



# BfN News

Mums Supporting Mums

## Breastfeeding support during COVID-19

Findings from Swansea University and Imperial College research project.

## AGM and Conference update

A round up of this year's virtual event.

NOV 2020  
AUTUMN  
ISSUE 78



Safety first at every level

# HELLO!

NOV 2020  
AUTUMN  
ISSUE 78

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the Autumn 2020 edition of BfN News.

We sincerely hope to find you and your families well. For many of you the last few months will have been a bit of a whirlwind of supporting children back into school. We hope that it has been as easy on your families as it could be during such uncertainty.

For all of us, the prospect of a long winter is a harsh reality as we navigate a new lockdown and the impact it will have on our lives. It continues to be a tough year for so many, but we will continue to be here for you and the families that we support as the Covid-19 situation continues to unfold.

We hope that this latest edition of BfN News brings a little joy in to your week. Alongside our usual news and updates from across the network, we bring you an update from our AGM and annual conference held online last month. We have also included research from Swansea University and Imperial College which explores families' experiences of breastfeeding support during COVID-19.

On our cover, we have included Zara Bergman and her son. You can read more about their breastfeeding journey on page 5.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to put together this edition by sharing stories, images and information. As always, we welcome your feedback, comments and ideas. Please send them to [leanne.rayner@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:leanne.rayner@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk). We'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for your role in helping to support babies, women, parents and families.



BfN Peer Supporter Agnes Leger



Perfect advertising from a little BfN helper



# A message from BfN's CEO

**I hope you are all well and your families safe. As we settle in to England's second lockdown, I wanted to reach out and share a few things about what we are doing in BfN to maintain our support for families, volunteers and staff during the second lockdown.**

Two weeks ago BfN carried out our first ever digital conference with record number of delegates registered. We had very positive feedback on the quality of speakers, range of topics covered and close atmosphere we all managed to create together with the live chat. Thank you for all your contributions on the day and your patience on the technical glitches!

The new restrictions in England are allowing us to maintain our outdoor support for families and volunteers. Outdoor support using a walking group model is running on a small scale in some areas in England and in Scotland. We have prioritised this as we know that meeting outdoors can be a safer way we can support new mothers to connect and for wellbeing to be supported.

Our commissioned peer support services running in Scotland and England are either running virtually or with some face to face element that has been approved via a specific risk assessment and in agreement with local NHS team or local authority. We continue to meet with the BfN Board of Directors to appraise them of the position and seek guidance.

Our training is running virtually and support for callers on the National Breastfeeding Helpline and online remains the main way in which we are reaching out to families. [Click here for info on what is happening in each area visit.](#)

We are very pleased with the progress of our training. Two special achievements to share – we will this month be training volunteers for the National Breastfeeding Helpline using a newly developed Mum to Helpline course and



we will also be training a new cohort of Drugs in Breastmilk Volunteers to support succession planning.

True to say we are not standing still, and we are making every effort to ensure parents and breastfeeding are supported. Our online information and frequently asked questions found [here](#) are being regularly reviewed. To help with guiding our staff and volunteers we have developed and are currently trialling outdoor guidance on supporting parents.

We are developing equivalent guidance for indoor settings. We are also working with Public Health, NCT and others on a sector specific guidance which we hope will be available at the end of this lockdown-phase. Other policies developed by BfN can be found [here](#) and there are new refreshed policies on health and safety and funding.

All staff are homeworking and no one has been furloughed or are likely to be given our ability to carry out support for families remotely. Our small office in Paisley is open for critical visits only and staff are working from home. We removed the Volunteer Information Line as there was no demand but we encourage volunteers or members to contact Central Support as and when you need.

These are just a few things we are doing together to help ensure we maintain our support for women, parents and their families, we remain vigilant to the changes and ready to adapt accordingly.

Thank you for your part in all of BfN's work to date. With all good wishes and strength to you at this time.

