

BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums

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APRIL 2020
SPRING
ISSUE 76



HELLO!

APRIL 2020
SPRING
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Editor's Note



Welcome to the Spring 2020 edition of BfN News.

We hope that this edition finds you and your family safe and healthy at home.

In addition to the usual updates and good news stories from across the network this quarter, you'll hear from our CEO Shereen Fisher about the collective efforts across the Breastfeeding Network to respond to the Coronavirus crisis.

On our cover, we reflect on the importance of our work in the community - as shown in this recent photograph captured at a BfN support group in Lambeth. While our services are currently delivered remotely, the impact that we have on the lives of so many remains the same.

We thank Ashley Graham for sharing the beautiful image of her growing family (top left) with us on Instagram, along with the inspirational graduation picture sent to us by a BfN community member as she took a moment out to feed her little one.

Please do let us know what you think of this edition of BfN News and get in touch with leanne.rayner@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk if you have suggestions for future newsletters. We'd love to hear from you.

The innocent face of the baby (middle left, also captured in Lambeth recently), serves as a reminder of just how precious our families are. So, please do continue to connect with BfN, but more than anything we hope that your family stays well and stay healthy.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



A message from BfN's CEO



I was heartened to receive a tweet this week which read 'the rest of the world has finally caught up with the way @NBHelpline and @BfN_Uk volunteers have been working for years! #Remoteworking'

It was in response to an image shared of our volunteers' home work stations – places they shared where they take calls from mothers calling the National Breastfeeding Helpline.

While I know not all of our volunteering and commissioned work is provided remotely, never more than now have I been thankful for BfN's strong helpline and telephony skills, our vibrant online community of peer supporters, our established working from home culture and broad volunteer base that branches out across the whole of the UK – just the strength we have needed to call on during this pandemic.

It's now more important than ever that we stay connected to each other, not only because sharing knowledge will help us plan and learn but because while stabilising immediate support for women and families we can also stay in touch about how we navigate the future.

All our lives have been turned upside down by the Coronavirus crisis – some of us may be finding ourselves closer to loved ones in our isolation, others may feel lost without the

routine of social interaction. Without a doubt mothers looking for breastfeeding support will find their usual services drastically cut back or gone, they will find their feelings of worry and of being overwhelmed heightened as health care professionals struggle to meet demand.

This is why at the Breastfeeding Network our immediate priority has been to stabilise our offer of remote support across our helplines and in communities by offering digital alternatives.

In tandem we have been working with partners including - Scottish Government, Public Health England, NHS and with other third sector partners on sharing resources that will be a vital support line for women and families for many months to come.

Responding to the crisis

I want to highlight a few things we have done to respond to the crisis – for mothers and families, for peer supporters – volunteers and paid staff, for our tutors and supervisors and for healthcare professionals in the front line or responding to the virus.

For mothers and families – we have strengthened the National Breastfeeding Helpline offer and secured additional resourcing in England. Against the usual opening hours, we have appealed to volunteers to help us respond to all calls, added in a voicemail option so any missed calls can be returned and we are doubling our remote supervision for volunteers.

There is dedicated social media support that extends to enquiries on BfN's Drugs in Breastmilk Information Service. At time of writing we are answering close to 100% of all calls to the helpline. I am so inspired and proud of what our volunteers on NBH have been able to achieve working with our sister organisation - Association of Breastfeeding Mothers, the strength of this long held partnership has been a rock of support. With a lack of consistent reliable information being an often quoted issue from Mothers we knew that we had to develop our online resources for women and families in

... CEO's message

response to the crisis. A small team of writers mobilised quickly to develop FAQ's that can be found [here](#). Content evolves in response to enquiries from the helpline and on social media and is quickly updated online.

In addition, third sector organisations working in infant feeding have come together to highlight the support that women and families can access during this time. The collaboration and generous offer of the third sector has been impressive, our combined effort can be found [here](#).

