

# BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums

## WHAT DO WOMEN REALLY WANT

When talking about  
breastfeeding? Dr Amy Brown

## #FEEDME #NOTSORRY

A review of recent  
breastfeeding campaigns

## BECOMING A GRANDMA

Wendy Slater shares her  
Australian adventures





# HELLO!

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## Editor's Note

**Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of BfN News.**

In this month's edition we think you'll find loads to keep you interested and informed. Our guest writer this time is Dr Amy Brown, who some of you may have seen present at our conference last year. Here she tells us more about her research into what women really want from breastfeeding support.

Turn to page 10 to read Wendy Slater's first hand account of becoming a grandmother and supporting her son and daughter in law as they became new parents. And on page 5 there's an article about fathers' mental health issues written by Mark Williams.

As always, we have a round up of project news and info from across the network and a list of all our newly qualified volunteers.

Thanks to our fabulous cover star this time, Ellie Duckham.

Please do let us know what you think of this edition of BfN News and get in touch if you have suggestions for articles for future newsletters. We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the Breastfeeding Network as we head into our 21st year supporting families.



# WHAT DO WOMEN REALLY WANT WHEN IT COMES TO TALKING ABOUT BREASTFEEDING?

The topic of how we can better support women to breastfeed is always going to be passionate. If you read headlines or social media debates, you might believe that we should quietly drop the subject – that talking about it just creates arguments and makes those who struggled feel guilty. But how do those at the centre of this – mothers who are feeding babies – really feel? What helps? What doesn't? And what should be avoided at all costs?

A few years ago I decided to find out, asking what mothers who had recently breastfed (even for just one feed) 'really wanted' and over 1100 told me their story. The core message was that we should keep going. Over 86% of mothers believed that it was important to promote breastfeeding. However just 10% of mothers believed that the messages out there were doing a great job.

So what did they want to see changed? Mothers came up with five key ideas.

## 1. Breast is not best; it is the normal way to feed a baby

This makes a lot of sense. After all, when did telling anyone that something was a good idea enable them to do it? We all know how to act in a way best for our health, but how many manage it? The breast is best message simply sets women up to want to breastfeed, but doesn't help them do it at all.

Best is also a very loaded word. How many of us really pick the best option every time? By saying breast is best, it's very easy to follow up with 'but formula is good enough'. Best can also be interpreted as the best mothers breastfeed, or that mothers who don't breastfeed aren't trying their best which isn't helpful to anyone. And anyway, how can something biologically normal be best?

## 2. Tell us the truth – breastfeeding can be challenging

Think back – just how much time did you spend thinking about the birth when pregnant rather than the small baby that you would have to care for afterwards? We don't do enough to prepare families in general about how to care for babies. Due to modern living for many of us the first new-born we even hold will be our own, meaning we've lost family knowledge of how breastfeeding works.

And mothers really felt that. They felt detail around aspects such as how much babies feed, cluster feeds and feeding at night was glossed over in favour of promoting breastfeeding as this great thing. I think sometimes we get so scared of putting women off breastfeeding that we romanticise what it will be like. Of course, breastfeeding can be wonderful and rewarding, but it's not often simple and easy, at least not at the start.

And this is where mothers felt they were being let down. They weren't prepared for what turned out to be normal baby behaviour, and thought something was wrong. Difficulties that could have been fixed with faster identification and support became the issue that led to them stopping before they were ready. And they often then blamed themselves, thinking everyone else found it far easier.



By Dr Amy Brown, Associate Professor, Child Public Health, Swansea University & Author of 'Breastfeeding Uncovered: Who really decides how we feed our babies?'

# WHAT DO WOMEN REALLY WANT...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

## 3. Don't focus just on the health reasons

When we do talk to families about why breastfeeding is a good idea, often the protective health factors are top of the list. However, mothers talked about how other talking about wider benefits could really help. One reason for this was because breastfeeding wasn't a guaranteed protector from all illnesses, so if their baby did get sick, they felt maybe their milk wasn't good enough. Or, others around them who weren't so supportive of breastfeeding used that as a reason why breastfeeding didn't matter.

As one mother said 'Breastfeeding is about so much more than health. It is about cuddles, and closeness and bonding. It saves time, costs nothing and you can never forget to take it out with you. Why don't we emphasise these things more?'



