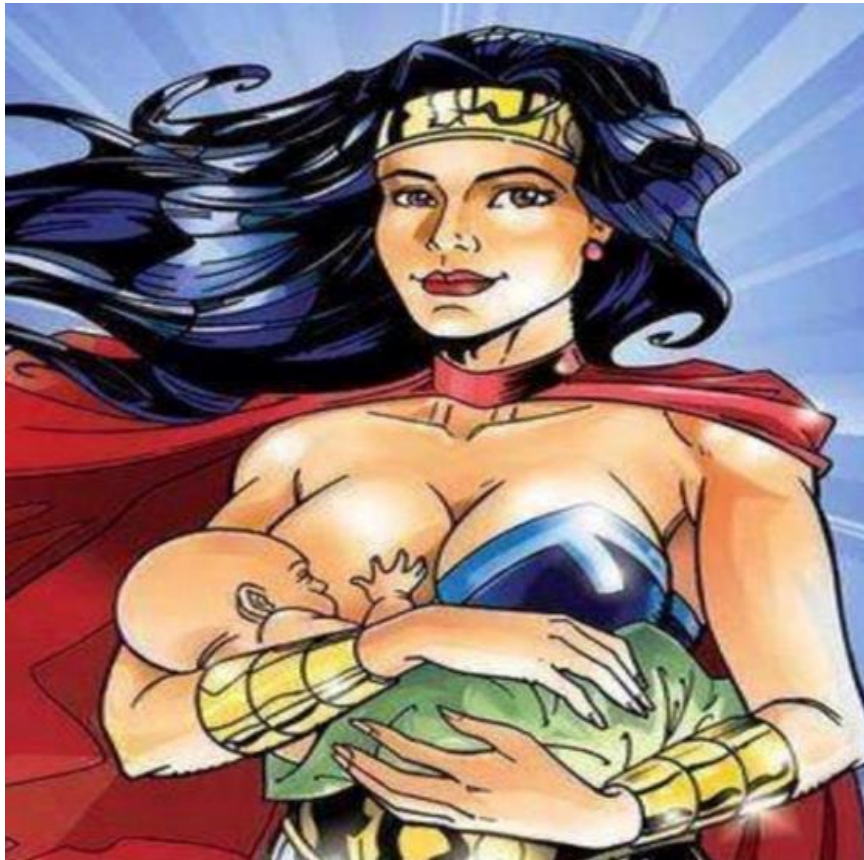




Breastfeeding Superheroes

The Electronic Newsletter of the Breastfeeding Network



Contents

55.1 Message from the Directors	2	55.12 Recent Research Asks if Breast is Truly Best.	12
55.2 News from Central Team.....	2	55.13 Too Close for Comfort	14
55.3 Editorial and General Information	2	Emma's Breastfeeding Timeline –Birth to Four	15
55.4 Congratulations	4	55.14 Is There Really No Such Thing as Bad Publicity?.....	16
55.5 Shhh....we're breastfeeding!	5	55.15 Spontaneous Breastfeeding Actions	17
55.6 National Breastfeeding Helpline.....	6	55.16 Mums' Milk Run 2014 – Every Feed Counts	18
55.8 BfN in Portsmouth Says.....	9		
55.9 Everyone Wants to Wear the Purple Vest ...	9		
55.10 What Do Teenagers Think?	10		
55.11 Anne Who? Ankyloglossia.	11		

55.1 Message from the Directors

Meeting as a board is a real pleasure. We are gaining from all the development work of the last few years with an incredibly hard working, strong central team enabling informed decision-making. This is more essential than ever in such a tough financial climate.

The new directors bring their varied experience to the team and it's really good to see them getting involved. Ann is leading on the short life working group, looking at our training. Maddy is considering the sustainability of the Drugs in Breastmilk Helpline using her GP background to give input into training tools. As our Caldicott Guardian, Wendy is guiding us on risk and information governance. While not so new, Debbie is helping us understand and intelligently question the financial information. We are very fortunate to have them.

We are mindful of the changes to commissioning and the consequent uncertainties this year about funding streams. As a result we must consolidate and make the most of our limited resources to ensure we continue to offer the best value for money.

This means we are finally going digital. We will no longer be printing leaflets. To make this change possible we have new branding and a re-design of the website. We hope you will be as excited as we are to see these changes. The information will be printed on request. This change will also allow us to keep information current and save on storage costs.

As a tutor, I am grappling with going paperless so I can share my experiences. I am learning to use a whiteboard and take photographs rather than use flipchart paper. It is challenging but also liberating - no more heavy bags on the train.

The increase in options for e-learning such as [twitter journal clubs](#) and webinars mean we can update our knowledge without going to study days. For this year we would like to test the viability of using online resources to update our knowledge for continuing professional development (CPD). Opportunities are all around us and we need to make the most of them.

To reduce CPD costs for Supporters, funding will only be available to attend the AGM. We know this is tough but it is being considered to reduce costs quickly.

We have many successes to celebrate:

Thanks to Sarah Edwards for developing #myBfNday on twitter to let others see the huge variety of things we all do within BfN everyday to support families. The number of different activities around the UK is impressive.

Well done to our CEO, Shereen, for her first radio interview and letters to the press.

Thank you to all the staff who work so hard for our wonderful organisation, always going above and beyond!

