

BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums



**REFLECTING
CONFERENCE
& AGM UPDATE**

A great day of networking,
learning & oxytocin!

**ON 20 YEARS
OF SUPPORT**

Looking back at where BfN
came from

**BFN IN
PARLIAMENT**

Celebrating volunteer success
in Holyrood & Westminster



HELLO!

DECEMBER 2017
WINTER
ISSUE 68

Editor's Note

Welcome to a very special 20th anniversary edition of BfN News.

This issue starts with some reflections from one of BfN's founding members, Phyll Buchanan, and a glimpse at the first ever BfN newsletter. We've come a long way in the last 20 years!

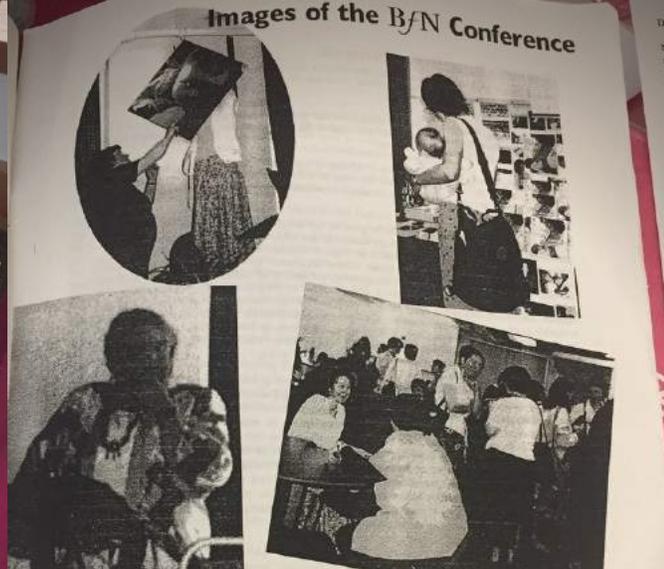
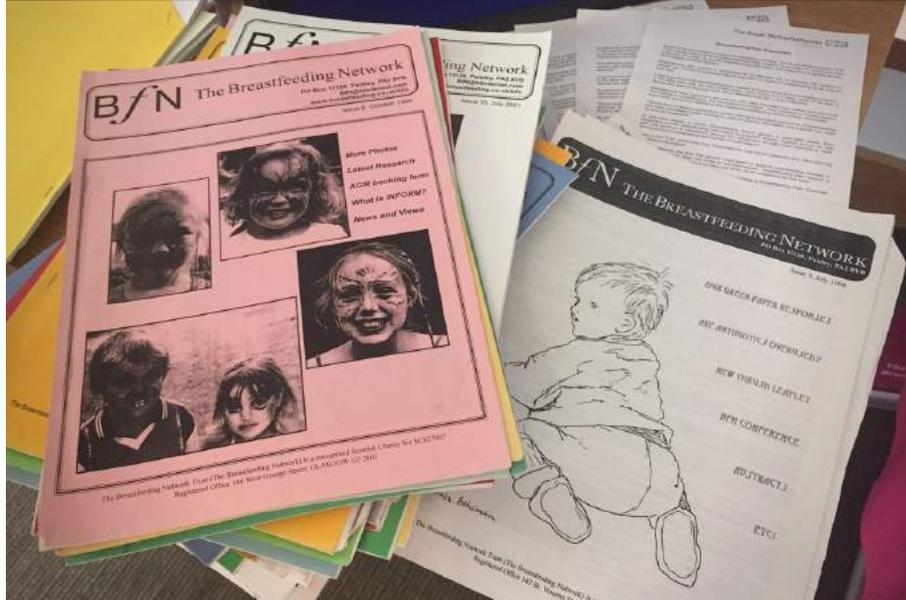
You can see highlights from the Holyrood and Westminster volunteer receptions, as well as read about our BfN conference in Birmingham and see how the Big Tea Break fundraising campaign went.

We're also celebrating all that you do to support families every single day across the country so you'll find lots of info from our local projects from Glasgow to Portsmouth, and everywhere in between - one project even had a royal visit recently! Find out more on page 13.

Our beautiful cover this time features some very special Katie Morag artwork, illustrated especially to celebrate BfN's 20th anniversary by Mairi Hedderwick, who also gave a very special presentation at our annual conference in October.

Enjoy this issue of the magazine and we wish you a very merry and peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy 2018.