When the Government moved from 'manage' to 'contain', it was with a heavy heart that we suspended our face to face support services including community drop-ins, training, events and home visits. Only exceptionally is face to face work continuing under the strictest of arrangements, only at the request of the local authority area or health board. It's absolutely the right thing to do as the safety of our staff and volunteers comes first. Some of our volunteers are pregnant and with few exceptions have dependents on whom good health will be relied upon so we take this very seriously. Areas supported by a small central team are stabilising services locally through offering digital support and the charity has purchased Zoom licences to enable this to happen.

Project areas are reporting that they are trialling helper training, supervision get-togethers, local team meetings and even 1-1 support with Mothers. We are learning fast and will look to test our digital capacity even further as we plan to hold our May BfN Directors' Meeting by Zoom - strengthening our digital service office is going to be an item of strategic importance.

We have a big network of volunteers and staff and communicating well, under pressure and accurately has called for a lot of focus. We are a small central team with contracted support on law and finance. We have managed to achieve a series of well-timed and high quality briefings that have included guidance on HR, IT, safeguarding, upskilling tools and tips on oping in isolation and remote working. We are working hard to fast-track our online training offer and support our tutors and supervisors to feel able to offer tutoring over online means.

How we are supporting our healthcare professionals

Within a week of the social distancing measures coming in, BfN were invited to be part of the conversation with Government about what the voluntary sector can do to support the NHS. This conversation was held in the very real context that up to 30% of the NHS workforce will be undermined by the Coronavirus. Today with other organisations we submitted our collective response with the honest hope that third sector might get recognised as a vital part of society.

We are asking Governments in Scotland and England to help us raise even more awareness of the NBH, our online resources and of BfN's Drugs in Breastmilk Information Service. These services directly support midwives and health visitors on the frontline of the healthcare response and many of these services do not rely on NHS staff. In project areas peer supporters are offering support remotely in their communities – maintaining a vital presence that health care professionals can call upon.

The longer term impact of the Coronavirus is still to be calculated but while it takes its toll on our relationships and erodes our traditional ways of communicating, social distancing is also offering us a choice, a choice to be curtailed by the measures or to be connected differently. There are concerns in the dash for digital – real concerns about inequalities and inclusion as well as our human rights like privacy. For now, our priority is to stabilise support and ensure that our combined efforts support mothers as well as possible while also looking after ourselves.

Heartfelt thanks to you all for your courage and commitment to supporting women and families and breastfeeding. You are a true inspiration!

Best Wishes

Shereen

BfN Annual Evaluation

What do people really think of our services?

Thank you to everyone for your efforts to support the BfN Annual Evaluation Survey so far.

The survey runs each year for the month of March, however we recognise that this has been no ordinary March, so we have made the decision to extend the deadline for survey responses to the end of April.

The survey is crucial to BfN, helping us to improve and build upon the support we offer. As of the end of March, we have 138 responses and we would love more.

Please do continue to encourage mums, families and HCPs to complete the survey via social media channels, over the phone and via email.

To say thanks for completing the survey we have 10 BfN boob tea towels to give away in a prize draw, so please do let people know they could be in with a chance of getting their hands on one!



Please share the live evaluation survey link:
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bfnevaluation2020



An eye opening supervision for BfN volunteers

February supervision for Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead volunteers extended to a screening of the gripping film 'Tigers', which is based on the true story of former Nestle salesman Syed Aamir Raza, who took on the baby milk industry, with the help of the International Baby Foods Action Network, when he realised the tragic impact of his work.

BfN volunteer Heb called it a "A shocking and thought provoking film". Another film viewer and BfN volunteer Heather went on to say that the screening "Brought intense feelings of sadness and bravery and sacrifice. I wondered whether I would be strong enough to sacrifice seeing my family for the wellbeing of the future of babies. You could have heard a pin drop in the room, it was very powerful".

[Click this link to read more about the film 'Tigers'.](#)

“ A real eye opener into just how much damage can be done by a company's unregulated push for profits over safe and sensible use of their product.

Heb - BfN volunteer

National Breastfeeding Helpline Update

By Fliss Lambert, NBH Manager

Such a lot to report on from NBH! Christmas seems like a million years ago now, but I want to start with a huge thank you to all the NBH volunteers who logged on and supported families over the Christmas and New Year period. You answered so many calls even on Christmas Day itself – it was wonderful to see, and in fact it topped off a great year for NBH.