Thanks to the runners Paul and Lis – what inspiration!

And, finally, we thank all our members for all the work they continue to do to support breastfeeding mothers and their families.

Phyll, on behalf of Sukie, Zoe, Debbie, Ann, Maddy and Wendy

55.2 News from Central Team

Kathryn Phillips recently resigned as HR Director for BfN and will be leaving BfN at the end of May.

She is leaving to pursue her interests in developing and running personal development workshops including meditation and guided visualisations and helping people deal with stress in their lives.

Kathryn has been a valued member of the organisation for over four years and she has contributed massively to setting up professional HR practices. She will be much missed. We thank her for all that she has done for BfN and wish her well for the future.

55.3 Editorial and General Information

I've heard that some people believe we at BfN think too much about breastfeeding. How is that even possible?

Over the last few months we've had an excuse, as everyone else is thinking about breastfeeding too.

It felt particularly surreal to wake up on 18th February to talk of tongue tie (read what it meant to [one mother](#)) on the national media. First the Today programme on BBC Radio 4, then [Woman's Hour](#). After years of the condition being ignored and even denied, what on earth was going on?

A few days later we were hearing that breastfeeding conferred no particular benefit. According to a new study your formula fed baby would do just as well, but without the asthma. Could that be right? [Phyll looks into the facts](#) for us.

Then, social media did what we have been trying to do for years, by challenging stereotypes and trying to normalise breastfeeding. It seems that while a Facebook page was encouraging the photography of women eating on the tube, elsewhere someone stepped out of the pub to photograph a woman breastfeeding. Then, a week later the same street is full of women breastfeeding. A couple of months later, there are breastfeeding protests in sports shops.

Meanwhile, in Blackpool a mum accidentally breastfeeds her baby in a taxi rank, which eventually leads to the national press publishing the words: 'breastfeeding is normal,' and Rod Liddle publishes an attack on BfN.

The press also approached Emma, a natural term breastfeeding mum. Read her [story](#) and see the [pictures](#).

There's been [loads of publicity](#), but is it all good for us? Emma writes about her experience and Fliss [analyses the situation](#).

There's a lot going on in BfN too. Phyll sums up the changes in the [message from the Directors](#). We have the [new webchat service](#) and volunteers spreading the word in [libraries](#) and [colleges](#). We look forward to [Mums' Milk Run](#) and celebrate support from the wider world in [Portsmouth](#) and on the [marathon track](#). In the North West [we ask locals](#) about breastfeeding services.

So what on earth are we going to find to write about in the next newsletter? The new branding, which will give you a new-look website and matching newsletter, that's what!

Veronika Tudhope

The BfN AGM and Study Day
will take place on the 4th October 2014
at the
[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons
Hall](#)
in Glasgow



Copy dates of future newsletters

Issue number	Name	Copy date	Published by
56	Summer 2014	25 th July	22 nd August
57	Autumn 2014	31 st October	21 st November
58	Winter 2015	30 th January 2015	February 2015
59	Spring 2015	24 th April 2015	May 2015

Since the BfN newsletter became an electronic publication, alternative arrangements are being made for members who do not receive emails. If you know anyone who falls into this category please let us know. You can find information about the [board of directors](#) and [central team staff](#) on the website.

55.4 Congratulations



Congratulations and Well Done

Full supporters

Marion Paddock
Gillian Hall

Thank you to their tutors

Claire Davis and Sukie Woodhouse

Supporters starting their probationary period

Lauren McCann
Nicola Muir
Sophie Reeve

Thank you to their tutors

Rayanne Napper, Sarah Edwards, Sukie Woodhouse

And to newly qualified helpers

Michelle Webster
Leanne Daniels
Wendy Livingstone
Gemma Wodehouse

and their tutor

Lesley Backhouse

A Certificate of Attendance was awarded to

Katy Brown



55.5 Shhh...we're breastfeeding!

We all know babies need books, and babies need milk... and mothers need a moment's peace. So can it all be combined in the local library?



Back in January, an email arrived at BfN HQ in Paisley asking if we could provide a speaker for the 200 delegates at the Surrey County Council's Library Service Staff Conference. The theme of the March conference was to be 'Libraries for All'. They planned to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion with a range of external and internal speakers.

Kelly Saini Badwal, the organiser, said, 'Breastfeeding is a huge area of discussion for library staff when thinking about equality and diversity. We have had many discussions around the need to make libraries friendly for breastfeeding mothers. This is set alongside meeting the needs of users who can often be opposed to breastfeeding in public places.'

Thinking of the many children who might be denied library access if their younger sibling could not be breastfed in the library we set about finding a local speaker. Marcelle Benneyworth stepped in and after the event she sent the following report:

'Lucinda Hartstone and I had a great time. It was a good turnout of about 200 people, and we spoke for fifteen minutes. After a brief introduction I spoke about the BfN and the different courses we run, for example, helper, supporter and tutor training. We then told them about UK law and the Breastfeeding Manifesto. Then I showed the audience where there are libraries that have breastfeeding support in them. I illustrated public breastfeeding with some photos of people breastfeeding out and about and then had a video clip from the Bumps to Breastfeeding DVD. We felt it went well. There were some useful

comments, such as, 'I'm surprised that we're discussing breastfeeding because I think it's natural and assumed that it was totally acceptable in this day and age'.