## 4. Recognise that every feed makes a difference

This one is a big of a challenge but so important. Of course, we want to promote the gold standard of six months exclusive breastfeeding continuing alongside solids for as long as mum and baby want. But the reality is that we're in a place right now where many mums feel that is challenging. Until we are in a place where mothers are fully supported from all angles, many will struggle, but every extra day they breastfeed can make a difference.

Mothers talked about feeling proud because they'd managed six weeks when they only thought they'd manage one. Or they'd breastfed for three days when they thought they'd never try. If we celebrate these personal achievements, these are the mothers who might breastfeed twice as long next time, or go out and spread a positive message about trying in their communities that might be orientated towards bottle feeding.

Others talked about how helpful it was to focus just on the next few days rather than being told they needed to breastfeed for many months more. They found when they focussed on just getting to the end of the week, they ended up breastfeeding for far more weeks than they thought they would.

## 5. Target a wider audience

This is at the heart of the matter for me. As one mum said 'We definitely need to be telling new mums about why breastfeeding is so good, but I think this should also be extended to everyone else. Everyone needs to know why breastfeeding is so important for mums to stand a chance of making this work'.

How do we do that? Support mothers by all means but we also must look to how we can make changes on a wider level. Talk to fathers and grandparents. Maybe take some information leaflets to your local GP. Campaign for better paid maternity and paternity leave. Go into schools and talk to children. Ensure Formula companies don't get away with advertising their products. Use some of the tactics formula companies use to get the message out to parents about how great breastfeeding is. Talk to local businesses to make premises breastfeeding friendly. Highlight the benefits to employers about making breastfeeding friendly. Make it visible. Keep sharing positive images and resources that show breastfeeding in a positive light, or indeed just show breastfeeding at all.

As the Baby Friendly Initiative recognise in their Call to Action, 'We need to change the conversation around breastfeeding by stopping laying the responsibility for this major public health issue in the laps of individual women and acknowledging the role that politics and society has to play at every level.' And we can all do something to bring about that change. Even if it's just telling a local mum you know what a great job she's doing.

Read more about Amy's research here: <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/bfm.2015.0175>

And the Baby Friendly Initiative Call to Action here: [www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/advocacy/call-to-action](http://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/advocacy/call-to-action)

## Get ready to run for BfN!



**Time to dust off those trainers - BfN's Mums' Milk Run is back!**

Like last year, we will be encouraging everyone to get involved in our virtual run - 20km during May - do it all in one go or split it up however you want - you can run, swim, walk or even scoot it if you want to! This year we have a very special new medal on offer too for those taking part... watch our social media pages and the BfN site for more info!

You could also consider organising local active events to bring the community together and help raise awareness of and funds for BfN.

Whatever you decide to do, rope in friends, family, colleagues, children and get out, get active and have fun!

**Find out more, and sign up for the run at [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/mums-milk-run](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/mums-milk-run)**

## South Hampshire BfN Annual Study Day



This year's South Hampshire BfN study day - the seventh one - took place on Saturday 24th February at St James Hospital, Southsea.

The event was a sell out for the second year in a row and over 60 delegates attended, including health visitors, neonatal nurses, peer supporters from BfN and other organisations, midwives and more.

Speakers included Dr Amy Brown, Wendy Jones, who talked about supporting breastfeeding in women with chronic illnesses; Beth Chapman, who spoke about birth trauma, Michelle Francis-Dent and Chris McKensie who discussed their multi-agency approach to breastfeeding support; and Mark Williams who talked about the importance of fathers' mental health - you can read more about Mark on the next page.

Delegates enjoyed a delicious buffet supplied by Make at Aldingbourne Enterprise ([www.aldingbournetrust.co.uk](http://www.aldingbournetrust.co.uk)), a great charity which is also one of the Portsmouth BF welcome scheme venues. These tasty BfN cakes were provided by Sugar Mum Fairy!



## Five year Service Awards



A big well done to **Jacqui Shadrache** and **Ferhana Hejazi** from **BfN Windsor and Maidenhead (WAM)** who both received their five year service awards from The Breastfeeding Network in February.

Project Co-ordinator **Rebecca Reeves** tells us: "They have both been so dedicated to their volunteering roles within BfN and have always shown commitment to WAM. On average a person generally volunteers for an organisation for two years so this is a great achievement for them. I would like to thank both Jacqui and Ferhana for all their support and time - long may it continue!"