**We welcome your feedback , please contact: [ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](mailto:ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)**

# Breastfeeding support during COVID-19



**In May 2020, researchers from Swansea University and Imperial College conducted research in collaboration with the Breastfeeding Network to explore families' experiences of breastfeeding support during COVID-19. The following summary has been taken from the report, the full findings will be published in a journal later this year.**

COVID-19 and lockdown has been a challenging time for breastfeeding families. Many have stopped sooner than they planned. Although this is unfortunately a common issue even outside of the pandemic, many blamed a lack of support and lockdown experiences upon their decision to stop.

We know that breastfeeding works best when women receive high quality practical and emotional support from professionals and peers including in the community. This support had to change once lockdown was in place, with breastfeeding charity organisations making rapid alterations to the way they delivered their service. Some women were fortunate to be able to access this, evidenced by the multiple, varied queries they had answered during this time, covering both practical and emotional support needs.

The majority of those who accessed this support found it useful and wanted it to stay, albeit alongside the benefits of face to face support once possible. For these women, their experience was positive, giving them easy and rapid access to support from the comfort of their homes.

Notably, some women accessed this support over and above health professional support during the pandemic. It is clear that breastfeeding organisations provided a valued and needed service at this time – a finding reflected in similar previous research exploring the impact of the Australian Breastfeeding Association during this time.

Unfortunately, two further groups of women did not have the benefit of this support including those who did not realise it was available, and those who accessed it but either struggled or had a strong preference for face to face provision. These women found a lack of in person care challenging, struggling to convey issues or with technology, or simply wanted the reassurance of someone in the room.

It is likely these experiences are not equal; those with more resources and fewer challenges at home will find accessing different sources of support in during difficult times easier. We found that women who did access charity support when they needed it were more likely to still be breastfeeding at the time of completing the survey compared to those who did not. To some extent their ability and willingness to seek support will in itself have supported these mothers' ability to continue breastfeeding, most likely reflecting high motivation.

However, given what we know about the impact of breastfeeding support for new families, the range of queries posed to teams, and the positive experiences from some women in this survey, it is evidenced that charity breastfeeding organisations have played an important role in ensuring mothers could continue breastfeeding through lockdown.

(Cont...)

## ...Covid-19 report cont

In terms of where we go from here, the good news is that online breastfeeding support services are working well for many women, helping them to breastfeed for longer. However, many challenges and questions have been set, with some of the answers likely outside the control or remit of organisations offering support. Namely:

- How do we ensure better promotion of availability of online breastfeeding support so that more families know they can access it?
- How do we ensure these organisations are well funded to be able to meet the needs of more women?
- How do we enable all populations to access online support, including those who may not be able to afford technology or high-speed internet connections?
- What is needed to recommence face to face breastfeeding support, given other public spaces such as restaurants and public spaces are open?

Given the known impact of breastfeeding upon population health and maternal wellbeing, the government urgently needs to review its provision of care for new families, considering how it can ensure that more are protected in similar circumstances in the future. Although almost all mothers valued the option to receive online or phone support during lockdown, many expressed a wish for face to face support to continue.

Recent press reports have stated that Health Secretary Matt Hancock wishes to encourage future virtual GP appointments unless clinical need, but caution must be urged in relying too heavily on a lack of in person support. It was clear mothers valued both the information they were being given, but also the warmth and connection from face to face support, and engagement with other mothers.

Finally, the impact of breastfeeding charities in supporting mothers practically and emotionally through this stressful period should be celebrated. They have served a community of new mothers, whom without their support may have had a much more challenging breastfeeding experience and likely a premature end to breastfeeding altogether. Their value and contribution must be recognised.

**Professor Amy Brown, Swansea University  
and Dr Natalie Shenker, Imperial  
College/Human Milk Foundation**

**[Click to download the summary report in PDF](#)**

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53592678>



# Zara's Journey

**Zara sits on the BfN Board of Directors, is a helper and National Breastfeeding Helpline volunteer. She recently shared her breastfeeding story and experience of expressing with the Sandwell team.**