WE'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY

From small beginnings BfN has grown to a highly regarded national charity supporting thousands of families across the UK. We've come a long way, and here BfN Director and founding member **Phyll Buchanan** looks back at how it all began...



Phyll & Mary celebrating at Holyrood, Sept 2017 >

"My memory of our journey began at a routine meeting of the NCTs Breastfeeding Promotion Group Committee. It was the 1st July, 1996, my middle daughter's birthday. After a tense discussion, about whether we should be working inside a high street pharmacy chain, the chair of trustees thumbed the table at us and told us that our consent would be assumed and it was up to us to show why this should not happen.

We were devastated. Our ethos, underpinned by the WHO International Code and our own Code of Conduct taught us to value our independence from infant feeding products so parents knew we were not going to be making money out of their decisions. Both the chemists chain and later the supermarket which got drawn into this were manufacturers of their own brand of infant formula as well as distributors of other formula brands and feeding products.

Back then conflicts of interest amongst health professions was really just becoming recognised, the World Health Assembly had just passed a resolution about avoiding conflicts of interest in infant feeding a few weeks before:

WHA49.15

3 (2) to ensure that the financial support for professionals working in infant and young child health does not create conflicts of interest, especially with regard to the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative;
5) to ensure that the practices and procedures of their health care systems are consistent with the principles and aim of the International Code; (http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/WHA49.15_icycn_en.pdf?ua=1)

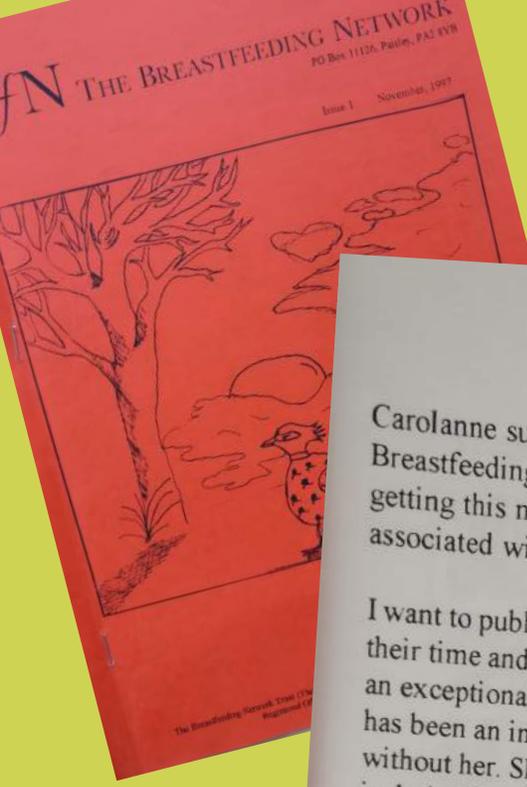
Despite all our efforts, a sponsorship deal with a supermarket was announced early in 1997. We challenged this. Mary Broadfoot wrote to the World Health Organisation seeking clarification about the status of World Health Assembly resolutions and whether a supermarket with its own brand of formula was a manufacturer in terms of the Code. To our immense sadness the initial response was unclear and it wasn't until June that we received clarification. However, it was too late and an Extraordinary General Meeting was held on the 3rd July 1997. This was our chance to explain our concerns and show how the sponsorship decision breached the trusts own handbook.

My memories of that day are hazy, speaking in front of solicitors, the motion being carried in the hall but out voted by the wider membership who hadn't heard the case for staying independent. Many of us resigned on the spot. The journalist from the BBC was in tears, along with most of us in the room. Mary Broadfoot being interviewed in the BBC radio car. At some point I was interviewed for the World Tonight on Radio 4. July 4th was our independence day and we vowed to set up another organisation for breastfeeding supporters who wished to practice independently. Libby Purves wrote an editorial in the Times applauding our stance and comparing our conflict as being a gnat compared to the elephant that some MPs were prepared to swallow (it was the time of cash for questions in the House of Commons*)

We worked flat out that summer and by the end of September the Breastfeeding Network was launched as a Scottish recognised charity. A year later we received an anonymous donation of £20,000 and launched the first single number telephone helpline for breastfeeding support. This grew in strength, was developed with a research grant from the Department of Health and we were asked to provide a shared breastfeeding helpline with the other organisations. ABM worked hard with us to make this happen and I will always remember them for taking the leap to work with us.

It has been a huge privilege to be part of BfN's history and I would like to thank everyone who made it possible."