During 2019 we answered 9.25% more calls than we did in 2018. It was a record breaking year in many ways – we received more calls than ever before, answered more web chats than in any other year and supported more families via social media messages than ever.

Our volunteers spoke on the phone for 2798 hours during the year - our highest amount of annual talk time since 2015! More than 12,000 families were supported across our helplines, language lines, web chat and social media. Such an amazing achievement.

2020 also started with a BOOM and in both January and February, our volunteers again increased the numbers of calls answered compared to the same months last year. And so, as March approached, we thought maybe, just maybe, March 2020 could be the month we answer more than 1000 calls – something we haven't managed in a single month since February 2015.

So we set ourselves a 1000 target March Marathon goal. At the end of February we were optimistic but also realistic – it felt like an achievable goal but it would require all our volunteers to do as much as they could. Little did we know what was about to hit us!

The beginning of March was busy, but not that out of the ordinary. Volunteers were doing a brilliant job as always and we were answering more calls than usual.



Then suddenly everything changed when Coronavirus hit the UK – people are isolating at home, healthcare professionals are more overstretched than ever, drop in groups are forced to close, new mums are being discharged from hospitals even more quickly than before.... And our NBH volunteers really stepped up!

Since around the 12th March, there's hardly been a day when we haven't had 100% coverage on the helpline – we often have 5 or 6 volunteers logged in at once (in normal times we'd have 1 or 2 on average). We've answered almost every single call first time, and for the first time ever we have introduced a voicemail option for callers, so if they can't get through, they can leave a message and one of our newly recruited NBH Voicemail team will return their call as soon as possible. We've also stepped up our web chat availability, social media responses and increased the amount of remote supervision that's available.

At the time of writing, with a few days of March still to go – we have SMASHED the 1000 call target – with over 1150 calls answered already. And all of this amazing support for the helpline has happened at the same time as (like all of you) volunteers have faced unknowns about their work, worries about relatives and family and their own health, have had to fit in home education for their kids alongside their jobs....

I'm completely in awe of what our volunteers are doing on the helpline at the moment and cannot thank them enough for their hard work. They are providing such a vital service and just quietly getting on with it.

Keep up the amazing work. THANK YOU!



Going from strength to strength in the Forth Valley

Another group of newly trained volunteers have taken to the wards at Forth Valley Royal Hospital after completing 12 weeks of BfN Peer Support training in February.

Working alongside the NHS infant feeding team, the volunteers provide one to one support to women immediately after birth to initiate breastfeeding.

These volunteers joined the first cohort of BfN Peer Supporters already operating on the wards, bringing the total number of volunteers offering support to families to twenty-seven.

Since September 2019 alone, over 300 new mothers who have given birth at Forth Valley Royal Hospital have received breastfeeding support from a BfN volunteer under the scheme.

The initiative will continue to operate in partnership with NHS Forth Valley until the

end of March 2021, funded by The Scottish Government under their Programme for Government Funding.

With personal experience of breastfeeding herself, Forth Valley mum Joanne was keen to take on the challenge to support other families starting out on their breastfeeding journey. She says, "With my first baby we really struggled to breastfeed and getting that initial latch and first feeds never worked while we in hospital. As a first time mum and after a difficult pregnancy and birth, it all made me feel like such a failure.

She goes on to say, "If there had been someone on the ward with the time to sit, explain, listen and show us what we should be doing and what to expect in the coming weeks, then I really think it would have made all the difference. Being able to provide that now for new mums is amazing".

We look forward to continuing the success of this initiative in partnership with NHS Forth Valley and leveraging this experience to inform our work elsewhere in the UK.

“ **Our volunteers really are amazing. They just want to help other mums.**

Caroline Harrower - Project Coordinator

A special thanks to Gloucestershire volunteers

We wish to thank all staff within the Gloucestershire service who have been working on the intensive 1-1 support in areas with low breastfeeding rates. This will sadly come to a close at the end of March, but a strong volunteer service will continue in Gloucester and Forest of Dean - with dedicated BfN volunteers continuing to run groups in the community, offering other support to local families, alongside access to local supervision. Thank you to you all.