Thank you Jacqui and Ferhana for all your hard work and commitment!



You can check out tweets from the event by searching for **#PompeyBF** on Twitter.



# A father's view on postnatal mental health issues

**Mark Williams is an international Fathers' Mental Health campaigner, author and keynote speaker who also campaigns for all parents, including the return of the MBU Unit in Wales after his own experience with his wife Michelle in 2004.**  
[www.reachingoutpmh.co.uk](http://www.reachingoutpmh.co.uk)

Mark spoke at the recent BfN study day in Hampshire. As part of this talk he explained about the importance of supporting all parents. Delegates were stunned to hear that at present there is no word of fathers in the Nice Guidelines on antenatal and postnatal health. During the talk delegates learned that one in ten fathers suffers from some form of postnatal depression, and anxiety is even higher, yet they are not screened or assessed like mothers who have a history of mental illness are.

In his talk, Mark made clear the importance of mental health, as the biggest killer in men under fifty in the UK is suicide. Postnatal depression can look different in fathers than mothers, with men often using negative coping skills - their behaviour often changes - like Mark's did while looking after his wife. Mark said he even broke his hand while feeling angry and he avoided people while experiencing suicidal thoughts during the postnatal period.

Mark has been campaigning and has spoken in Parliament about why we need to support all parents. Sometimes even if only the dad is suffering, this has an impact on the whole family. There needs to be a holistic approach as we know that fatherhood has totally changed with more stay at home dads and single fathers bringing up their children alone than ever before in the UK.

We also need to think about same sex couples and the lack of support for them, and how birth trauma effects everyone. Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder - experiencing and witnessing life threatening events and seeing loved ones hurt or in pain has a massive impact on fathers and therefore on their families too.

After suffering for years in silence, Mark now travels far and wide to spread the word by hosting workshops and running training with Dr Jane Hanley. Mark has spoken to over 2000 fathers from around the world and he started the **#Howareyoudad** campaign to make sure dads are asked about their mental health too.



**International Fathers Mental Health Day, taking place on 18th June this year will focus on educating people about the importance of fathers mental health.**

## NEW SUPPORTERS IN WOLVERHAMPTON, SUMMER 2017

A group of Wolverhampton's Helpers successfully completed their Supporters course, increasing the already considerable volunteer skill and experience set in this very active part of the country.

Already busily volunteering at breastfeeding groups and on their local postnatal ward, the Supporter trainees qualified as Helpline Supporters during the course - many active on the Helpline already - and have since qualified as probationary Supporters.

Supported by BfN Supervisor and Tutor Diana West, the new probationary Supporters are now hard at work acquiring the experience and units they need to complete their probationary period and become full BfN Supporters in the near future.



Congratulations to the Wolverhampton BfN Helpers who completed their Supporter training in June 2017 - pictured are (top row) Karla, Juliet, Sam, Jen, Lucy, Shamim and (bottom row) Abby, Jess, Jenny and Donna. The group includes mothers and health professionals, who work hard to provide breastfeeding information and support in Wolverhampton.

# NORTH LANCS



Just before Christmas, we sadly got the news that BfN would no longer be the commissioned provider of peer support in the North Lancashire area. After over 8 years supporting thousands of mums and working alongside many healthcare professionals, the 'Star Buddies', as they are known locally, have built an incredible reputation for their empathetic and well informed support.

As well as being fortunate enough to have a paid team, we have also had a wonderful army of volunteers and these have been key to the amazing work we have done.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all the hundreds of volunteers over the years who have supported families in our local groups, clinics and on the postnatal wards at Royal Lancaster Infirmary and Blackpool Teaching Hospital.

We have very recently had two Helper courses running, training 24 enthusiastic new volunteers. We very much hope they will be able to continue to support local mums, putting their training to valuable use.

One mum, Sophie, was keen to share why she is so passionate about supporting other mums which clearly shows the fantastic work we do.



## Becoming a Star Buddy

"I looked down at my 1 day old baby girl who was screaming at the top of her lungs, and tried desperately to get her to latch and feed. She had been screaming for what felt like hours. I was tired, overwhelmed and felt like she didn't want my milk. It's so hard becoming a mum and even harder when you feel like you can't even meet your baby's most simple need...but then came Kate, a shining star in the dark (I know it sounds cliché but it really felt that way) and Kate listened and helped.