Watch the BfN 20th anniversary film here: bit.ly/bfn20vid



The first ever BfN Newsletter, dated November 1997 - front cover (left), and opening piece by Mary Broadfoot



Some Thoughts from Mary Broadfoot

Carolanne suggested I write something uplifting and/or inspirational for this, the first newsletter of the Breastfeeding Network. I feel proud just writing that. I hope you all feel uplifted and inspired just by getting this newsletter through your door - we have achieved so much in a short time. I am proud to be associated with so many wonderful dedicated women and men.

I want to publicly thank all of you, and many others who have not joined us, but who were generous with their time and support. I will name a few, who were there in the formative stage, or who I know have put an exceptional effort into getting the Network off the ground. First and foremost, Phyll Buchanan. Phyll has been an inspiration to me, and I do not exaggerate when I say the Network wouldn't have happened without her. She has put in a tremendous amount of time and sheer hard work. Others who spring to mind include Magda Sachs, Karen Hogg, Sheila Perkins, Gill Gyte, Cherry James, Esther Shreeve, Leah Granat, Hilary Morton, James Robertson, Mandy Yearn, Jan Edye, Wendy Jones, Hilary English, Jane Britten, Veronika Tudhope, and Jacqui Stronach. It was my pleasure and privilege to meet Carole Clothier, Anabel Hands and Bernie Ross in June. Who have I missed out? Please forgive me, everyone else! In July I got so many letters and cards, with so much support and warmth, that I could not begin to answer them all. Thank you all, for your kindness, your patience, your support, and your practical help. I can honestly say one of the problems facing me personally is how to make use of the offers I have had!

The Breastfeeding Network belongs to you, its members. The Trust Deed which governs it has few rules about what it can or can't do. It does limit our sources of funding, excluding manufacturers and distributors of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats and dummies. We can make it work for us, and for breastfeeding. It's scary being so responsible - but exciting too. There are so many possibilities - we have to prioritise, and get the basics in place, but then what will we do? Let us know what you want to see the Network do - put it on the agenda if you're having a local meeting, and just brainstorm!

When I first stated that I would set up the Network, I had no idea about a number of things - first, the amount of work which it would take, and second, that we could be a real effective force for breastfeeding. I'm glad I didn't know how hard it would be. Because if I had, I possibly wouldn't have had the courage to make the commitment. We made a decision that we would only approach with information about membership those who had clearly requested that information. This has caused some problems, as we have heard of people who feel they are not well informed about our existence and ethos, but we feel sure it was the right course to take. Despite this, many have made a leap of faith, and decided to make it happen. And it is happening.

We have 59 registered Supporters, 41 Associate members, we have tutors ready to go, a training scheme which is exciting and innovative, we have a voice on local groups all over the country, where Supporters find their input as welcome as ever, and we are represented on a variety of national initiatives. We have a newsletter, we have a web site thanks to Jane Neesam and her husband Garry, and the press (thanks to Maggie Hamand's press release) covered our launch in September - so well that I am still mopping up letters following thanks to the Daily Mail! We are needed - just ask the women who have written asking for any information about breastfeeding, hoping it will work for them with their new baby. The Breastfeeding Network is here to stay. Let's grab this opportunity to really make a difference to the breastfeeding experience of women of all backgrounds, all over the UK.

Mary Broadfoot

Thank you to everyone who has shared photos, memories and stories from the last 20 years of BfN.

Mary Whitmore shares her memories:

"My membership number is 14, I'm proud of that. It would have been an earlier one but I was already a tutor with NCT and needed to close that work with care, which meant meeting with all my trainees and explaining I was going, and plans for them to continue with NCT, carefully not trying to poach them to come with me, which took a fair bit of time.

It was such an exciting time. I'd known Mary Broadfoot from when I lived in Glasgow, and she was chair of the NCT branch and I was the secretary! I remember long phone calls with Mary and with Phyll and Magda in the run up to the formation of BfN.

Somehow it was almost easier to feel a sense of belonging in the new organisation, even though we were all so far apart, because there was trust and love, we all knew this was a good thing to be doing with great people.

I remember those early days so very clearly - our basic course was a six session breastfeeding Matters course. It was liberating that course, including the things we really felt mattered with no holds barred. It didn't qualify folk for doing any supporting - just understanding the issues. I ran these courses literally back to back in my house. I don't remember advertising, it just happened word of mouth. I remember doing all the photocopying at the local supermarket in Lytham, they got to know me quite well.