A continued commitment to breastfeeding mothers at Windsor Castle

The team at Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead BfN Peer Support Project were delighted to be invited back by The Royal Collection Trust to provide training to the Visitor Services Team at Windsor Castle in 2020.

With a commitment to providing the highest quality visitor experience at Windsor Castle, Royal Collection Trust staff worked alongside the team to understand how they could better to assist mothers and families when breastfeeding within Windsor Castle grounds.

Focused on furthering the knowledge of breastfeeding by the Visitor Services Team the two day training programme considered suitable places, environments and positions for breastfeeding on site.

Vibrant discussions with BfN staff and volunteers highlighted the challenges that mothers may face when breastfeeding in public, how it may make them feel, and how the Visitor Services team could support them during their visit.

Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead BfN Peer Support Project Coordinator Rebecca Reeves led the project and felt that it was a success, adding that there was extended discussion and questioning on the topic from participants young and old.

Shereen Fisher has applauded The Royal Collection Trust for integrating breastfeeding in to their staff training programme. "We hope that

other organisations can be inspired by the Royal Collection Trust to think about how too they might be able to become more welcoming to breastfeeding families" she said. For more information, contact Rebecca Reeves at Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead BfN Peer Support Project.



Mums Milk Run

The BfN Mums Milk Run is back! Albeit with a bit of a facelift to offer you a positive distraction during the coronavirus lockdown.

If there's ever been a time to stay mentally and physically well, it's now. Yet, at the same time, our lives have never been so restricted. So in May 2020, we are bringing the Mums Milk Run in to your living rooms, gardens and on your socially distanced daily exercise.

Our challenge to you is to complete 31 hours of physical exercise during the month of May. That's one hour every day. It can be a run, jog, walk, online fitness workout - even an hour of yoga. Anything that gets your body moving and your mind a little clearer.

Participation is free, because our focus to support you to be fit and well. But, we do ask that you connect with our Mums Milk Run Community by sharing your hard work on social media - this means that we can all continue connect, even though we are apart.

Registration will open in the next few weeks and be promoted on our social media channels and website. Once you're all signed up, we will send you a Mums Milk Run pack by email with everything that you need to know. We look forward to working out with you.

Support increased in Wolverhampton thanks to Lowhill Helpers Group

Congratulations to the Lowhill Helpers group in Wolverhampton, who finished their training in December, tutored by Diana West.

The training group included mothers and health professionals from Wolverhampton and surrounding areas, who are now keen and fully equipped to go into their local hospital and out into the community to provide breastfeeding information and support to the families.

Well done everyone for a fantastic achievement!



Trainees pictured (from left to right) Sanshia, Andrea, Bonnie, Hanah, Caroline, Sophie, Zuhra, Elly, Kylie, Monique and Emily (Trainees Sarah and Alina not pictured)

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Infant Feeding and Inequalities is back

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Infant Feeding and Inequalities was suspended during the period Parliament was closed during the General Election campaign before Christmas.

However Alison Thewliss MP was re-elected and wasted no time in getting it back up and running again in January. Lots of BfN members wrote to their MPs and asked them to join the initial AGM which took place on 29th January 2020.

MPs in attendance, along with Alison, included cross party representatives - Jonathan Reynolds, MP for Stalybridge; Fleur Anderson MP Labour MP for Putney; Southfields and Roehampton; Alex Davies-Jones MP for Pontypridd; Stephen Timms, MP for East Ham; Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Sunderland West and Shadow Minister for Public Health; Kirsty Blackman MP for Aberdeen North;

Gavin Newlands, MP for Paisley & Renfrewshire; Kieran Mullan MP, for Crewe & Nantwich; Anneliese Dodds MP for Oxford East; Oliver Heald, MP for North East Hertfordshire.

Thank you if you invited your MP to attend this meeting, or the subsequent one which took place on March 10th – it really does work!

Alison also asked a question about formula stockpiling and the National Breastfeeding Helpline to Health Secretary Matt Hancock before Parliament was suspended due to the Coronavirus.