It's really down to Kate, a star buddy that came to visit me in those first few days, that I am still having such a wonderful experience with breastfeeding and why I have decided to train to be a star buddy myself. It's amazing that in just 16 weeks I will be able to help other mums through any struggles, and the training is so interesting. Not only am I learning so much about breastmilk and positioning but I'm also learning really important life skills such as active listening and how to talk to people without putting my point of view across. When I'm qualified I hope to volunteer regularly at the hospital and in support groups."



**Sophie Paluch - Mum to Ivy, 17 months (still breastfeeding!)**

**A huge thank you to everyone who has been involved over the years in the Star Buddy scheme in North Lancs, and in Blackpool. Everyone at BfN was devastated to hear the funding decisions that were made locally. We hope to find ways for everyone who want to continue to be involved with BfN to do so.**

**Thank you for all your support and hard work and for all you've contributed to your local communities.**

## APPG UPDATE

**The Breastfeeding Network continues to be an active member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on infant feeding.** The group is led by MP Alison Thewliss and meets four times a year. The next meeting takes place on the 20th March 1-3pm in the Wilson Room of Portcullis House, Westminster. Anyone with an interest in infant feeding is welcome to attend. In recent meetings there has been an increase in numbers of MPs attending, and this is entirely down to constituents contacting their MPs and asking them to go along, so please do consider approaching your local representative and inviting them to take part. For more information, visit [www.infantfeedingappg.uk](http://www.infantfeedingappg.uk)



## Code Monitoring for Baby Milk Action

**Rebecca Verlander, BfN volunteer and Project Administrator for the Islington project tells us about a new role she is involved with, supporting Baby Milk Action:**

"I have been volunteering with Baby Milk Action for a few months now and it is a wonderful charity. As many of you know, UK law bans stage one formula from being promoted or advertised in the UK. Unfortunately this is often violated and the BMA Facebook page allows members of the public to report code violations. This is often supermarkets reducing formula but can be from various sources.

My role as an admin for the page is to respond to any visitor posts and advise the next steps. We often ask the poster if they are willing to escalate the complaint to the manager or Head Office and to consider becoming a member of BMA.

We also receive lots of posts that, although break the WHO International code, do not contravene UK law. This includes promotion of follow on milk, teats and bottles etc. We then advise the poster that we will still make a note of it for our records.

Keeping the UK free of first stage formula promotion protects babies. It stops formula companies being able to provide incentives to parents to buy a certain brand of formula. It also helps stop promotion of formula over breastfeeding. Baby Milk Action play a vital role in stopping UK law violations and it is a privilege to volunteer for them."

Spotted an illegal formula promotion in store (like the one here), in print or online? Please do take a pic and report it - see [www.babymilkaction.org.uk/rules-pt5](http://www.babymilkaction.org.uk/rules-pt5) for more info.



Interested in volunteering for Baby Milk Action? Email [felicity.lambert@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:felicity.lambert@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) and we'll put you in touch with them.



## What BfN means to me...

**By Sarah Turner, BfN Director, Supporter & Helpline Volunteer**

"My involvement with the Breastfeeding Network started after I found feeding my first daughter to be the hardest thing I have ever done. I knew I wasn't alone in this, and I wanted offer other women the support that I had been lucky enough to find.

Fast-forward a few years, and now BfN is a central part of my life. Volunteering, whether in person, on the phone, or online, is one of the most important things I do. It has shaped how I listen, and how I interact with people. It has also made me really understand how much of this sort of help is needed - and lacking - throughout the country.

To that end, I am thrilled to have been recently appointed as a Director, to be able to devote more of my time and professional skills to help BfN evolve as necessary to support volunteers, staff and parents alike."

Find our more about the rest of the BfN Board of Directors on our website:

[www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/bfn-board-of-directors](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/bfn-board-of-directors)





# Breastfeeding in the spotlight

By Kim Townsend,  
BfN Social Media Officer

Over the last couple of months we've seen some great breastfeeding campaigns spreading online, on billboards, and on TV. It is so encouraging to see messages about breastfeeding reaching a wide audience. It has also been really inspiring to see the creativity that has gone into these campaigns, and to see mothers, volunteers, modelling for the images with their babies at their breast.