The following was an exchange that took place at the Q&A session at the end of the conference:

Question: How would you ensure the library user who was unhappy about the breastfeeding in the library was not a dissatisfied "library user", while also ensuring the library user who was breastfeeding was also a satisfied customer?

Answer: There is always a need to balance the competing demands of users. In this instance the mother has a right to breastfeed. This would have to be tactfully explained to the complaining user.

Kelly adds, 'It's also important to emphasise that the best solution is prevention [of problems] For example ensure children's areas are breastfeeding friendly with a comfortable chair for mothers.'

Feedback from the programme team said, 'Thank you again for speaking at our conference, we found it very interesting and useful, and I think everyone had a great day.... everyone left with a real buzz.'



Many thanks to Marcelle and Lucinda for taking the breastfeeding discussion out into the community. Taking these discussions beyond new parents and health professionals is invaluable. Marcelle has kindly sent me her presentation with permission to share it if anyone would like to use it for a similar event. It is available by email from email@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Veronika Tudhope

55.6 National Breastfeeding Helpline



The most exciting thing to report from the National Breastfeeding Helpline is the launch of our pilot [web chat](#) support project. Since the beginning of April, we have been offering

mums breastfeeding support via instant online secure messaging.

Although opening times are quite restricted because we have only a few trained volunteers at the moment, feedback from mums and volunteers has been positive. The very first mum to use the service immediately commented on our Facebook page:

"I have just used this and it was brilliant, questions answered quickly and very helpful. Thank you"

We have more training planned in Portsmouth and Scotland and are looking at a 'train the trainer' model, to provide training to supporters. A massive thank you to all the volunteers who have been involved in web chat support so far.

As we don't want to reduce the resources available to our phone service, we are hoping volunteering on web chat will appeal mainly to supporters who don't currently volunteer on the helpline often. If this applies to you, please get in touch by calling the office or [emailing](#)

There has also been a lot of interest from helpers, so we're looking at ways we can get others involved too. Watch this space for more info.



Webchat training in London in February

Thank you to all the volunteers answering calls every week on the helpline. If you've not logged in for a bit, why not make this month the one where you give it another go? If you have any technical problems or can't remember your login details, simply contact your [Link Worker](#) or [Fliss, the NBH Manager](#). We can generally sort things out in a couple of minutes.

The numbers of BfN volunteers available on the helpline during March and April have been particularly low. It's harder for mums to get through on the National Breastfeeding Helpline. If you can just commit to one hour a month, that would make a huge difference to the number of calls we answer.

We can arrange for a text to be sent to remind you it's time to log on if that would help. We offer childcare expenses if you need them and can offer refresher training if you just want to get your confidence back. Talk to your link worker, or contact [Fliss](#) about what we can do to make it easier for you to volunteer on the helpline.

Felicity Lambert, National Breastfeeding Helpline Manager



55.7 Ask the Public

The newsletter copy date has finally spurred me to share the results of two surveys, conducted on breastfeeding information stalls as part of health and wellbeing events in Wolverhampton during the summer of 2012. I hope you find the results of the surveys interesting and relevant – we certainly did!

Who took part?

All the general public who visited our stall, including new parents, parents-to-be, young people, grandparents, adults with no children, health professionals and representatives from other organisations.

Powerful responses, interesting themes

Participants were invited to write down their responses onto Post-it notes. The original wording is included as far as possible, below, as some of them are very powerful. They are grouped together in the themes that emerged.

“What support do breastfeeding women need?”

Breastfeeding in public

- Easy ways to feed in front of the family
- Where can women go to breastfeed ‘out and about’
- Breastfeeding lounge e.g. in shopping centres so mums have somewhere to go , Appropriate places to breastfeed in central shopping centres
- Public areas need to have more breastfeeding facilities
- No stigma breastfeeding in public places
- The ability to breastfeed outdoors in confidence
- More signs telling people where they can breastfeed
- Where to go when in public. Feeling free to breastfeed wherever you are
- Information about health benefits and all of society saying its absolutely natural to breastfeed anywhere
- Being able to breastfeed ANYWHERE!
- More private places to go to breastfeed
- Better breastfeeding-friendly places
- Place to breastfeed where feel comfortable
- More places where breastfeeding can take place
- More facilities available to make breastfeeding easier when out and about
- Support breastfeeding in public (3)

Society

- More publicity to promote breastfeeding so women feel more comfortable
- Reducing stigma against breastfeeding(2)
- Made to feel its ok to breastfeed, making it normal(2)



- More relaxed. No guilt if you can't breastfeed
- Respect

Breastfeeding groups

- Local groups and support groups (5)
- More groups with help for baby to latch on

General support

- Confidence (2)
- Someone to listen and genuinely understand
- Little less pressure but nice encouragement. Mothers do get tired – encourage breast pumps or even bottles if problems persist
- Support for breastfeeding mothers
- A lot more support than seems to be available
- Not too pushy.(2) Not being degrading and patronising to women
- Having someone local to sit with me at home (2)
- Support in knowing if my baby was getting enough milk. Is there a set time you can establish a routine or would you feed on demand? What if the baby has difficulty sucking or latching on? What if my baby was premature and starts to lose weight when breastfed? Like as much information as possible to what diet I should follow. If I need to take medication – need info on what medication means I cannot breastfeed while taking
- More support for mothers who leave hospital early
- Friendly voice and reassurance
- Support from other breastfeeding mums
- Help if things go wrong or they have problems
- As soon as woman finds out she is pregnant she needs advice and support to allay her fears (if any)
- More support for early stages (2)