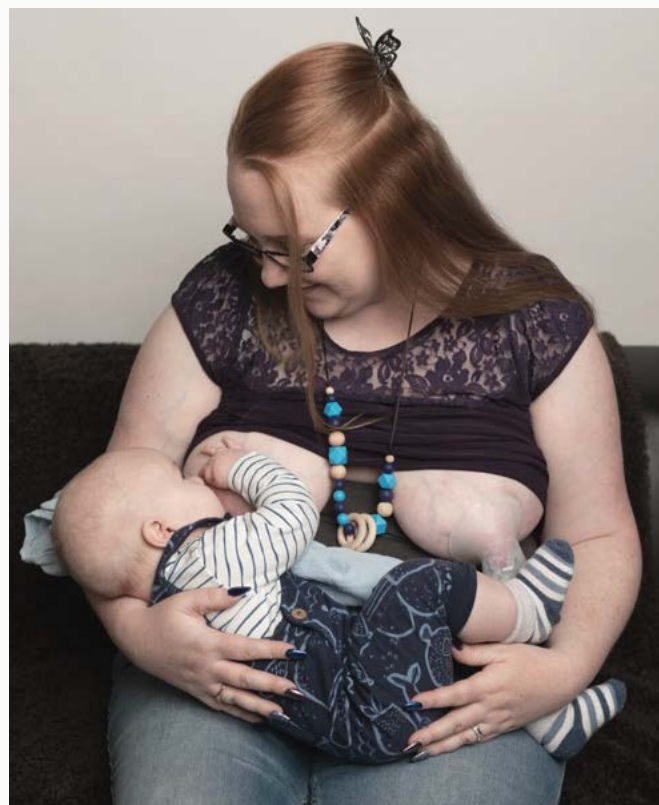
While I was pregnant with my first son I knew I was going to breastfeed. There was just no question in my mind. I attended a couple of antenatal sessions and with the full support of my husband we thought it would be straightforward.

Very late in the pregnancy I was diagnosed with gestational diabetes which ended in an induction and an assisted birth. My son was born healthy but with a lot of bruising and swelling to his head. He latched straight after birth and although his feeds were short I wasn't aware anything was wrong. I was so glad to go home after 24 hours of blood tests for both of us! I had a home visit the next day from the lovely Jane from BfN and had a good natter but baby was too sleepy to feed.

By day 3 I was starting to suspect feeding wasn't going so great. He was just sleeping all the time apart from when he was crying at my breast. He was constantly latching and coming straight off again until he was so exhausted he'd go back to sleep. I called the infant feeding team in tears and they saw me straight away.

Louise was wonderful. She said he had jaundice probably made worse by the bruising and lack of milk intake. She said she thought he had a tongue tie which was most likely the cause of our problem and made a referral to the clinic. She also set me up with the breast pump and said she could tell how much I had tried to feed him as my milk was already quite plentiful. It was such a relief.

For the next 2 weeks I got into a schedule of pumping every 3 hours around the clock and feeding my son my milk in bottles. It wasn't what I thought breastfeeding would look like but I was happy he wasn't drinking formula milk.



When he was 14 days old we went to the clinic and he was diagnosed with very severe restrictions in the movement of his tongue (posterior tongue tie). He had it cut and I thought that was that, that he would feed at the breast with his "new tongue". Unfortunately, despite loads of support from BfN he never got off the bottles but they helped me come to terms with our unusual breastfeeding journey.

There were times when I felt like a fraud or judged when attending breastfeeding groups and there were times when our plans were cut short due to having to go home to pump or not having enough milk and clean bottles with me. There was a constant feeling of anxiety over running out of milk even though I had a freezer full and around a litre in the fridge at any one time.

Despite all this I'm no longer upset how it all panned out. It was OUR breastfeeding journey and it lasted 18 months. I still had a wonderful bond with my baby and I wouldn't change that for the world!



## Farewell to BfN Chair Sukie Woodhouse

**It is with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to Sukie Woodhouse in her role as BfN Chair.**

Sukie has served as Chair of the BfN Board since 2013 and oversaw a shift in composition of the Board in taking on non-member Directors in attempt to broaden skills and bring balance.

She also supported recruitment of BfN's Chief Executive and juggled a role as a Tutor supporting local families in Oldham, Stockport and Tameside with a local partner organisation Home-Start HOST.

Sukie's insight as an early BfN member and passionate trainer of peer supporters brought important relevance and local knowledge to the strategic position of Chair.