[Watch here.](#)

At the moment it is unknown when the next APPG meeting will take place but you can follow updates from the group on Twitter at @APPGIFI

Thank you to everyone in our network who contacted their local MP and requested their attendance at the AGM.

What BfN means to me

Kirstin Worsley
Scottish PfG Project Manager

To be honest, until about 4 years ago, when asked what BfN was I would have said it was where you went to print resources about thrush and mastitis to use in training new mums to become Peer Supporters (oh and I knew there was a helpline, because I had called it once).

Going back a bit, about 20 years ago and after the birth of my third child, I realised that breastfeeding was NOT easy, it wasn't something babies just did and it definitely could hurt to the point of feeling that my nipples were about to fall off.

In that moment, when someone suggested I train as a Peer Supporter I thought, like many of us do, that if I could just help one other mum to feel better about feeding, to reduce her pain and help her to find a way to give her baby what she had thought about when she was pregnant, then that would be fine.

Move on 15 years from that point and a house move and I was training with UNICEF Baby Friendly and helping more women in my part of the world to continue their feeding journey.

Then, one day about 9 years ago, someone actually offered me a job where I would get money to train mums to be peer supporters (my husband's words were "you can actually get paid to do this sort of thing??!!") and since then it has become the biggest passion of my life, filling every day with something breastfeeding related, although of course my family are still my total world.

So, when my manager received a call from Sarah Edwards, 4 years ago, asking if there was anyone who would be interested in training to take calls on the National Helpline, I did a bit of real research about the organisation, discovered it had become so much more than a leaflet about mastitis and decided to "give it a go".

Roll on 4 years, and I am now taking calls and

answering webchat and social media messages to my heart's content. I love listening to a woman, sometimes with tears in her eyes and helping her to work through her thoughts and fears and come to a point where she feels able to move forward with her feeding (or have a plan to stop, if that was her reason for calling).

In the meantime, I carried on with my "day job" training peer supporters and looking after a troop of volunteers in the Scottish Borders. (I don't manage volunteers, they tend to be the ones keeping me on the right track!).

But then.....the Scottish Government decided to fund the implementation of breastfeeding support as a national project and this is when BfN became an even bigger part of my life as I became the Scottish Project Lead. So, now, not only do I still talk and message wonderful families on the Helpline but I also get to see support appearing in new areas across Scotland and meet lots of wonderful mums who are training to become new supporters of mums in their communities. BfN are giving me so many new opportunities.

The supporters, supervisor and tutor courses have given me the chance to make connections with other BfN people across the country and at this point I send a big HI! to you all!

If I had to put it into words, what BfN means to me, it is "family, team effort and determination". I know it can be hard, funding is always an issue, mums always seem to be receiving less care than they deserve or the staff around them are able to give, despite their best efforts, and we sometimes feel that we are only a tiny fish in a big puddle. However, if a younger me had told me I would one day be working for the organisation that I had called 20 years ago, I am not entirely sure I would have believed them and yet, here I am.

So, believe in yourselves, you can do this, you are doing it and you are all absolutely fantastic!



Further funding announced for Wokingham

We are delighted to announce that Wokingham Borough Council has provided a further £14,000 to support breastfeeding locally.

BfN volunteers have helped 342 new mums since May 2019. As result of this new funding, we will recruit and train a further 12 peer supporters, provide ongoing training and support across the borough, and employ a volunteer co-ordinator oversee the initiative and enhance connections within local professional networks.

Well done team!

A 'Big Tea Break' Thank You

A great big 'thank you' to everyone who supported the Big Tea Break event that was held on Friday 17th January at The Red Lion in North Hertfordshire.

The event was a resounding success, raising almost £300 in cash donations to support BfN. Beautiful cakes and other baked goods were donated by villagers and BfN volunteers, who enjoyed the warm and welcoming atmosphere offered by our generous hosts at The Red Lion.

The funds raised will help purchase branded t-shirts for new BfN volunteers as they begin to support local families, contribute towards the cost of study days and support BfN's Drugs in Breastmilk Information Service. Special thanks goes to The Red Lion for their generosity and Nattering Needles for cake and knitted boobies.