Support from health professionals

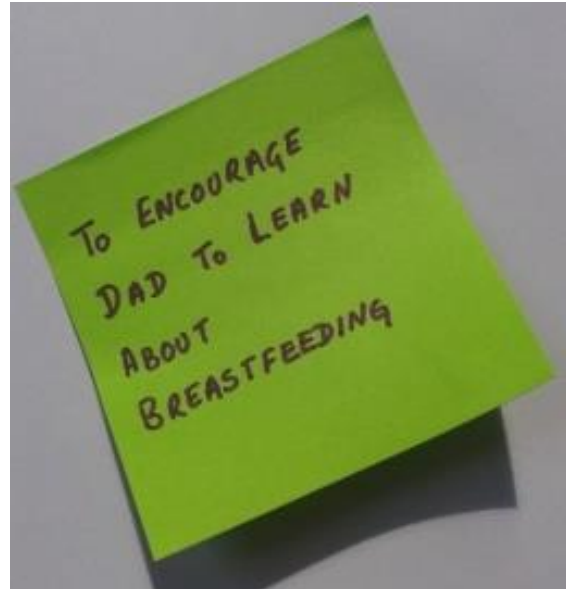
- More support from health visitor (1), midwives (1) and maternity ward (1) for breastfeeding under difficult circumstances

Family

- Second mother/grandmother figure. Not all mothers can get the right advice
- Supportive families
- Support from my mother
- Time! And help in the household whilst breastfeeding

Practical support

- Breast pumps (2)
- Practical help
- Physical demonstration i.e. on props
- Shown how to!
- More regular classes. More information about when classes are
- Soreness and problem solving



“What support do the families of breastfeeding women need?”

Breastfeeding in public

- Educating family on making women feel comfortable breastfeeding at home and out and about
- To be aware of more quiet places to breastfeed
- Information on breastfeeding in public
- Be open with the family that you are breastfeeding. Families need help to support a breastfeeding mum's privacy e.g. at family parties
- Encouragement when breastfeeding outside
- Knowing how to make a breastfeeding mum feel comfortable

Fathers

- Fathers need information and better understanding of breastfeeding
- To encourage Dad to learn about breastfeeding
- Awareness for fathers. Media, society to promote it being a joint event. Make it more MALE positive

Pressure

- Stop the pressure to stop breastfeeding
- To be told that breastfeeding is acceptable
- To be told it's acceptable for the mother to feed her baby herself
- Change in public opinion
- Information on the importance of breastfeeding

Illuminating responses – own conclusions...



Some of the responses are very illuminating, though perhaps not surprising, and I'll allow you to draw your own conclusions from them... But I can't help wondering... although these surveys were conducted a year or so ago now, I wonder how much would have changed if we were to repeat them this year? Hopefully a great deal has changed for the better!

- More support/information on the benefits of breastfeeding
- More information (worried what other people think)
- Knowing how to make a breastfeeding mum feel comfortable

General support

- Guidance and help
- Support to help mum before and during breastfeeding. Need authorities to set up lessons
- More consistent advice

Family

- To know how to be supportive to the mother and know where to get help too
- Advice on how they can join in at feed time
- Information/knowledge so they can help a breastfeeding mother
- Support and information on breastfeeding for the family as a whole, not just the mother

Information

- More information for everybody
- To be aware of healthy diet for breastfeeding mum
- Support material on breastfeeding
- More information on breastfeeding (x 3 responses)
- Information on breastfeeding for family members
- Information about bm in terms of nourishment/goodness

Diana West
Supporter, Supervisor and Tutor, West Midlands

55.8 BfN in Portsmouth Says.....



Recently, funding for all BfN services in Portsmouth was under threat.

After many meetings, discussions, funding applications and fundraising ideas, in March, a difficult decision was made. We announced on Facebook that from 30th June 2014 we would no longer be able to offer our current services. I don't think any of us were expecting what happened next.

Within an hour of putting out the announcement on our page, Portsmouth Breastfeeding, we had almost 100 responses expressing anger and sadness that this service was to be lost, and offers to support us in any way.

By the end of the day, mothers were sending in their stories explaining how BfN volunteers had positively impacted on their lives. They were preparing to protest outside the civic offices. They had written to MPs and councillors. They had shared the story with local media. They were arranging fundraising events, and donating money and they were spreading the word, all whilst sharing their breastfeeding photos.

Less than a week later, funding was found and it

was confirmed that we could resume our services. This was all down to the strong community that has been built up in Portsmouth over the past four years. That, and the determination and hard work they collectively put into expressing how valued the BfN team are to them.

All the BfN volunteers in Portsmouth wish to thank every single one of you. Your stories and words of encouragement and support have meant more to us than we could ever express in words. I don't think there was a dry eye amongst us as we read your stories. We are so grateful that your passion has enabled us to continue to support women and their families with their individual journeys. I



know, that together we can continue to build and nurture the wonderful, supportive, breastfeeding community here in Portsmouth.

Eleanor Johnston

55.9 Everyone Wants to Wear the Purple Vest



Well Done and Thank you!