Sukie, as fellow Board Members and close colleagues we remain ever grateful to your dedication and contribution to the work of the Breastfeeding Network.



## Portsmouth team welcomes new supervisors

"We are incredibly proud to be welcoming 12 new supervisors to the Portsmouth team. This year's training brought unique challenges, leading to new and resourceful ways to deliver this in-depth course of tutorials, online discussions, group work, presentations, written assignments and assessed role-plays.

All 12 more than rose to the challenge and this has resulted in a wonderful connection forming across the UK despite our strange times.

We are grateful for all your hard work and dedication to BfN. Congratulations to each of you.'

Aurore, El & Joy - BfN Portsmouth



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# Looking for a simple way to support our work?

**Do you know that you can now recycle your old printer cartridges and raise money for BfN?**

It's free and simple to do. It helps the environment too - so the trees will definitely thank you! ♻️

Lots of us are doing more printing from home at the moment, whether for work, home schooling or activities for the family.

Recycle4Charity is a great way to put your old inkjet cartridges to good use, earning £1 for each wanted list cartridge.

To find out more and register to take part in the scheme click [here](#).

**Giving a little makes a big difference right now, so please do consider signing up.**

**Your Empty Ink Cartridges Could Help Us Raise Money!**



Help us to raise funds by recycling your used ink cartridges via **Recycle4Charity.co.uk**



Hello, and welcome to the Breastfeeding Network's Annual Conference 2020.

## A groundbreaking AGM and annual conference

In October, BfN hosted a groundbreaking digital AGM and conference. We were delighted to welcome a record number of online delegates, who took advantage of the opportunity to attend from their homes.

Speakers included Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, Dr Lisa J Orchard, Tisian Lynskey-Wilkie, Gill Rapley & Tracey Murkett and Professor Helen Ball. The audience also enjoyed poetry and spoken word readings from Hollie McNish.

We received very positive feedback on the quality of speakers, range of topics and close atmosphere we all managed to create together with the live chat.

We hope that you enjoyed the event and we thank you for the lively discussion and questions on the day.



Number one: Salt-N-Pepa's Push It was not as funny on the birthing CD as I had hoped it would be.



## Tutoring during lockdown

### by Donna Ebanks

Hi I am Donna. I have been a helper since 2014 and worked as a Supporter for the Sandwell Project since 2017 and am now a Supervisor and Tutor.

I trained as a Supervisor while I was expecting and had just had my baby when I started Tutor training early in 2019. I had been asked to take over a Helpers course along with a fellow tutor from the same cohort and my work project, which we did.

It was exciting and scary and we worked really well together gaining experience and sharing ideas. The training finished and lockdown hit - literally overnight all of our ready to go helpers were halted, soul crushing.

We have tried to keep the volunteers motivated with a great team here in Sandwell, Louise our volunteer coordinator has been doing weekly quiz sessions via the group WhatsApp and quiz nights via zoom and it has been really popular.

In the spring this year I applied to deliver an online helpline supporter training course via zoom. What a change! What a challenge! It was easier than the conference calls we had during our training as you can see faces and there is less chance of talking over someone, also people can



attend from their lounge in their PJs if they want to, so I feel it is more accessible and there is also the fact that anyone can join even if there is no local project so it really is accessible.

All assignments would have been sent in the same way for this training so the only thing is the in person face to face meet ups for sessions that has changed and for me, it has not been too much of a barrier for the helpline supporters and it has been great to work alongside my fellow tutors.

## Progressing our investment in volunteering

In order to help BfN to evaluate and improve our processes around volunteers, we have made the decision to undertake the Step Into Investing in Volunteers process (IiV). Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations who involve volunteers, which aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience and to ensure organisations acknowledge the contribution made by volunteers. The process will enable BfN to compare our current volunteer practices and processes against the IiV standard, identify gaps and take the steps necessary to close those gaps.

Investing in Volunteers looks at 9 key indicators: Policies, Resources, Diversity, Roles, Safety, Recruitment, Induction, Support and Recognition. BfN attended an introductory workshop with Volunteer Scotland in September and this was attended by a number of volunteers, tutors, supervisors and central staff. The work will be planned and coordinated by a steering group over the coming months and we look forward to sharing our developments with you in the coming months.