No charge to folk attending, my time willingly given. Deeply empowering. Local health professionals started attending, including many health visitors... it was clear they weren't getting this information or learning experience elsewhere. I think I had 150 people through these courses in a couple of years. It fired people up, but didn't qualify them for supporting - but that was maybe a good thing, because they could fight the cause in other ways.

I remember us tutors spending months and months of time developing, and arguing about the Supporters course. It just seemed to expand and expand, and became more written work than there had been in NCT - which I found rather frustrating. Nevertheless, I remember setting a target for myself for training local Supporters whilst talking with Deborah Behrman at one of the tutors weekends at the Barn. I managed to triple my target in the allotted time. That felt really good. I then went on to set a target for training a number of local tutors. BfN expanded rapidly within travelling time of my house.

Food featured heavily at the tutors weekends, the main meals were usually made by Deborah herself, with those of us living too far away to provide hot meals coming laden with contributions of some sort or another, including plenty of alcohol. Deborah also always organised a walk for us all during the weekend. She also organised the sleeping arrangements - we bought sleeping bags and there were some mattresses and one or two beds. She always allocated those who had come the furthest and had to stay 2 nights the better sleeping arrangements. I remember the mice scuttling across us and the floors doing the night. My kids were about 5 and 2 then, and they hated me being away for the weekends, but I loved them.

One abiding memory is the car journeys down from the north. There is this particular roundabout, and a particular map of Deborahs which we found confusing (no satnavs then of course). We ALWAYS went wrong at that roundabout, often with Lorna driving at high speed convinced that she knew the way. I don't think we ever made it off the right exit first time ever. Huge merriment always ensued!

Deborah always had a knitting project on hand, and she used to let me knit a few rows whilst I was there. We still swap knitting patterns now for grandkids."



Wendy Jones remembers: "My main memory was buying a fax to communicate quickly with Phyll - seemed so high tech! And that the purple was a link to the Suffragettes"



< The original BfN team!

Below: some of the founding members who made it to the conference this year and shared their memories of those early days of BfN.

Jane Neesam reflects: "At our study day in July this year I did a introduction using a photo of me with my children the summer BfN was born, and then me with all my children and dogs 20 summers later! I reflected on the changes, it was a nice thing to do. At the study day, a local GP attended and it turned out that she had come to the first BfN drop-ins in my living room with her daughter who was 20 this year!"



BfN in Holyrood & Westminster!

As part of our 20th anniversary celebrations we asked you to nominate BfN volunteers to come along to two very special receptions - one in the Scottish Parliament building in Holyrood, and the other at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster.

The **Scottish event**, hosted by MSP Tom Arthur, took place on 13th September and we were delighted that the Scottish Minister for Public Health, **Alien Campbell** was able to come along and

speak on the night. But the people who made the biggest impact were our wonderful volunteers who spoke - **Julie Wiegand, Máirín Nicol, and Directors Caragh Gregory & Phyll Buchanan**. After the event

Tom Arthur MSP gave a group of BfN volunteers a 'behind the scenes' tour of Scottish Parliament.

Our **Westminster event** was rescheduled from May (due to the General Election) and eventually took place on 16th November, hosted by **Alison Thewliss MP**.

The Shadow Minister for Public Health, Sharon Hodgson MP, spoke about her personal breastfeeding journey and thanked the volunteers for their work. Again, the volunteers who shared their stories made a huge impact - **Gosia Kolka, Marion Paddock, Wendy Jones, Phyll Buchanan and Emma Bandey**. **Francesca Entwistle** from Unicef BFI also said thank you to BfN. After, volunteers were treated to a tour of the Houses of Parliament, led by Alison Thewliss.

A huge thank you to our wonderful volunteer photographers for capturing so many brilliant images of the events - **David Woodward** in Holyrood & **Garry Neesam** in Westminster. A big thank you also to the fabulous BfN bakers who made our beautiful and delicious birthday cakes - Erika Van Der Westhuizen and Hannah Ryan. They really were show stoppers!

Bringing families together

BfN has always been about families and an extra special family story has come out of our 20th anniversary celebrations.

Garry Neesam (husband of the lovely Jane), was our fantastic volunteer photographer at the Westminster event. When he sent through the images he mentioned that he had a connection with one of the volunteers there.

Garry tells us: "Jane and I have been doing our family trees off and on for the last 28 years or so. About 3 years ago I discovered that my mother (in her 70s) had an older sister she never knew about. My new aunt (then in her 90s) had a granddaughter and we made contact. We connected on Facebook and were able to arrange for my Mum to return to Scotland to meet her older sister for the first time.