Paul completed the London Marathon in 4 hours 30 minutes, a new personal best, and raised £460 for the Breastfeeding Network.

Next to wear the purple vest was Lis at Bracknell on the 27th April. She completed her first half marathon in 1 hour 44 minutes 15 seconds and raised £744.30.

Who's next for a purple vest?



55.10 What Do Teenagers Think?

In December 2012 the Teaching Assistant students at Blackpool and The Fylde, Grade1 FE College carried out a survey to find out why so few teenagers breastfeed their babies. As a result the [Breastfeeding Campaign in February 2013](#) was launched, working with Cheryl Smith of Fleetwood Star Buddies. It aimed to promote the benefits of breastfeeding amongst teenage parents. This would be achieved by developing a visiting exhibition for communities across the Fylde, highlighting the values of breastfeeding to mother, father and child.



None of the group surveyed (150 females, aged 15–19, and 30 males, aged 15–23) had experience of breastfeeding although the group included 21 mums and eight dads.

- 90% agreed that breastfeeding was good for a baby.
- 89% said they would not breastfeed.
- 95% said it was easier to bottle feed.
- 98% didn't know what the benefits of breastfeeding were for the mum.
- 91% didn't know what the benefits of breastfeeding were for the baby.
- 100% didn't know what the benefits of breastfeeding were to the dad.
- 92% said breastfeeding would hurt.

- 12% know where to go for support with feeding.

After the survey the whole college population was invited to take part in competitions, lectures, workshops, and a New Mum and Dad group. Competitions were held to design a logo, a slogan, a college breastfeeding room, a bra, or a cake, and to write a story, poem, song or rap. There was also a photography competition.

Lectures and workshops were held throughout February covering a range of associated topics:

- Environmental benefits
- Monitoring and evaluating statistics on breastfeeding mothers
- Post-natal care
- The World Health Organisation - Code of Practice
- Breast and bottle
- Surviving breastfeeding
- Baby-led weaning
- 'How much? Much too much' – price comparison
- From Bump to Birth

The exhibition was unveiled and Blackpool & The Fylde's College breastfeeding room was officially opened for students and staff In March 2013.

The campaign exceeded our expectations and offered many opportunities for breastfeeding to be discussed. The exhibition was invited to tour all the Sure Start Centres in Blackpool and we hope it can also visit high schools.

Lee Reynolds
Curriculum Leader for Early Years in the School of
Society, Health and Childhood



New Helpers in Thatcham

Maja, Dominique and Helen were among eleven ladies who successfully completed BfN helper training in Thatcham, last July.

Gladys Perrier was very proud to present them with their OCN certificates at their last supervision session.

These new helpers are now playing an active role in drop-ins in West Berkshire and doing a great job. Thank you!

55.11 Anne Who? Ankyloglossia.

One woman's experience of tongue tie

Only a few close friends have seen this photo, but in a way I have wanted to share it for a long time. Partly to help promote breastfeeding, but also to inform on tongue tie. It represents a time that was very hard and if it could help one other person then it is worth it. In that photo I have my hat on to try to make light of the sickening pain I was in whilst breastfeeding Henry.



The pain was far worse than the birth, when I had gas and air for just the last couple of hours. For me, Henry's birth was a fearless, manageable experience. This is a gauge to help explain the feeding pain I experienced. I don't want to show off; I know all births are different. Tongue tie, also, does not affect everyone in the same way. I suffered severe nipple trauma (bleeding fissures), mastitis (flu like symptoms and aching breast pain), and ductal thrush (a nasty burning sensation in my breasts after feeding). This continued for twelve weeks. Then tongue tie was finally diagnosed and treated. I had continued to try to find a solution throughout that time because my instincts told me that there was something wrong beyond a 'poor latch', even though numerous midwives, doctors, paediatricians, and a breastfeeding counsellor told me they could find nothing. This was due to a lack of training and a lack of awareness of the condition.

A diagnosis of tongue tie may be more prevalent today, as more women seem to be breastfeeding. Perhaps this is due to the World Health Organisation advising on the benefits of breastfeeding, and extended breastfeeding.

On a positive note my experience led to me researching more on the benefits of breastfeeding. I am still feeding Henry a couple of times a day, something I didn't plan to do and even balked at before

Whether I bottle fed or breastfed I wanted it to be my choice, not a decision forced on me by lack of knowledge of the subject.

(Incidentally, I hope to train as a breastfeeding counsellor at some point this year too. I will find the time!)

More information about tongue tie:

What the press said on the 18th February
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-26199591>

Woman's Hour (BBC Radio 4) coverage
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01shgbw>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01shgbw>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tongue-tie/Pages/Introduction.aspx>



Mellony and Henry looking happier after treatment for Henry's tongue tie

Mellony

55.12 Recent Research Asks if Breast is Truly Best.

[Colen, C.G., Ramey, D.M.](#), Is Breast Truly Best? Estimating the Effects of Breastfeeding on Long-term Child Health and Wellbeing in the United States Using Sibling Comparisons. (2014) *Social Science & Medicine* doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.027.

'[Breast milk is 'no better for a baby than bottled milk'](#) screamed the press headlines towards the end of February. Just not what you want to read on your way to the Breastfeeding Drop-in! Below, Phyll Buchanan looks more closely at the manuscript of this American study that was released in full, ahead of publication, and asks what lies behind the headlines.