**You can find out more here <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/investing-in-volunteers/>**



# Ayrshire and Arran Family Stories

The wonderful team in Ayrshire and Arran have been doing all they can to ensure that families have been able to access the support that they need during the pandemic. For many of the families that have been supported, this support has been a lifeline in a world of uncertainty. Here are some of their stories.



## Sophie and Finley

"I gave birth during the height of lockdown restrictions. I think lockdown made a massive difference on how confident I was in my ability to breastfeed because I didn't have visitors to worry about, I could establish a good routine with Finley without worry that someone would be knocking on the door and making me feel like I had to cover up or hide away to feed him. I've missed out on the interaction with other mums at baby groups however I've gained a lot of well cherished memories with my partner and two children that I wouldn't of had otherwise."



## Amanda and Noah

"Just before we went into lockdown my little boy turned 1. With this brought many feeding challenges such as Noah wanting to feed 24/7, waking up every 2 hours during the night, me wanting to stop and Noah getting more teeth which caused him to start biting me! Luckily I managed to get support from some lovely ladies online and although I never joined in with any of the zoom groups I knew they were there if I needed them. I can honestly say without the breastfeeding group I definitely wouldn't still be breastfeeding now!"

## Jamie and Joshua - Ayr

"My partner, Katie had high blood pressure throughout her pregnancy and kept getting sent to hospital for check ups. When I wasn't allowed in I had to just sit in the car park waiting for updates as we never knew how long she would be in. I have never felt so helpless - I felt lonely in the car so can't imagine how she felt in the hospital herself.

When she was induced she had to go into hospital herself and spent two nights alone which again was horrible for us both. I was lucky that I got a few hours with them both after birth but going home alone wasn't very nice. The next day we had to wait until 3pm until Katie and Joshua were discharged and it was a very long day for me as I just wanted to hold him!!

The worst thing about having a baby in lockdown would be not knowing enough to support my partner with breastfeeding as she had a tough time at the start, but the best thing was the gift of time. I'm a chef and work very long hours so getting six weeks with my newborn son is something I'll never get again."







## World Breastfeeding Week

### A national call to action to address fragility of infant feeding support.

Our organisation has seen first-hand how the Covid-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of infant feeding support available for women, parents and families.

During the pandemic, the need to support babies and families escalated and support services across the UK have been stretched beyond anything in our experience.

Existing variations in provision for infant feeding support have increased as services have been cut, health visiting teams redeployed and provision moved online, leading to unknown outcomes on infant nutritional health, worsening maternal mental health and widening health inequalities.

Tremendous efforts from the NHS and Third Sector organisations, including many volunteers on the National Breastfeeding Helpline and other charity-run helplines, along with swift adaptation to offer online support, have provided many families with support but this is not sustainable without a longer term strategy.

On World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August 2020), BfN joined 19 other organisations to call on the UK government to adopt a 10-point Infant Feeding Action Plan. The plan proposed measures to rebuild infant feeding support for communities and give important attention to the needs of mothers and children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to help tackle inequalities.

[Click to read more and download the plan.](#)

**With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to have a tremendous impact on everyone, BfN's Big Tea Break was more important than ever this year.**

Many mums starting their breastfeeding journey have been struggling to access the support they need. Families have felt isolated, lonely and disconnected at home caring for a new baby.

Let's face it, it continues to be a struggle for everyone!

That's why this October, we invited our community to take part in BfN's Big Tea Break simply for the purpose of connecting with friends and family by taking time out to have a virtual or socially distanced cuppa and a chat.

As we have commenced a new period of lockdown in England, we encourage you to remember to take time out to prioritise your mental health by connecting for a virtual cuppa and chat with your loved ones as often as possible.

Remember to share time - share love!