She subsequently visited 2 or 3 times before her sister sadly died. Julie Peterkin is her granddaughter and is a member of BfN in Ayr. Jane was able to meet her this year at the BfN conference. My mother, brother and sister have all been able to visit Scotland to meet mum's sister, Julie, and her family, but I have not yet had the opportunity. Julie was at the reception at the Houses of Parliament and we met for the first time in Portcullis House!"

Julie adds; "When I contacted Jane for the first time she said to me 'that's two families we are related through' which I thought was lovely."



Julie & Jane

Big Tea Break 2017

This October saw another successful Big Tea Break to raise money for the Drugs in Breastmilk Information Service which provides evidence-based information to enable mothers to breastfeed their babies for as long as they wish and to provide information on the safety of medicines for each mother and baby pair.



A total of 81 runners took part in our virtual run, covering either 20 miles over the month of October, sharing it with a friend, or the 20 minute challenge. Purple vests were everywhere!

We had runners, walkers, and everything in between, and together we raised **£1131.65** for DiBM, not including additional sponsorship raised through our JustGiving page.

To see who's raised, and who's still raising what, click here:

www.justgiving.com/breastfeedingnetwork





SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE



Kim Townsend has been working as Social Media Officer for BfN for 6 months. She originally trained as a Broadcast Journalist, and worked in BBC local radio before joining the charity sector where she worked for Media Trust supporting charities across the UK with media and communications projects.

"Over the last few months I have been auditing our social media channels. I have been figuring out things like who our followers are, and what we have done online that has worked well, and what hasn't. The results have been really interesting.

We've found out that on Twitter we're reaching mostly health professionals (midwives, health visitors, breastfeeding supporters) and on Facebook we are reaching more Mums, mostly between the ages of 25 and 44. This is useful for us to know when we are promoting services we offer to different types of people. We have also found that the Drugs in Breastmilk Facebook page is our most active community, with many messages for support every day, lots of page visits, and good interaction with our posts. This is likely because people are coming to this page regularly to get support, which has made us wonder whether we should expand the support we offer through Facebook to our other pages.

So what are we going to do about this? Well, early next year we will be surveying anyone who messages us for support on Facebook to find out information like, why they chose to message us online rather than ring the helpline, and whether we are supporting different types of people online than on the phone, and whether the types of questions they are asking are different. The answers will help us in expanding our offer of support online.

You may have also seen that we have recently launched our own blog (www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/blog) on the BfN website, which gives us a way of writing up our own articles, thoughts, information, campaigns etc that can be shared on social media (if anyone is interested in writing a guest post you are welcome!). We are also in the process of re-invigorating our Instagram profile, which we think might reach younger followers than Facebook. And in general, we are trying to be more strategic about how we use social media. It's a great tool for reaching people, communicating about what we do, providing support, campaigning, influencing decision makers, talking to our peers, and much more, and it can play a big part in helping us meet our aims."

Multi Agency Team Pilot - Portsmouth



We have recently seen the beginning of the breastfeeding multi agency pilot. The Breastfeeding Network, Solent NHS Trust, Portsmouth Hospital Trust and Portsmouth City Council have come together to form this exciting team of five breastfeeding supporter workers. Together we will be collaborating with maternity and delivering support to mums in the first few days with evidence based information.

There have been some challenges in bringing this team together, things such as IT have been particularly tricky. Having a multi agency team means we are all trained in different areas and cannot all access the same systems, we have had to overcome these hurdles by putting new procedures into place. Procedures such as note recording and lone working safety protocols. Although we are all used to working differently, with different training and work experience, there are many things that have been extremely positive, working together has allowed us to learn from each other and bring our ideas together.

The Breastfeeding Network has built an extremely good relationship up with these agencies and this has helped us work alongside them in this team.

Eleanor Johnson

Breastfeed Happily at Ayr United



Earlier this year Alison Thewliss MP wrote to all football clubs in Scotland to ask them to consider declaring their stadiums as being breastfeeding friendly.

Ayr United Football Club was the first Scottish football club to sign up to a breastfeeding support scheme by signing up to our Ayrshire Breastfeed Happily Here initiative, and BfN supporters went along with Alison to meet players and unveil the new pitch side banner.