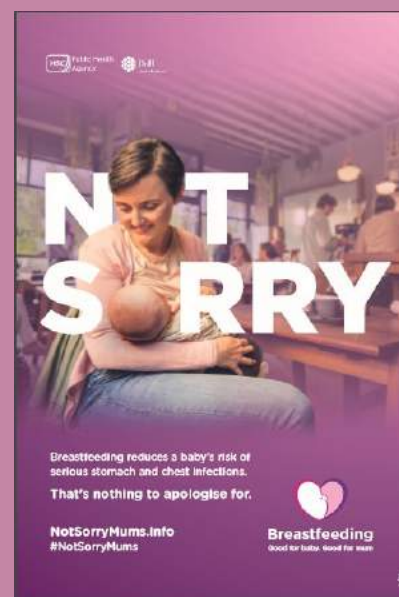


The Association of Breastfeeding Mothers' **#FEEDME** campaign, produced by RAN studio and Avenir Art, features stunning, vibrantly coloured photography, showing women breastfeeding in public places. In a recent poll I conducted in our BfN Facebook group, this campaign came out as a clear favourite. Members said they liked that it features older babies, a variety of feeding positions, and that the women are from different ethnic backgrounds. BfN Member Eleanor Johnson says 'I love that it shows so clearly that breastfeeding doesn't mean the everyday stops in a very positive and bright way', and Julie Pee says 'I like the simplicity of the hashtag and the photos are colourful and beautiful'.

**Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust** recently created some great posters, that are **free to download**, and have even said that organisations can add their own logos to them if they wish – very generous. The posters show women breastfeeding at home, and have really encouraging messages like **'breastfeeding twins: your body is amazing'** and **'I'm not saying it's always easy, I'm saying it's worth it'**. In our Facebook poll, BfN members said they like that the women are more casual, but that they weren't as keen that all the images show women sat on a sofa, rather than out and about. BfN member Ayala Ochert said **'it's aimed at pregnant or new mums and shows how breastfeeding is all about love and bonding'**. It is my personal favourite, because I like the messaging – I think it is very encouraging – and I like that its aim is to increase rates of breastfeeding. I can imagine seeing these posters in a hospital or doctors' surgery and feeling a connection to them.



The **Northern Ireland Public Health Agency** recently launched their **Not Sorry** campaign, which has had a much wider reach on social media. There are posters and a video, which show a woman breastfeeding on a bus, and in a café, with large text saying Not Sorry. The messaging has received a positive response on twitter, making women feel confident and brave to share their stories with the hashtag **#notsorrymums**. On our Facebook poll people were not sure, though, about the fact that it might make women feel like there is something to apologise for in the first place. Ayala Ochert says 'It is designed for Northern Ireland, which has its own particular challenges. I think it empowers NI women and also shows the general public what the impact could be of their disapproving looks'.



Overall it is so positive that so many campaigns are coming out to normalise breastfeeding. BfN member Erica Harris says **'All these campaigns have been wonderful and it's been so nice to see such an array of different style campaigns in what feels is in a short period of time'**. Julie Pee says **'I love them all, anything that normalises breastfeeding gets a thumbs up from me'**.

# WAM Volunteer of the Year

**Huge congratulations to BfN Helper in Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead, Heb Newman.**

Heb was voted by her peers this year for her great constant support to her peers and providing input into discussions, as well as her enthusiasm to share the BfN role in her work at the Childrens Centres.

Heb received a beautiful handmade felt figure from Truly Heart Felt.



**Well done and thank you Heb 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](mailto:julie.weigand@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) with details and we'll include them in the next issue of BfN News!



## Last minute Mother's Day present idea!

Last year we launched our BfN 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 Mothers Day (or birthday, or new parent) gift for friends or relatives. Find out more about the Friends scheme at [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/become-a-member)

For more gift ideas including NBH diary covers and knitted breasts, visit [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/shop](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/shop)

## Bliss Sponsorship

You may have seen a lot of discussion on social media during February regarding the premature baby charity Bliss, who had agreed to accept some funding towards HCP training from Danone Nutricia.

Many in the infant feeding world were very concerned about this decision as even though Bliss gave assurances that Nutricia would not be allowed to influence content of the training, there were doubts about whether this could be guaranteed. It was also particularly worrying as there is such a wealth of evidence about the difference breastmilk can make to premature babies.