Raising funds to support BfN has never been easier!

Did you know that you can turn your everyday online shopping in to donations to help support other mums along their breastfeeding journey?

Easy Fundraising is a simple and effective way to support BfN. And 100% free for you to do.

All you need to do is sign up online, then click on your usual online stores and every time you purchase, BfN will then receive a small donation from the retailer to say thank you.



Simply click this link to check it out:
www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Thorntoun Care Home joins the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland scheme

Thorntoun Care Home, in Kilmarnock, recently played host to NHS Ayrshire & Arran and BfN's first ever pop up inter-generational breastfeeding session.

BfN volunteers and group of mums with their babies and toddlers met with the care home residents and chatted to them about their parenting and feeding experiences. It is hoped that future sessions can be rolled out in other care homes throughout Ayrshire.

Thorntoun Care Home is the first care home in Ayrshire to sign up to the Scottish Government's Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland scheme.

Jo McNish, BfN's Ayrshire Project Manager said, "We are delighted to have Thorntoun Care Home join up to the scheme and we hope this will encourage other care homes to sign up. It has been heart-warming to see care home residents and local mums swapping experiences from times gone by



and now and to see the smiles on the resident's faces as they interacted with the little ones."

Ruth Campbell, Consultant Dietitian in Public Health Nutrition added, "The Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland scheme is continuing to help change the culture and attitudes to breastfeeding in Ayrshire. Having local care homes signed up to the scheme will reassure breastfeeding mums that they are welcome to breastfeed when visiting elderly relatives or friends."

Susann Macleod, Thorntoun Care Home Manager, said, "We are delighted to join the scheme. We want to encourage and reassure mums that they can breastfeed their baby comfortably when visiting relatives."

BfN Ayrshire currently runs 11 infant feeding support groups across Ayrshire. For more information contact Jo McNish at jo.mcnish@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

“ It has been heartwarming to see care home residents and local mums swapping experiences from times gone by.

An open letter from the Programme Director of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

We have been asked to share this update with you regarding the Baby Friendly Initiative position on the Medela brand.



Dear Breastfeeding Network

We have received a number of queries about the breast pump company Medela in relation to our Conflicts of Interest in Baby Friendly services requirements. Medela manufacture and market* a teat and so come within the scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code).

While it has always been acceptable to use Medela products in Baby Friendly accredited services, it has been unacceptable to attend Medela sponsored study days, receive sponsorship for education etc. because of violations of the Code related to advertising** of the teat. Medela has now produced new guidelines for the marketing of their products ([click here to read the guidelines](#)) which have been reviewed by the Baby Friendly Initiative Designation Committee.

The Committee has agreed that these guidelines address most of the previous issues relating to advertising of the teat and so have agreed that in the future, accepting sponsorship or other support from Medela will become a personal or organisational decision that will not affect Baby Friendly accreditation.

Please note that this does not mean that Medela will no longer manufacture or market their teat, nor that Unicef UK consider them to be fully Code compliant.

Should Medela's position change, then this position will be reviewed. It should also be noted that this position does not include other manufacturers of bottles and teats. We recommend the usual vigilance when making decisions about how to work with commercial companies who come within the scope of the Code ([click here to read 'Working within the Code: Health Professionals' Guide'](#)).

Best wishes
Sue

Sue Ashmore
Programme Director
UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative
www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly



*Marketing is product promotion, distribution, selling, advertising, product public relations, and information services.

**Advertising is the strategic method of influencing the behaviour of an intended audience to entice them to buy.

Who's Who and Who's New

Leanne Rayner - Social Media Officer

Leanne Rayner joined BfN in December 2019 on a maternity cover contract. With a long history of working for social good, she brings almost 20 years' experience of managing marketing, communications and fundraising at a senior level in the UK and Asia Pacific.

Since becoming a mum, Leanne has refocused her attention a little. A breastfeeding mother herself, she has redirected her skills to support other women along their breastfeeding journey.

Leanne has already grabbed the bull by its horns, leading communication across BfN central social media channels and is keen to share her insights and expertise.