Alison Thewliss MP said: "By making a positive declaration that their stadium and grounds are breastfeeding friendly, clubs like Ayr United are letting people know that breastfeeding is normal and need not be a taboo issue. Football crowds have changed a lot over the years and stadiums are becoming a much more family friendly environment. The vast majority of clubs understand the need to build future generations of fans and it's great to see clubs like Ayr United getting the message out there that they welcome families and breastfeeding mums."

For a full list of Breastfeeding Friendly football clubs, visit www.alisonthewliss.scot/breastfeeding-at-football

If your local club isn't listed, why not pay them a visit or write to suggest they get involved?



What BfN means to me...

By Lou Everett, Trainee Helper and Administrator, Sandwell BfN Project

"When I was asked to write about 'What BfN means to me' the first thing that came to my mind was "Support" but if I'm totally truthful you mean a whole lot more to me than that.

I first came into contact with BfN in November 2015, a fraught new Mummy with a new baby, wanting to breastfeed with all my heart but finding it so, so difficult. Today, we couldn't be further away from those tears and anxiety of the first few days - and I owe that to the support I have received from BfN helpers and the groups they attend. It is because of those days, and the support I received that I am now training to be a helper myself, driven by the memories of those early days and to follow in the footsteps of those wonderful women before me.

I have also been fortunate enough to temporarily work for BfN doing administration work. I have found it so interesting seeing BfN and the work 'we' do from a different angle, helping in the background to keep our team running smoothly. Helping to organise events, making sure that Mums (and their families) feel supported and a part of a community that many don't even know exist yet, but that once they are a part of it they will always remember.

My BfN journey has given me a new path in life, a new job and new friendships that I will (hopefully) always have!"

The BfN 20th Anniversary Conference & AGM



The 20th Anniversary Conference and AGM was held on Saturday 7th October at The Priory Rooms in Birmingham. A total of 137 people, a mixture of staff, volunteers and healthcare professionals, attended to celebrate with us and hear speakers such as Dr Amy Brown, Dr BJ Epstein, Dr Kirsty Darwent and Mairi Hedderwick.

Feedback forms were gathered, and 95% of attendees rated the day as either good or excellent - a great success!



In addition to the variety of interesting speakers, there were also three break-out sessions to choose from directed by Dr BJ Epstein, Lynn Timms and Dr Kirsty Darwent, or a Walk and Talk to discuss maternal mental health and add a couple of miles onto the 20 mile virtual run total.



During the lunch break, Lorna Hartwell, along with other founding members, led a celebration of the beginnings of BfN, before cutting the birthday cake and having a birthday sing-song!

< The BfN Tomboobla was a big success with many delegates heading home happily with prizes as well as a new knitted boob!

Best Newcomer Award

Huge congratulations to BfN Helper in Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead, Elizabeth Sweeney.

Project Co-ordinator **Rebecca Reeves** said: "Elizabeth completed her Helper Course earlier this year. She is such a dedicated volunteer and is always willing to go the extra mile. Her commitment and enthusiasm won her the 'Best Newcomer' award for Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead BfN.



She was voted winner by all the WAM peers, and the award is very well deserved."

Well done and thank you Elizabeth for all the time you give!

Do you work with an amazing volunteer you think deserves a bit of extra recognition?

Email julie.weigand@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk with details and we'll include them in the next issue of BfN News!

★ Looking for a last minute Christmas gift?



Earlier this year we launched our new Friends scheme - anyone can join if they want to support our work but are not able to commit to training or volunteering.

A BfN Friendship could make a great Christmas gift for new parents or grandparents to be - perhaps you could include a limited edition Katie Morag print and make it a super special present!

Find out more about the Friends scheme at www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/become-a-member

For more gift ideas including NBH diary covers and knitted breasts, visit www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/shop

Project Leads Meetup

On **Wednesday 29th November**, BfN Project Leads travelled from all over the country to Birmingham to meet up for the day and share best practice and good news stories.

As part of this this packed meeting they received finance training from **Heather Hartwell** and an update on HR policies and support from **Julie McNeil**. They also spent time discussing sustaining projects after funding cuts, looking at the upcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) & Information Governance (IG) Audit with **Clare Farquhar**, as well as data collection and reporting, volunteers policies and handbook.

The day went really well and it was great to have Julie and Heather travel to join the rest of the project leads.

The event was arranged by Programme Managers, **Nina White** and **Anthea Tenant-Ayles**. Huge thanks also go to **Nina Adams** for organising a fabulous company, **Cowling WLG**, to give us the meeting room space and catering for free as part of their Corporate Responsibility Programme.