[The Big Tea Break Toolkit is still available to download here.](#)

## Inspiring New Helpers Join Camden Team

### Congratulations to the new cohort of Helpers joining the Camden Baby Feeding team in London.

We welcome Amy Nussey, Kate Ferraro, Anna Glowacka, Grace Cullin, Kalpana Kalidas, Yuri Stone and Aisha Nakyambadde. Although they started the Helper course face to face in February, after a few sessions with BfN Tutor Sarah Twite, their training was transferred online and continued during lockdown. Kate and Kalpana recently told us a bit more about how that was for them.

Kate says "I was so grateful for the chance to continue the course throughout lockdown. It gave me a welcome distraction and a sense of purpose. I look forward to helping mums feed their babies and supporting them in such strange times. Thank you so much to Sarah and the Camden Baby Feeding team for allowing us to continue the training."

Kalpana told us "The Covid19 lockdown will forever be known as a time when maternity services were let down. When new mothers were left abandoned, in the midst of global panic. When my daughter asks me "mummy, what did we do during this period", I'll tell her we baked a lot of cookies...and while her and her baby brother slept, mummy tried to help. I always wanted the phrase "pressure to breastfeed" to turn into "supported to breastfeed", so I used this time to heal my



anxiety and enrich my mind with the knowledge I wish I, and every new mum, had had the first time they tried to latch on their newborn."

She went on to say 'I think about how I felt through this pandemic...uncertain over what's to come, guilty over too much screen time, desperate for human contact, overwhelmed and exhausted. Is the forth trimester really all that different for mum and baby? If we each had a helper through Covid19, how would we have felt?."

"A global pandemic isn't a choice, but the way we our feed our babies should be, training during lockdown made me even more passionate to ensure every mother is free to make that choice. I'm so proud to now be a BfN Helper. I can tell my daughter at a time when the world changed instantaneously, so did I."

**We are immensely proud, and grateful to all of you for completing the course and joining the team!**



**"I can tell my daughter at a time when the world changed instantaneously, so did I."**



# BfN Project Contacts at a Glance

As an organisation we are committed to helping increase breastfeeding rates locally through our Peer Support Programmes. Here's a list of the contact in each project to help you stay in touch and share experience:

- London - Islington - Hannah Leonard
- London - Haringey - Linda Velloso
- London - Tower Hamlets - Tracey Murkatt
- London - Hackney (2 Children Centre contracts) - Susy Gilvin
- London - Camden - Agnes Leger (Volunteer Coordinator)
- London - Lambeth - Lisa Whipp
- Portsmouth - Eleanor Johnson
- Gosport & Havant - Ginny Dupont
- Stoke - Jill Smith
- Derbyshire - Jill Smith
- Sandwell - Anna Cooney
- Wolverhampton Virtual Groups - Anna Cooney
- Oldham & Tameside (partnership with Homestart) - Nina White
- Cheshire & Merseyside (training only, volunteers coordinated locally) - Sophie Walters
- Wokingham - Kirsty Beck
- Frimley & Wexham (Phone support upon hospital discharge) - Rebecca Reeves
- Ayrshire - Kayleigh Lindsay
- Glasgow & Renfrewshire - Melanie Woodward
- Forth Valley - Project Lead Kirstin Worsley, Local Coordinator Gemma Hamilton
- Midlothian - Project Lead Kirstin Worsley, Local Coordinator Carol Hodgkin
- Western Isles - Project Lead Kirstin Worsley, Local Coordinator Phillippa Rewaj



## A Fond Farewell from Windsor and Maidenhead

Volunteers from BfN Windsor and Maidenhead (WAM) came together in August for a socially distanced evening of Supervision, games and farewell drinks.

Marcelle Benneyworth, Tutor and Supporter for WAM has sadly resigned from BfN. She has been with the organisation since 2006 and will be hugely missed by her WAM team and all at BfN.

Rebecca Reeves, Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead Breastfeeding Network Coordinator says "Sadly the funding for the project has ended after over 10 years of having a BfN presence in the area. The volunteers will continue to attend drop-ins and be of support to families the best they can."



[More information on each Peer Support Project can be found on our website here.](#)

# Black Breastfeeding Week Insights

**2020 saw the third Black Breastfeeding Week in the UK take place - this year it was held in the week August 25th-31st.**

Here in the UK Black Breastfeeding week is led by Ruth Dennison from Breaking Breastfeeding Barriers. This year the theme was 'Revive, Restore, Reclaim' and it has never felt more important than in 2020, given everything that has happened this year.