More than 1300 people signed an online petition urging Bliss to reconsider their decision, and many wrote directly to the charity. BfN, along with ABM, LLL, LCGB and Doula UK wrote a joint letter to Bliss asking them to rethink their decision.

The letter can be viewed in full here: [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/blog](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/blog)

The result of all this was that Bliss decided to reject the funding. We congratulate Bliss for making this decision, especially in the current climate when funding is so difficult to find, and we wish them all the best in their future fundraising efforts.

# Bliss

for babies born too soon,  
too small, too sick

# A New Grandmother's Story

**BfN Supporter Wendy Slater has recently become a grandmother - here she shares her personal story of being a new grandmother trying to support breast feeding. Wendy's own thoughts are in brackets throughout:**

"Charlie Slater was born on 8th November 2017 by elective Caesarian Section due to mother's previous surgery. He was born in Sydney Women's Hospital, Australia, which is a Baby Friendly Hospital.

I arrived in Sydney on Sunday 5th November and was met by my son, Dylan. We travelled by bus and train back to their tiny studio flat, fairly near Bondi. That night Dylan, Sharlyn, Omma (Sharlyn's mum) and I somehow all slept here, the next day they were moving to a two bedroomed flat. (I know, not the best timing... can be a trigger for PND).

Sharlyn had gestational diabetes, which she had controlled really well with diet & exercise. She is from South Korea and Omma speaks no English. Sharlyn shares with me that she anticipates that Omma will look after her, and I will look after Charlie (I think "I will be looking after you & Charlie together"). I am designated car driver (Eeek - those Sydney roads are quite scary!)

Two days of Dylan and I moving stuff and the big day is here. The C-section goes without problems and I drive to the hospital & find a free parking space. It's \$30 day to park in the hospital car park.

The midwife is with Sharlyn and pushes her nipple into Charlie's mouth. Sharlyn says he is biting (not surprised with that attachment). After the feed I hold Charlie and see that he has an obvious tongue tie, which had already been observed at the newborn check. Apparently, there, as here, they wait and see before release. After a few feeds of Charlie biting, the midwife said they would try positioning before taking any other action (My thoughts are unrecordable!)

**Day 2:** I suggested bringing Charlie to the breast from the centre and waiting for his mouth to open wide.... later Dylan asked me to back off and speak to him first (OK - mouth is now zipped).

**Day 3:** brought cracked bleeding nipples (what a surprise!). The expressing machine and Lansinoh were brought in and visit to the Lactation Consultant organised. Now nipple shields are introduced. Meanwhile Dylan and I are driving all over Sydney collecting a crib, car seat, washing machine etc but NO FRIDGE.



**Proud new dad Dylan gets the chance to try skin to skin with baby Charlie.**

**Day 5:** Sharlyn and Charlie are discharged. He had lost 11% birth weight, so nipple shields, top ups of formula, expressing - lots of fabulous very yellow breastmilk and using a quite thick special B/F pillow from Korea - with small pillow for under the baby's head (oh help!).

During the collection of some baby equipment, one father was talking to Dylan about how his babies all had to have their tongue tie released privately - costing \$400 each and how feeding was much better after. Later I left open the page on tongue tie in Wendy Jones book, 'The Importance of Dads and Grandmas to the Breastfeeding Mother') and disappeared to do some shopping. Meanwhile Sharlyn is expressing and the temperature in the flat - where the breastmilk is hanging about is over 30C (the nurse in me is screaming). I buy a cool bag.

**Day 7:** I drive Dylan, Sharlyn and Charlie to the hospital for a scar check and to see the Lactation Consultant. While I'm in the car, Dylan rings me to say that he has persuaded them to release the tongue tie and it will be done at midday (That's my boy - information is everything). It's a good job I've got a good book because that's four hours in the hot car. After the procedure, we all go to have a picnic of fish and chips at Watson Bay. Charlie has EBM in a bottle.

**Day 10:** They get a fridge (hooray, I can relax a bit!) Charlie has been fine - which goes to show the amazing properties of BM. Still using nipple shields, BF cushion, but very little formula.

Continued on page 11...



**Very clever multi-tasking grandma Wendy enjoying cuddles with baby Charlie**

# A New Grandmother's Story

(Continued from previous page...)

