

Feeding future generations - Lancashire's commitment

Supporting the Best Start for Children in Lancashire

Why is this so important?

The way we feed our babies makes a big difference, and we know that this impacts on babies from birth and lasts a whole lifetime.

- Evidence shows that holding baby in our arms to feed them responsively is good for baby's brain development; it helps them feel secure and supports their long term emotional health.
- We know that in the short term, illnesses such as diarrhoea & vomiting, eczema, asthma, and ear, chest & urine infections are more common in babies who are not breastfed.
- Not feeding breastmilk, increases risks of immediate and later life obesity.
- Mums benefit too! Women who breastfeed are less likely to get breast or ovarian cancers or osteoporosis.

However, in our area, not all babies and children benefit as much as they **should** from this and we would like your help to improve this. The following UNICEF short clip [Call to Action](#) explains this in more detail.

So why don't more babies benefit from this?

We have a perception in society of what a good baby does. He follows a set routine, he feeds at regular intervals, and he sleeps through the night. However evidence shows us that babies have tiny tummies and need feeding very regularly day and night. Babies are just like us - some are laid back and some need more cuddles - and what they need on one day could be different to the next. So when our baby doesn't follow what society perceives as a good baby, we may feel like we are doing something wrong.

Some mums feel embarrassed to breastfeed their babies in public, worrying that the community around them will not support them to do this. Other mums need to return to work and wonder how they could continue to breastfeed/give their babies' breast milk. Mums have the right to feed their babies where ever their baby becomes hungry, they don't need any special equipment just somewhere comfortable to sit, a smile and a few positive words.

Our Community Role

If you live or work in Lancashire you might wonder if this is really something you can have much influence over. Whether you have contact with children, families, pregnant women, teenagers, young men or grandparents, then you have more influence than you may think. So yes - this is for you.

We want to talk to you about how the environment, activities and people within your community or organisation can help to support babies and young children get the best nutrition and start in life. If we manage to do this together we will protect them from many common illnesses, help their bodies and brains grow as they should, and be strong and active members of our community.

Thinking about how it may work in your organisation may start with asking yourself "what might it look like here?" Simply displaying signs 'breastfeeding welcome' can be very reassuring for a new mum.

Children's Rights: UK law has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for a business to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. (The Equality Act, 2010)

How can we all help?

Is early nutrition something you are discussing with children? Research suggests that attitudes towards baby feeding are often formed in childhood. If a positive attitude is formed at that stage, breastfeeding is more likely to be a real option for a girl later as an expectant mother, and a boy is more likely to become a supportive partner. As an employer, are you discussing with your pregnant employees that on return to work that you will work with her to support her to continue to breastfeed/express her milk so she can continue to provide breastmilk for her baby?

New mums / and young families need care and support from partners, family, friends and the community.

What does this mean?

- ✓ Avoid suggesting that a baby “should” be in feeding or [sleeping routine](#)
 - All babies are different, feeding often and waking regularly is normal however they feed, and if mum is breastfeeding, frequent feeds and night feeds help boost her milk supply.
 - Remember evidence and advice may have changed since you had a baby
- ✓ Encourage a new mum to get support if she is struggling – help her carry on breastfeeding
 - [Breastfeeding Support for Lancashire](#)
 - Help her access a breastfeeding support group
 - Avoid suggesting formula as this may make her feel unsupported, and also decrease her milk supply
 - Ensure your organisation is empowered to speak up in support of a mum if someone criticises her feeding decision, or feeding in public.
 - Tell her what a great job she is doing
- ✓ Look after mum: if mum is well cared-for then she will be able to look after her baby
 - Bring her a drink, make sure she eats, help with housework and daily chores
 - A few positive words can make all the difference on a tough day
 - If you are an employer make sure your workforce are aware before their baby is born and after, that they can return to work and continue to provide breastmilk for their baby with your support.
 - Although it is a child’s right to be fed where ever they become hungry, and this is protected by law, having a sign or a sticker showing your support can mean a lot to new families.
 - Try not feel uncomfortable if a mum feeds in your presence: being comfortable around a breastfeeding woman helps her feel more relaxed and supported to feed her baby
 - Smile – she is just feeding a hungry baby!

The following link helps explain [How you can help support a breastfeeding mum](#) in more detail.

“Creating a supportive environment that enables women to breastfeed is a collective responsibility, and only by working together will we help new mums and babies”

- Dr Amy Brown, College of Human and Health Sciences, Swansea University.

For more information on how you can implement this Community Commitment please contact infant.feeding@lancashirecare.nhs.uk 01254 612582.

Useful resources and websites

- Breastfeeding & the workplace - <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/2/i/Acas-guide-on-accommodating-breastfeeding-in-the-workplace.pdf>
- To find out places that have signed up or to sign up your organisation, please visit ‘Breastfeeding Friendly Lancashire’ <https://www.lancashirecare.nhs.uk/Breastfeeding-Friendly-Places>

- LCC Normalising [Breastfeeding in schools and colleges](#).