Unicef Baby Friendly Conference 2017



As usual BfN had a presence at the Unicef BFI conference, which took place in **Telford** this year.

Our stand was extremely busy from even before the conference officially began, with our handmade '**boobles**' selling out by lunchtime on the first day! Our **Katie Morag Christmas cards** were also a hit and once **Wendy Jones** joined the stand on day two, sales of our 'Friends of Drugs in Breastmilk' packs went through the roof!

Our Online Training Development Officer **Hayley Riggs** spoke to hundreds of delegates over the two days, promoting our soon-to-be-launched online training courses for health care professionals.

BfN were represented in two of the **poster presentations** - one by Wendy on the topic of **perinatal mental health** in the breastfeeding woman, and another about the **Breastfeed Happily Here Scheme in Ayrshire**.

Everyone who visited our stand was extremely complimentary about BfN volunteers and services, with many commenting that they didn't know what they'd do without us!

Another highlight for BfN was on day two when BfN volunteers and staff members at Camden Baby Feeding Team, **Smita Hanciles** and **Zamzam Elmi** spoke movingly about their own personal experiences and received a standing ovation from delegates. Zamzam talked about how just one person make a difference for her on her breastfeeding journey and how that inspired her to train as a peer supporter herself.

Kate Meads (Supporter, Supervisor & Business Development Manager) sums up BFI:

"There were some amazing talks this year at the conference, but the one by **Dr Nicholas Embleton** stood out for me as a reminder of how breastmilk is always so much more than anything we can make ourselves and a real reminder that the adverts portraying breastmilk substitutes as 'close to or almost as good as' breastmilk is simply misleading. The development of human milk has been millions of years in the making and perfecting rather than around 100 years of attempting to mimic!"



Gut microbiota in preterm infants: Health, disease and nutrition - Dr Nicholas Embleton, Consultant Neonatal Paediatrician at Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:

Our understanding of the role of gut microbiota has increased dramatically in the last 10 years with the advent of molecular methods of identification. Data now show that humans carry hundreds of different species of bacteria, with many potential roles in health and disease. Breastmilk has its own unique set of bacteria (the 'breastmilk microbiome'), which exist in the mammary gland. Nature is clever: the bacteria are not simply innocent bystanders, they are there because they fulfil a functional role. Breastmilk-associated microbes are one potential reason why short (e.g. gastrointestinal function) and long-term (cognitive) outcomes differ between babies who are breast or formula milk fed. Preterm infants are born, and cared for, in an abnormal environment. Hospital care practices, intravenous nutrition and antibiotics all affect the pattern of gut microbes. Emerging evidence also strongly associates the pattern of gut microbes in preterm infants with the risk of devastating diseases such as necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) and sepsis. It seems likely that one of the reasons for lower risks in preterm infants who receive breastmilk is the pattern and acquisition of gut microbes.

His presentation will be uploaded to the Unicef Baby Friendly webpage soon so keep an eye out for it!

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/training/conferences/annual-conference

Next year the Baby Friendly conference will be in Liverpool and we hope BfN will be represented there again.

If you can crochet, please start making boobles now!

NBH Update

It's been a busy time at the helpline as always, and we've noticed a significant increase in the numbers of calls received over the last couple of months - perhaps cuts in face to face services are really making a difference now, our helpline volunteers have never been more needed.

Over the last month or so we've been trialling a new online rota system called **Three Rings** - with the aim that volunteers can schedule themselves into a slot if they want to, and will be able to see which times they are most required. We'll continue this trial during early 2018. If you're an NBH volunteer, talk to your Link Worker about how to use the system.

We have had study days in Paisley and Slough and have more coming up in **February: 3rd - York, 9th - Sandwell** - save the date if you're in those areas.

As always in January, we'll be holding a **'Have a Go'** week - to encourage anyone who has ever trained as a helpline volunteer to log in and 'have a go' - it doesn't matter how long ago you last took a call - your Link Worker can help you back onto the line if you want to give it a go! **Have A Go week will be 15th-21st January** - maybe make taking a call your New Years Resolution?

in 2018 we're also launching a series of **webinars** specifically for NBH volunteers - you'll be invited to log on and watch an interactive presentation on a different topic each month, with issues covered including responsive feeding, tongue tie, managing anxiety and medications. The first session will take place on 16th January and a full programme will go out in the next NBH newsletter and on the NBH volunteers Facebook page.