The sibling study

Does breastfeeding make a difference, when all other factors are the same? Researchers tried to find out by studying families where siblings were fed differently.

Population studied: children born to mothers in the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1979 Cohort, who were then followed 2 yearly from 1986. Three groups were studied:

- All mothers and their children. They were interviewed at least once.
- A sibling sample with two or more children from each family where the babies had the same kinds of milk.
- A group of discordant siblings where one, or more, was breastfed and the other(s) formula fed in infancy.

Twins and multiples were excluded.

Total sample [8,000 children from 4,000 families] numbers rounded	
Sibling sample with two or more children from a family where the babies were fed the same [7,000 children from 3,000 families]	Sibling sample where one was breastfed and the other(s) formula fed [1,700 children from 665 families]

Exposure and comparison:

- Feeding was described as breastfeeding, or bottle feeding, with no allowance for mixed feeding
- Duration of breastfeeding was measured in weeks

Eleven outcomes measured:

- Physical health (body mass index, obesity, asthma).



- Behavioural indicators (hyperactivity, parental attachment, behavioural compliance)
- Academic achievement (reading comprehension, vocabulary recognition, math ability, memory based intelligence and scholastic competence).

Time: children aged 4 to 14 years old between 1986 and 2010.

Results:

Lydia's son isn't taking it all too seriously

The first two groups (all children, and all children from families where siblings had the same kind of milk) showed advantages for the breastfed

children, reflecting expected demographic differences.

The group of children fed differently (called the discordant group) were of interest because these demographics are assumed to be constant within each family. In other words when the siblings were given different sorts of milk in the same family the only difference was the milk given as parents' education and family circumstances apply similarly to both children. However, none of the outcomes in this discordant group reached statistical significance, which was taken to mean that breastfeeding had no long-term advantage to children in this study.

Funding: from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development

Viewpoint Written from a sociological perspective the authors call for sensitivity in recognising the 'difficult trade-offs [mothers make] in the care and financial support of their children or in fulfilling their own human potential.' In other words, a mother's choice about how to feed her baby will be affected by a wide variety of social factors.

Comment: This study generated plenty of publicity and responses. I consider the biggest shortcomings to be:

- To compare ever/never breastfeeding and expect to see any difference.
- To ignore the effect of mixed feeding
- To compare weeks of breastfeeding, as long-term effects are likely to require many months of breastfeeding. Comparing months, perhaps six months versus a year or more might have given a better comparison.
- Absence of testing of the discordant sample to see whether there were differences between siblings which might explain feeding differences; e.g. age of mother, birth order, birth spacing or child illnesses affecting feeding decisions.

Further reading: [NHS Choices response](#)

- [UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative](#)
- [Breastfeeding medicine](#)
- [Slate](#)
- [Huffington post](#)

Phyll Buchanan



New Helpers in Finchampstead

Back Row:

Isabel Evans (tutor),
Emma, Jayne, Jemma,
Jacky, Mary and Nancy

Front row:

Esther, Salima, Rachel
and Barbara

Missing from photo,
Charlie, Rebecca and
Faith

Tutors:

This course was tutored
by Isabel Evans, with
some help from Phyll
Buchanan.

55.13 Too Close for Comfort

"I'm working at [Closer](#) and we're doing a piece on women breastfeeding their children and I wondered if you would be interested in speaking out about it?"

The private message in my Facebook inbox from an old colleague was intriguing.

We hadn't spoken in years. We'd worked together on women's magazines – I keep friendly with all my old colleagues.

But I always forget that they can read my newsfeed; all the stories and shared news articles about breastfeeding, birth and pregnancy, plus the odd cute picture of my four-year-old daughter. Maybe I had hinted about breastfeeding her?

I knew immediately what she wanted – a juicy, controversial piece about a woman feeding a child rather than a baby.

And yet I paused. Perhaps as someone who knows exactly how magazines work, I could turn this to my advantage and a positive piece would be published?

So we began discussions. I know there aren't that many natural-term feeders who want to be in a national publication talking about it, complete with pictures. I wasn't really that sure I wanted to be, for that matter.

We talked. She was very interested. Would I give her pictures of Lilia feeding? Yes of course. I sent her one of Lilia in her school uniform, latched on and gazing into my eyes, along with others from birth onwards.

Would I be happy to feed Lilia at a photo shoot so they could get their own shots? Sure thing.

Would I talk openly and honestly about what it's like feeding a school-age child? Absolutely.

I just had one thing to ask. Could I have full copy approval, not only of my piece, but also of any accompanying doctor's comments, so that I would have a chance to correct any myths? Ah, we'll get back to you on that.

And so it went downhill. During the "pre-chat", I knew that nothing you say to a journalist is ever truly off the record, and she used every trick in the book, in our book, to get me to say something controversial.

Will you feed her till she's seven? I don't know. The thing about natural weaning is that it is child-led, so we will just see what happens.

Do you think all women should feed this long? I think all women should do what feels right for them. I'd never presume to tell someone else what they ought to do with their child.

Each time, she set the trap and I negotiated around it.

So it wasn't a big surprise when she called me a few days later to say they had decided to go with someone else, sorry.

Someone prepared to say the openly controversial things that I wasn't?

Yes, she admitted sheepishly, you know how it works.

And so the potentially balanced article that I'd hoped for became the inflammatory piece in *Closer* that you might remember from early this year.