**Week 2:** We all go to Bronte Beach, Sharlyn is very apprehensive about feeding in public. She tells me that it feels like she is naked and everyone is looking at her.

**Later in Week 2:** We go to Coogee Beach. It's very hot. Generally Charlie is quite unsettled, doesn't like being put down, but loves being held (of course).

**Week 3:** Clovelly Beach. Phone call later to say Sharlyn is engorged on the right side and expressing isn't working. I said the usual stuff and they consulted Wendy's book. Charlie fixed it by feeding under arm (good boy Charlie xx) Just after this incident Sharlyn tells me that she has managed to feed without nipple shields (what a girl!) and Charlie is more settled if she eats less chilli (umm..)

**Week Five:** Pat (Grandad) joins me in the studio flat and the next day I drive Sharlyn and Charlie to their first clinic appointment. Weight gain is excellent & the HV equivalent seems to know her stuff.

**Week Six:** Family outing to Shelly Beach. Charlie really likes to be held while I dance to the drums (video not for public viewing!) Sharlyn still reluctant to feed in public, but does a bit. Omma goes home to South Korea. Sharlyn visits the GP for her check up to be told that she should not be taking ibuprofen, as it is not good for babies (where's the evidence?)

**Week Seven:** Christmas Day. We have a BBQ on the beach (where else?) with some friends. Sharlyn feeds Charlie then has lots of wine. We drive back to the studio flat and find they have the expressed milk - but no bottle! They try spoon, cup, pouring it directly into Charlie's mouth (I leave the room at this point) he is having none of it! Sharlyn does not appear at all drunk and it has been a few hours since the last feed, so I tentatively suggest that BF should be fine... and it was.

**Week Eight:** I am allowed to accompany Sharlyn and Charlie to the GP's for his baby check - providing I don't speak (especially about ibuprofen). Also we go to the first parent group, where five mothers are BF, but Sharlyn has a look of pure panic at the thought.

**Week Nine:** Sharlyn has designed a cover under which she thinks she will be able to feed Charlie. We go to Bondi Junction (a shopping centre) for material and interfacing and she makes it in about an hour.

**Week Ten:** Our last day there and we go for a meal. Sharlyn feeds Charlie under her cover and is very happy - so is Charlie (what a girl - she has with quiet determination come through all the early problems, and is now successfully and happily breastfeeding).



**New mum Sharlyn trying out her own design breastfeeding cover.**

We leave Sydney for a much needed rest in The Philippines.

I would like to thank Wendy Jones for her superb book and Jane Neesam for the 3 hour debrief when I arrived home."

**A huge thank you to Wendy Slater and all her family for sharing this personal journey and photos with us. We'd love to hear from more grandmas about their stories of supporting their grown up children - get in touch with us if you would like to share your experiences with others.**

**REMINDER! 2017 Annual Returns are now due for all Helpline, Probationary and Full Supporters.**

Your supervisor can send you the form via email or there are paper copies if you prefer.

**Please remember that the work you do as a volunteer is incredibly valuable and we will do everything we can to help you stay registered.**

If you have any concerns, speak to your supervisor. There are a variety of ways to fulfil your ongoing learning requirements, and still time to catch up on any supervision needed which can be in the form of group sessions, one to one meetings in person or over the phone/Skype.



## NBH Update

In January 2018 we launched our new webinar series for NBH volunteers. A webinar allows you to take part in study day quality presentations from the comfort of your own home. Each month the webinars will cover a different topic - so far we've had a session on Responsive Feeding, run by ABM chair Emma Pickett, and a presentation on feeding multiples by Kathryn Stagg. In March, Wendy Jones will be presenting on drugs in breastmilk, and in April Debbie Barnett will be hosting a session on milk banking. Other topics we hope to cover in coming months include tongue tie, PND, co-sleeping and more. We hope these sessions will help volunteers to feel more confident in dealing with helpline calls, offer them new ideas, and also enable them to fulfil some of their training requirements. Contact [Felicity.Lambert@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:Felicity.Lambert@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk) for more information.

We have also been trialling a new online rota over the past few months. Unfortunately it's not been used as much as we hoped it would be so we've decided to give it a rest for now and explore other ways of scheduling volunteer time. Feedback from volunteers suggests that some really love the flexibility the helpline offers and a rigid rota makes that more tricky.