We have produced a Polish language version of our NBH poster. >

If you'd like a copy of this to display locally, contact: **felicity.lambert@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk**

Thanks to all who volunteer their time on the helpline.

The poster features the National Breastfeeding Helpline logo at the top left, which includes a stylized figure of a person holding a baby. To the right of the logo is the Polish text 'Infolinia Karmienia Piersią'. Below the logo, there are two columns of text: 'For confidential information and support' on the left and 'Jeśli chcesz uzyskać informacje i wsparcie' on the right. The central text reads 'Talk to a mum who knows about breastfeeding' in large, bold letters. Below this, it says 'Porozmawiaj z promotorką karmienia piersią (wolontariuszką z doświadczeniem)'. At the bottom, there is a large phone number '0300 100 0212' and the website 'www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk'. There are also smaller details about operating hours: '9.30am to 9.30pm 7 days a week' and '9.30-21.30 7 dni w tygodniu'.

Marathon Man!

Most of our fundraisers are our volunteers so it's great to hear when others are moved to raise funds for BfN too. Rebecca Reeves, Co-ordinator of the Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead project sent us this picture of her husband Gary who recently ran the Purbeck 16 and raised £454.48 for BfN. This race sounds very challenging - 16.5 miles, predominately off road, and has around 2323 feet of climbs! Well done Gary and thanks for your support!



If you've been inspired by our virtual runs this year and fancy taking on a challenge for BfN, why not join our BfN Active Group on Facebook?

Email **clare.farquhar@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk** to join. It's a very supportive, encouraging group and there's no need to be running marathons to be part of it! They'll cheerlead you on, whatever your target!

And if you are thinking of taking on a challenge in the new year, perhaps consider raising a few pounds for BfN at the same time? It can all be done via our JustGiving page: **www.justgiving.com/breastfeedingnetwork**

Multi-tasking!

A BfN trained Helper in Tower Hamlets, **Divya Sehgal**, shared these fab photos with us as an example of a multi-tasking mum - getting glammed up and breastfeeding at the same time!

Some inspiration for those Christmas parties! Thanks for sharing Divya! If you or the mums you're working with have questions about the safety of while breastfeeding, read our info sheet on that covers everything from hairdressing to pedicures, massages to waxing here: **bit.ly/BFandBT**



Alison Thewliss joins Glasgow Helper trainees



On December 1st **Alison Thewliss MP** visited Eastbank Health Promotion in the East End of Glasgow to hear from mums who trained as BfN Peer Supporters. The volunteers will be helping at NHS groups in Easterhouse, Dennistoun and Baillieston and on local maternity wards.

UNICEF Baby Friendly Call to Action

Alison Thewliss has been busy! On 5th December she hosted an event with Unicef at the Houses of Parliament to encourage MPs to sign up to the Unicef Call to Action campaign on breastfeeding. Almost 2,500 people wrote to their MPs asking them to join in and 90% of all MPs were contacted. More than 40 MPs turned up on the day and pledged their support. You can find the full list of MPs here:

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/mps-support-breastfeeding



A royal visit!

Hornsey Road Childrens Centre had a visit from the Duchess of Cambridge recently. Hannah Leonard, Project Co-ordinator at BfN Islington who run a breastfeeding support group at the centre, had the opportunity to briefly meet with Kate. The visit was organised by Family Action who the Duchess works with so the focus was not on breastfeeding but Hannah managed to have a chat with her about it: "We talked briefly about the group and what sorts of issues mums come with, and I explained the range of other ways in which we support mums. She asked whether we felt there was too much pressure on mums to breastfeed and I said we find that it is not being able to meet their own expectations/intentions that mums find most emotionally affecting, which is why they so need our support." Hannah is following up by sending the Duchess more info about BfN and the work we do, particularly around perinatal mental health.



Home-Start HOST Oldham, Stockport & Tameside

Denise Farrow, Infant Feeding Services Manager at the BfN/HomeStart HOST project sent us these pictures of what they've been up to.

Right: Tameside HV teams & local Children's Centres have been awarded the prestigious Baby Friendly Award.



HOST runs antenatal support groups, offers bedside support at Tameside General, works in partnership with midwives and HCPs, organises events to raise awareness of breastfeeding, trains volunteers and runs Infant Feeding groups in local Children's Centres. They have 30 peer support volunteers and 12 paid staff working in the community and recently received coverage in local press: bit.ly/HOSTnews HOST also run a successful Breastfeeding Welcome scheme involving local businesses.



CONGRATULATIONS TO...

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