Not that it puts [lactivists](#) off. In April, [Sharon Spink spoke to The Sun](#) and subsequently various [TV shows](#) about her natural-term feeding. She did a great job, avoiding anything judgemental of others or proscriptive about length of feeding. And once again, the media doctors' comments were ill-informed, inaccurate and inflammatory.

Maybe I had a narrow escape. Massive media interest followed both those articles and as children get older you do have to consider how they will feel.

As for Lilia and me our breastfeeding relationship continues to evolve. At the time of writing I'm six months' pregnant, and we've gone from feeding every morning, with additional feeds occasionally, to feeding every few days with complaints about milk that "tastes funny" to, currently, a total stop because "I don't like the colostrum, Mummy" and "I will wait till the milk comes in with the baby".

So maybe in months to come you will see me in some magazine or newspaper talking about feeding my five-year-old and newborn. Or maybe I'll learn the lessons and avoid mainstream media, and share my photos ([see next page](#)) in the BfN Newsletter instead.

Emma Taylor

Emma's Breastfeeding Timeline –Birth to Four



HOW

LONG



'AFTER SIX MONTHS, THERE'S NO NEED'

Closer's Dr Christian says: "Breast milk boosts a baby's immune system, but only for the first six months.

After that, it has no effect. As long as the child is having a healthy diet, there's no harm in breastfeeding. But breastfed older children risk becoming psychologically dependent on the mother. This could result in behavioural problems as they grow up."



'DO IT FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE'

Emma Pickett, Association Of Breastfeeding Mothers, says: "Research shows breastfeeding continues

to be beneficial for many years – and there's no reason not to continue for as long as possible. It helps a child's immune system and aids brain development. Children who are breastfed are often more sociable and content, because their emotional needs are being met."

Montage by Gwen Sinclair

55.14 Is There Really No Such Thing as Bad Publicity?

In the past at the Breastfeeding Network, we've maybe not done a great deal to highlight the wonderful work we do supporting mums and families across the UK. We haven't had the time, resources or know-how available to celebrate our successes in the media. This means the vast majority of the work we do goes unnoticed by the wider world.

We're now tackling this with an increased presence on social media sites including [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Pinterest](#); with more regular press releases and comment on current relevant news stories. This is generally proving successful – for example with the '[Rugeley Mass Feed](#)' story making headlines earlier this year, we used it as an opportunity to talk about what we do, and our CEO Shereen made her radio debut on BBC Radio Staffordshire.

However, as we're all well aware, breastfeeding is a topic that generates intense debate and discussion. Newspaper columnists, online bloggers and TV producers also know this – any column with 'breastfeeding' in the title is guaranteed to generate more clicks, comments and shares on social media. The more outrageous the headline and content, the more clicks and advertising revenue it will generate.

Recently the Breastfeeding Network was one of a number of unwitting targets in a particularly inflammatory column written by Rod Liddle in The Spectator. The link is available in the article about the Rugeley mass feed but if you chose to use it be aware that this fuels the number of clicks it generates. It's safe to say, Rod does not come across as a fan of breastfeeding, and has certainly never accessed BfN support! We made the decision not to comment publicly on the details of this column, despite its content. According to Rod, BfN is a 'ghastly charitable concern... a huge middle-class charity... determined to inflict its views upon the masses, to ensure that every young mum breastfeeds and those who don't... probably shop in Aldi or Lidl'. We restrained

ourselves, clarifying exactly what we do, where we do it, why we do it, and who we support. Our response was 'The Breastfeeding Network does not comment on opinion pieces'. In doing so we made a stand against those in the media who try to frame breastfeeding as something controversial, something that needs to be debated, something that pitches mothers against mothers – all of which make it harder for mums to access support when and if they need it.

We know what we do, and that we do it well. We also know our time is better spent supporting mums and we'd prefer to write press releases celebrating our achievements rather than defending ourselves against someone who doesn't really care about what we do.

So is all publicity good publicity? Well if Rod's column had been written by a breastfeeding mum who had been left feeling that way after accessing BfN support it would be very bad publicity for us. We would need to respond and act immediately and effectively. But just being mentioned in a piece of sensational journalism that is clearly designed to offend and annoy? Well, at least Spectator readers have heard of us now!

Now, who thinks we should invite Rod to speak at the AGM?

Felicity Lambert



Wioletta with Wiktor & Daniel, read [her story](#)

55.15 Spontaneous Breastfeeding Actions

One Saturday in mid-March, over 100 women with babies sat down in a street in the Staffordshire town of Rugeley for a mass breastfeed. A week earlier none of them had been planning to do this. What had happened in the previous nine days?

It started on day one (7th March) when Emily sat down on a doorstep to rest and breastfeed her baby while shopping. Someone in the pub across the road took a photograph and posted it on the 'Spotted Rugeley' Facebook page with the following message.

"I know the sun is out n all that but there's no need to let your kid feast on your nipple in town!!! Tramp."

This caused a bit of a reaction. By day three (9th March) the 'Spotted Rugeley' Facebook account was deactivated and a different one started under new administration.

On day nine (Saturday 15 March) between 600 and 1,000 people turned up in Rugeley, and women breastfed their babies in the same place as the original photograph, on steps opposite The Shrew pub. Press coverage by the [BBC](#), [ITV](#) and [Birmingham Mail](#) followed. The BfN also issued a [statement of support](#).