She is looking forward to continuing to help educate and engage audiences across the network and encourages you to contact her at leanne.rayner@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk



Georgina Southall - PA to the CEO

Georgina is based in Birmingham and joins us from the BBC after four years service. A strong advocate for inclusion, Georgina was most recently part of the Diversity & Inclusion team at the BBC, working alongside senior managers and leaders at the BBC in her role.

Georgina is driven by a passion for planning and organising, and enjoys offering her skills to support any projects that she can.

Georgina says that she is delighted to join the team and 'believes in the fantastic work the BFN has done, and continues to do, in supporting women and others with breastfeeding support and information.'

You can contact Georgina at: georgina.southall@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Exciting news for Islington and Haringey breastfeeding services

BfN is excited to announce that two London services have been recommissioned, up to seven years in Islington, with Haringey extended for up to six years. This has been made possible as a result of the efforts of staff and volunteers to support local families with breastfeeding, alongside the delivery of peer supporter training to boost capacity. Thank you! This collective effort meant that we were well placed to meet the council requirements for the new contracts.

We also extend our thanks to Islington and Haringey Public Health and celebrate their increasing commitment to the provision of local breastfeeding support services.

Research and Reading

BfN is committed to collecting and disseminating information relevant to breastfeeding and infant nutrition. In this edition of BfN News, we share with you two important reports released recently.

The first is the WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission report "A Future for the World's Children". The report highlights how the health of children now and in the future is under threat, and our ability to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals depends on overcoming two new challenges: the climate emergency and "predatory commercial exploitation"; including by the breastmilk substitute industry.

Generally the report speaks of general health improvements for children, but widening inequalities and lack of prevention of avoidable illness and death when vaccines are not available.

[Click here to read the full Lancet report](#)

The [Baby Feeding Law Group](#) have produced a one page summary paying special attention to how the report relates to breastmilk substitutes and the Code.

[Click here to read the summary.](#)

The second report is the 'Marmot Review 10 Years On' launched by the UCL Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health Foundation.

The report examines progress over the past decade in addressing health inequalities in England and proposes recommendations for future action. It looks across a number of areas, including early years and education, work and income, housing, places and communities.

While there has been progress in some areas since 2010's Fair Society, Healthy Lives, the report finds there is growing evidence that health inequalities are widening and life expectancy is stalling.

The report makes a clear recommendation for an increase in public health funding "in a way that is proportionate to need", alongside an increased focus on prevention from the NHS. It states "without additional financial allocations for prevention services, particularly in more deprived areas, health will decline and the burden on health services will increase."

[Click here to read the full report and executive summary.](#)

As part of the solution to tackle health inequalities, the report

proposes the UK Government increase spending on public health to seven percent of the NHS budget, as was originally set out in the 2010 Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives.

While the Marmot report is weak on mention of breastfeeding and early years nutrition, both reports offer evidence to help inform the conversation around support for public spending in the early years.



Congratulations

A huge thank you to everyone that makes BfN what it is. You all make a difference to families across the UK.

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

Helpers

Anne Mitchell
Emma Dubberley
Hannah Stevenson
Lisa Armstrong
Nelly Brewer
and their tutor
Anne-Marie Thomas

Gilly Crawford
and her tutors
Anne-Marie Thomas
and Esther Pierce

Amy Wilkes
and her tutor
Antha Tennant-Eyles

Ali Butcher
Amy Van der Walt
Elaine Kennedy
Emma Turner MacDonald
Jade Clarkson
Jenny Cotton
Katie Graham
Lindsey Tyrer
Linzi Paxton
Pamela Jamieson
Sarah Smith
and their tutor
Aurore Arnould

Claire Montgomery
Debbie Nelson
Hannah Willey
Laura Brisbane
Nicola Bonsor
Rachel Montgomery
and their tutor
Aurore Lasne

Ainara Pérez Fernandez
Claire Salerno
Debbie Black
Hazel Haddow
Kirstine Dymott
Laura Dunabie
Lesley Dickson
Lesley Doig
Liz Robertson
Marge Adams
Michelle Struth
Sarah Milstead
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