You may have noticed that Public Health England have recently launched an Amazon Alexa breastfeeding support bot - this allows families to ask their voice activated 'Alexa' for breastfeeding support. The information it gives is all based on the Start4Life info and it does enable mums to call the helpline via the bot. We have asked PHE to let us see the scripts Alexa is using, and we'll update as we find out more. If you have an Alexa, why not try asking it about breastfeeding and let us know what she says!

As always, we want to say a **huge thank you** to every single volunteer that answers calls on the helpline. Every call really does make a difference and we are struggling more than ever at the moment to answer enough calls. Our current funding for the helpline comes to an end in July 2019, so over the next few months we really want to have a massive push to try and improve our calls answer rates. If you have ever trained as a Supporter, we'd be delighted to have you back on the helpline - even just one call a week would help! Get in touch with your Linkworker ([linkworkers@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:linkworkers@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)) and they will be able to support you to do this.

## SAVE THE DATE!

This year the **Breastfeeding Network conference and AGM** will be held on:

**Saturday 6th October**

After the success of last year's event, the conference will be held again at the **Priory Rooms, Birmingham.**

Get the date in your diary now and we hope to see lots of you there!

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HILLTOP HELPERS GROUP, SANDWELL



Congratulations to the Hilltop Helpers group in Sandwell, who finished their training in December, tutored by Diana West. Those pictured are (top row) **Emoke, Emma, Andrea, Hannah, Sharn, Meriel, Kirsty and Zara**, plus **Rachel, Elena, Kayleigh and Rebecca** (bottom row).

Thanks to their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication, this group of local mothers submitted their completed LALs at the end of their training, so qualified as Helpers immediately in the new year! Now they're all eager and ready to start volunteering in the groups, clinics and maternity wards of their local community. Great news for everyone!

**Diana West, Supporter, Supervisor and Tutor, West Midlands**

# CONGRATULATIONS TO...

## ---- HELPERS ----

**Kimberley Moores**  
**Claire Thomson**  
and their tutor  
Jo Hankinson

**Hayley-Ann Cummings**

**Oana Visan**

**Siobhan Hagan**

**Becky Lopez del Rincon Troussel**

**Megan Richards**

**Clare Kelly**

and their tutor

Joy Jones

**Michelle Arnott**  
**Sally Campbell**  
**Emily Horwill**  
**Jessie Linardi-Nicol**

**Jo McNish**

**Zoe Tait**

**Marissa Waite**

**Rebecca Ronald**

**Gayle Baker**

and their tutor

Karen Paterson

**Casey Thorpe**  
**Tabby Brignall**  
**Caroline Sanderson**  
**Katie Young**

**Emma Porter**

**Kelly Eastwood**

**Charlotte Brighton**

**Kate Thomson**

**Georgina Bennett**

and their tutor

Eleanor Johnson

**Andrea Sohail**

**Elena Stott**

**Sharn Tailor**

**Meriel Morgan**

**Rachel Hazeldine**

**Becky Pountney**

and their tutor Diana West

**Sarah Bolland**

**Beth Bradnum**

**Lesley Rankin**

**Luisa Crawford**

**Hazel Tyson**

**Stacey Steele**

and tutor Carolanne Lamont

## ---- HELPLINE SUPPORTERS ----

**Phillipa Fellowes**

and her tutor Anne-Marie Thomas

## ---- PROBATIONARY SUPPORTERS ----

**Jade Koch**  
and her tutor  
Mandy Barlow

**Kirstin Worsley**  
**Julie Wiegand**  
**Marie-Claire Ronaldson**

**Carly Roythorne**

**Angela Auld**

and their tutor

Sam Ball

**Sam Ball**  
and her tutor Diana West

BfN would like to say a special thank you to **Lead IM Officer Pat Little**, who has played such an important role in ensuring all of our volunteers qualify with OCN, and who retires from this role at the end of March. Luckily, Pat isn't leaving us completely and will be staying with us in a voluntary capacity providing information and support to those who need it in her local area and on the National Breastfeeding Helpline! Phew!



**A huge thank you to everyone who makes BfN what it is - helpers, supporters, tutors, supervisors, staff members, friends and fundraisers - you all make a difference to families across the UK.**