Less than a month later, a mum driving in Blackpool pulled over to breastfeed her crying baby. She stopped (accidentally) in a taxi rank and got a ticket. She was [understandably cross](#) and contacted the [local press](#). A local journalist called BfN for a comment. Our response was:

'As breastfeeding is a normal part of life it affects all sorts of social situations. We hope that breastfeeding mothers and their babies will be treated with the same respect as everyone else.'

When the Daily Mail picked up the story, they quoted us as saying, '**Breastfeeding is a normal part of life.**' As a consequence we also had some attention from the [Spectator](#), which you can read about [elsewhere](#) in this issue.

And just when you thought there had been a year's worth of breastfeeding coverage in a month, Wioletta's longstanding complaint to Sports Direct caught the public imagination. There were more protests, in the form of nurse-ins, in branches of the sports shop all over the country. A [petition](#) was launched, and [Sports](#)

[Direct's Facebook](#) page was inundated with complaints. There was more [press coverage](#), with [differing levels](#) of [analysis](#). At the time of writing I was unable to track down a direct statement from Sports Direct. Wioletta contacted us and our CEO sent the CEO of Sports Direct a [letter](#).

So, there is spontaneous pro-breastfeeding stuff happening all over the country, which is not being organised by the BfN. Is this a sign that things are getting worse for breastfeeding mothers? Or is it a sign of growing confidence among young mothers, who want to breastfeed while out and about? And what does it mean to the BfN?

One of our three stated charitable [objectives](#) of the BfN is '*working towards creating a society which affirms the right of all women to breastfeed their babies*'.

When this objective was written in 1997, our expectations of how this would be achieved could not have included Facebook (born in 2004) or Twitter (born 2006). Social Media has not just opened the door for positive movements and support but is also a place where less positive opinions can be expressed, such as racism and misogyny. For example, the Tumblr and Facebook pages about [women eating on the tube](#). Why wasn't it called 'people who eat on the tube'? Unsurprisingly, this and other actions which show a lack of respect for women coincides with a [new wave of feminism](#) which appears to encompass the choice to breastfeed out and about.

We are seeing work towards our aims, but which was not instigated or organised by BfN. Events are being organised, relatively quickly, and with high levels of success, that would have been hard to do, with planning and effort, by us. There is no doubt that the hard work we have put in, and are still putting in, has helped to set the scene for this to be possible. Some things happen because their moment has come. In this case we have contributed to the moment.

The Breastfeeding Network exists in the hope of becoming successful enough to put ourselves out of work. When every woman who wants to can breastfeed for as long as she wants, unhindered and well supported, BfN has done its work. We have a huge role in supporting breastfeeding mothers in their choice but when they begin to do it for themselves it becomes a truly sustainable social change.

Veronika Tudhope

55.16 Mums' Milk Run 2014 – Every Feed Counts



It's the 2014 Mums' Milk Run 14th June 2014! Join the Party!

The event will be held in various locations across the UK but we need YOU to organise local events in your area.

Do you know someone who says she didn't breastfeed? Her baby had some breast milk, but she thinks she failed and did not breastfeed. This year's Mums' Milk Run is aimed at her. We want her to see that every feed counts and celebrate her achievement.

How do you celebrate? You have a party! Any party. You can hold your party outside or indoors, and on any scale; council park or garden shed, family fun day or cups of tea. Everyone can do something. The aim is to have an 'uplifting' event that celebrates breastfeeding mums and volunteers.

The key messages in your publicity should be

- Every feed counts!
- One drop, one day, one week one month, one year, every feed counts.
- The Breastfeeding Network will support you. Whether you are starting, stopping, finding it hard or going back to work, we are with you!
- BfN provides support for mums, from mums who understand.

To summarise, the theme is 'inclusivity' and encouraging those that might think they failed, or did not breastfeed, to realise that they did achieve

something – by giving one drop of milk or more – and to celebrate that.

Some tips for organising an event

- To enable us to maximise press coverage hold your event on the 14th June or, if that is not possible, between the 15th and 21st June.
- Find a few friends to help you.
- Decide what you want to do, when, where and who will do what.
- Inform your supervisor of your plans
- If needed, seek permission from venues.
- [Register](#) your event. Give us as much detail as possible so that we can advertise your event on the website. Follow our guidelines, which will coach you through all the organising.
- Download everything you need from the [website](#):
 - Templates for Posters, Stickers, paying-in slips, Business card
 - Template for JustTextGiving payments
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Risk Assessment Form
 - Fundraising Guidelines
 - Guidance Document
 - Sponsorship Forms
- Request donation boxes and area JustTextGiving codes by emailing mumsmilkrun@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk
- Send for paid promotional items from the Paisley office if you wish:
 - T-Shirts (£10, adult and child)
 - Pens
 - Water Bottles
 - Wrist Bands
- Publicise your event to families, children, Health Professionals, Children's Centres, Community Centres, Local Hospital, Newspapers, TV, Radio
- Have a great day, enjoy your event, raise awareness of BfN, and raise money!
- Take photos and send them in for the newsletter and website.

Money raised can be split between local and central budgets, or given just to central BfN. Income will be spent on supporting the local and national charity strategy of increasing support for women and babies.

Written with information from Kate Meads