Black Breastfeeding week in the UK culminated in a virtual conference event on the 29th August for which BfN were one of the sponsors. During the inspirational online event, we heard from speakers including US based midwife and doula Shafiah Monroe who spoke about breastfeeding and domestic violence; Elsie Gayle talking from a midwife's perspective on why Black mothers don't breastfeed; and GP Registrar Dr Hannah Dennison who provided a detailed intro to breastfeeding, how to work and the benefits for mothers and babies.

Pregnancy yoga teacher Tzaddi provided a welcome session covering yoga, meditation and mindfulness. Ruth hosted a really interesting conversation with doula Lina Duncan about how white women can be allies for the Black community. There were also personal stories from mothers including Chaneen Saliee.



**BREAKING BREASTFEEDING BARRIERS & UPLIFTING EDUCATION**

**BLACK BREASTFEEDING WEEK**

Revive, Restore, Reclaim!

AUGUST 29TH 2020  
INTERNATIONAL ONLINE EVENT  
LONDON UK

**Speakers • Q & A • Raffle Tickets • Prizes • Awards • Give Aways • Black Business Show • Fundraiser • Discussions**

**Family & Friends**  
Everyone is invited, Dads too!

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- Introduction to Breastfeeding in the Black community
- Introduction to Tongue-Tie
- Breastfeeding Culture Safety

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Email: [info@breakingbreastfeedingbarriers.org.uk](mailto:info@breakingbreastfeedingbarriers.org.uk)

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The event included awards for those women who have done a lot this year to encourage and support Black breastfeeding in the UK. The conference was well organised and well attended by people from all across the country. It was incredibly thought provoking and we came away inspired to find out more, learn more, do more and do better.

**Some of the resources recommended on the day for further reading included:**

- Nova Reid's Anti-Racism guide
- 'Is breastfeeding ever black and white'
- The journey amongst journeys by one of Bradford Doulas
- Ruth's own blog on Black Breastfeeding Week



Ruth Dennison from Breaking Breastfeeding Barriers





# Update from the National Breastfeeding Helpline

By Fliss Lambert, NBH Manager



Another busy period for the helpline, with varying levels of lockdown across the country causing more anxiety for new parents. As usual the helpline volunteers are taking everything in their stride and continuing to answer very high numbers of calls, web chats and social media messages.

We were delighted to be invited to speak at the All Party Parliamentary Group in Infant Feeding and Inequalities, chaired by Alison Thewliss MP, in October. It was a brilliant opportunity to sing the praises of our wonderful volunteers, who have really excelled during the pandemic so far this year, supporting record numbers of families.

It was fabulous to be able to share the stats from this year (124% more calls answered this year compared to last year!), and some of the amazing feedback we have been receiving from callers, who seem particularly appreciative of the helpline at the moment, given that there is so little face to face support currently available.

If you didn't see it live, you can watch the whole APPG via Alison Thewliss's [Facebook page](#).



It was also a pleasure to present the NBH awards at the BfN AGM this year. Not quite the same as usual as we weren't all in the same place cheering and clapping together, but nevertheless it was lovely to be able to recognise all our volunteers for playing their part this year, as well as saying extra big thank yous to those who had achieved a special award during the last 12 months.

As we go into the winter months, with more lockdowns planned in various parts of the UK, I can only imagine that demand for the helpline will be higher than ever.

So a massive thank you to all our volunteers for all you've done so far and please keep up the amazing work! You are doing such a fabulous job – as these callers are telling us.

**“ You are doing such a fabulous job – as these callers are telling us. Thank you! ”**

**Thank you!**

# Derbyshire Team Takes a Big Tea Break

**Derbyshire Helpers, Mums and staff from the Infant Feeding Team came together on the 30th October to enjoy the BFN Big Tea Break.**

Mums registered in advance so they could enjoy a cup of tea on us and a little treat to occupy older children so that parents could enjoy their moment of calm.

