer Support drop-ins, providing case studies or relating examples of parents' concerns and questions that typically arise. We also highlight what's normal in terms baby sick/poo/skin, as well as discuss red flags and when we'd be signposting families to health professionals for further assessment / investigations and referral.

For the first webinar in June, Lambeth service lead, Lisa Whipp and Dr. Tom were joined by GSTT Senior Specialist Paediatric Dietitian, Emma Illidge who is part of the Prescribing Support Team to talk about spitting up and vomiting. In September, GSTT Paediatric Allergy Prescribing Support Dietitian Jessie Chien joined Dr. Tom and Lisa for the second webinar, which focused on bottom troubles, covering diarrhoea and constipation.

The webinars have been well-attended, attracting health visitors, midwives, GPs, nurses, social workers, infant feeding leads, lactation consultants, breastfeeding peer supporters, public health officers and researchers. An attendee at September's webinar said 'I have already encouraged colleagues to sign up for the next session - the last 2 have been so well researched, presented and very engaging' and further feedback indicated:

- 100% of respondents felt that the presenters were engaging
- 100% felt that the presenters were knowledgeable
- 100% learnt something new as a result of attending the webinar
- 95% felt that the objectives were met

If you missed the previous allergies webinars, [here's the June webinar recording](#)

## New Haringey Helpers

By Alison Lohmann



These future Haringey Helpers were delighted to finish their Helpers Course in October. Celebrating with cake in advance of the Boobie Bake Break (which took place on 4th November), they took the opportunity to chat through where they might be able to volunteer in the future.

**(L-R) Timea Bakaja-Dezsi (Tutor), Annabel Greene, Seran Craig-Best, Chrissy Osibona, Arielle Garton, Janey MacRae and Joy Hastings (Tutor)**



# Southampton Welcomes Breastfeeding scheme

The Southampton Welcomes Breastfeeding Scheme has been launched and is growing beautifully week on week. We have had a great reception in the city and are so grateful that so far, 36 amazing venues have signed up to the scheme and we look forward to welcoming many more. The ball is well and truly rolling, with all the City Council Libraries signed up and a vision to get all the cities pre-schools and nurseries on board. We have pubs, restaurants, shops, baby groups, classes, swim schools, farms, art galleries, GP's, all committed to welcoming breastfeeding families. It's easy to email, phone or make contact on social media to make them aware of the scheme, and some even contact us after they've seen other businesses sign up! Here's the link to find breastfeeding welcome venues:  
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/find-a-breastfeeding-friendly-venue-near-you/>



## Raise Funds for BfN for FREE with Easy Fundraising & Give as you Live!

An advertisement for 'easyfundraising' and 'Give as you Live'. The background is purple with white snowflakes and a white mountain range. The text reads: 'Christmas shopping means more than just gifts you can help us raise FREE donations'. At the top, it says 'easyfundraising feel good shopping | £35M Raised'. At the bottom, there is a row of logos for partner brands: eBay, M&amp;S, Groupon, Sainsbury's, Booking.com, moonpig, Argos, ASOS, Carphone Warehouse, GAME, Currys, and PCWorld. Below the logos, it says 'You Shop. 6,100 sites will Donate to us. For Free.'

Shopping online this Christmas? Did you know that by signing up to Easy Fundraising or Give as you Live you can help raise funds for BfN at no extra cost to you?

Just sign up for an account and shop at over 6000 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice. It won't cost you any extra. Find out more including how to sign up to Easy Fundraising [here](#) or Give as you Live [here](#).

Feel free to share the sign-up links with friends and family and help us raise funds to support the amazing work we do!





# Shropshire Project update

By Emily Evans

We have had a great time at BfN Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin recently. With the launch of our first two face to face support groups, one in Telford and the other in Shrewsbury. We have already seen a number of mums offering both breastfeeding and social support. We also began 2 Helper Courses in September training 24 passionate local mums. This great addition to the team will enable us to expand face to face support to more places in the county, focusing on areas where support is currently very limited and further away from our main hospital sites.

Get support from our trained breastfeeding peer supporters, meet other parents or just come for a chat.

**TELFORD**  
Dawley Town Hall, TF4 3JR  
Tuesday  
10am-12pm

**SHREWSBURY**  
Sunflower House Children's Centre, SY1 4ES  
Thursday  
10am-12pm



Find us on Social Media  
@BreastfeedingNetworkShropshire



# Extended funding for Stoke on Trent

By Nikki Gallagher



We are really excited at Stoke-on-Trent that our funding has been extended for a further 3 years with additional funds to grow our Antenatal pilot project and grow our local community groups across the towns. We will be launching our second breastfeeding group in Tunstall shortly.

We currently have 18 trained volunteers and are launching our third helper training course in January 2023, so there will be more volunteers and groups next year!

# Congratulations

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



## Helpers

Rachel Chilver  
Charlotte Vernon  
April Macnamara  
And their tutors:  
Joy Jones / Sally Carter

Mairi McLachlan  
And her tutor:  
Aurore Lasne

Katarzyna Joanna Sadowy  
And her tutors:  
Eleanor Johnson /  
Alys Vaughn Williams

Imane Beztati  
Olga Luterek  
Rachel Tyler  
Tania M Nzau  
Lucy Cox  
Michèle Towns  
Lorena Godoy  
And their tutors:  
Jane Taylor /  
Timea Bakaja-Dezsi

Paula Ivanovici  
And her tutors:  
Eleanor Johnson /  
Timea Bakaja-Dezsi

Clare-Marie White  
And her tutor:  
Lydia Murtagh

Emma Suess  
And her tutor:  
Shruti Arora

Faye Sierota  
And her tutor:  
Kirstin Worsley

Hannah Bianga  
Fay Kellow  
Sarah Steel  
And their tutor:  
Crystal Golding-Smith

Elizabeth Wallace  
Carol Davies  
Elizabeth Rodford  
Helen Ducommun  
Kathryn Parkinson  
Lauren Hunter  
Lyndsey Parker  
Leanne Deakin  
Emily Evans  
Francesca Martin  
Karen Gordon  
Grace Lloyd  
And their tutors:  
Naomi Waters

Claire Dorby  
Louise Fletcher  
Cher Halliday  
Lynne Norris  
Felicity Young  
Georgia Binkhorst  
And their tutors:  
Sarah Edwards /  
Fiona McLean

Katie Blair Kane  
Jane Kane  
And their tutors:  
Carolanne Lamont /  
Marie-Claire Ronaldson

## Helpline Supporters

Louise Hunter  
Claire Montgomery  
Marge Adams  
Gayle Lucas  
Colette Pye  
Louise Thompson  
And their tutor:  
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

**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.