We wanted to offer Mums a moment of reflection and a safe space to talk about some of the difficult moments we have experienced in 2020 as well as sharing ideas on how we can relax during our busy days.

The group shared a relaxation exercise and it was a peaceful way to round off the shared morning.



## Stoke Welcomes Fifteen New Helpers

Fifteen mums from Stoke began their Helper training this month. Despite the challenges of Covid-19 all of our new volunteers are excited to begin the new digital training course.

Breastfeeding support has had a difficult time in the area and it is wonderful to work with passionate and committed volunteers, in partnership with the local authority, to establish 3 support groups in the city.

**We anticipate great things from them - watch this space.**



# Congratulations

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

## Helpers

Madeline Da Silva-Turner  
Larissa Horsnall  
Rachael O'Keefe  
Laura Coope  
Demi Hames  
Danielle Kitson  
Lauren Cloudsdale  
Alexandra Dilkes  
Jenny Ward  
Shaz Wardle  
Holly Stewart  
Kiana Carrington Roberts  
Becky Tidbury  
And their tutors: Francesca  
Elver-Fiddimore / Lydia  
Murtagh / Donna Ebanks

Becky Tidbury  
And her tutor: Francesca Elver-  
Fiddimore / Lydia Murtagh

Mavourneen Conway  
And her tutor: Jane Neesam

Kimberly Skirving  
Chiara Ciucani  
Laura Hutchinson  
Phillipa Rewaj  
Laura Buwert  
Chelsea Crighton  
Karolina Antanaviciute  
Carol Hodgkin  
Alyth Hay  
Shona Hart  
And their tutor: Kirstin Worsley

Hannah Moraa  
Philippa Cook  
Milana Broda  
Sharmin Azad  
Michele Gallagher-Summers  
Lucy Marsden-Rogers  
Brogan Rowland  
Amy Nussey  
Kate Ferraro  
Grace Cullen  
Kalpana David  
Yuri Sone  
Aisha Nakyambadde  
And their tutor: Sarah Twite

Transferred in:  
Michal Yahav and her tutor:  
Anthea Tennant-Eyles  
Rebecca Jennings and her  
tutor: Derbyshire team  
Emily Clark and her tutor:  
Shruti Arora

## Helpline Supporters

Anne Rushent  
Jessica Day  
And their tutor: Carolanne  
Lamont

Claire Cittern-Jones  
Rebecca Pountney  
Anne Mitchell  
Polly Bishop  
Candida Spedding  
Claire Flynn  
Jill Smith  
Hannah Giudicelli  
Beverley Turner  
And their tutors: Carolanne  
Lamont and Esther Pierce

Natasha Collier  
Alyson Baillie  
Alana Jones  
Gemma Hamilton  
Fiona Law  
Amber Munnoch  
Kirstine Dymott  
Ainara Pérez  
Laurie Stewart  
Kimberley Davidson  
Amy Bryson  
Hazel Haddow  
And their tutors: Kirstin  
Worsley/Joy Jones/Lydia  
Murtagh/Donna Ebanks

Transferred in:  
Frances Smith and her tutor:  
Lorna Hartwell

## Probationary Supporters

Lucy Merali  
Agnès Léger  
Siobhan Hagan  
Tamsin English  
Lucy Clark  
Vanessa Smith  
And their tutor: Joy Jones

Robyn Nalty  
And her tutor: Phyll  
Buchanan

Transferred in:  
Claire Flood  
Lyndsey McConnell  
Karen Williams  
And their tutor: Mandy  
Barlow

## Tutor/Supervisors

Debbie Roberts  
Natalie Hickman  
Cara Jamieson  
Alys Vaughan-Williams  
Virginia Blakeley  
Sally Carter  
Timea Bakaja-Dezsi  
Caroline Furey  
Fiona McLean  
Marie-Claire Ronaldson  
And their tutors: Eleanor  
Johnson, Joy Jones and Aurore  
Lasne

Lia Pallè  
And her tutor: Eleanor Johnson

**We value each and every  
one of you!**

**If your name is missing  
from this list, please  
accept our apologies.**

**Contact us to ensure that  
you are included in the  
next issue.**

**Thank you for your  
understanding.**

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