



Terms of Reference: Evaluation of The National Breastfeeding Helpline@Night pilot and NBH uplift contract

Applications for this consultancy must be submitted no later than 22nd April 2024 09:00

Clarification meetings will take place 29th – 30th April 2024

Decision communicated w/c 6th May 2024

Draft report reviewed with the Board January/ start February 2025 (weekend date TBC)

Completion of evaluation – 3rd March 2025

Expressions of interest are sought from experienced evaluation teams with proven experience and ability to carry out an evaluation of the National Breastfeeding Helpline night-time pilot service and the established day-time service.

The evaluation is expected to provide robust insights into both reach, difference made to breastfeeding mums and parents, and learning from the NBH@Night to inform future recommendations for this service, as detailed below.

Expressions of Interest will be shortlisted and assessed based on:

- Credible subject matter and evaluation / research methods expertise in the evaluation team proposed for this assignment;
- A relevant and realistic proposal for delivering an evaluation that achieves its purpose;
- Value for money;
- Compliance with the WHO Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes;
- Availability to complete the evaluation within the required timescale.

Background:

The Breastfeeding Network in partnership with The Association for Breastfeeding Mothers, have delivered the National Breastfeeding Helpline as an independent source of high quality information and support on infant feeding since 2008.

The day-time service operates between 09:30 and 21:30 every day of the year. The helpline offers an accessible universal service through a national number, with calls charged at local rates. Apart from the day-time helpline run by volunteers, the NBH includes support offered through social media and webchat. A successful voicemail service was added to offer increased capacity during the pandemic.

Services are run by volunteers who receive BfN's OCN level 3 accredited peer supporter training or ABM's Breastfeeding Counsellor training. Volunteers receive supervision and ongoing training.



This service is financed by The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) of The Department for Health and Social Care (sub-contracted via Serco) with additional funding from The Scottish Government.

Under the auspices of the Start for Life Programme, on 28th November 2023, BfN signed a contract with Serco to cover a) additional investment in the day-time service and b) the pilot of a night-time service, extending the NBH round the clock.

The additional investment in the **day-time service** was made to recognise an increase in costs since the original launch of the service, and to:

1. provide a voicemail service to enable users to leave a message if their call is not answered and receive a timely return call from the Helpline;
2. provide the Drugs in Breast Milk Service to provide pharmacy advice and information on the compatibility of medications and breastfeeding so that incorrect information on medication does not cause breastfeeding cessation;
3. recruit additional volunteers to staff the National Breastfeeding Helpline, social media messaging service, and web chat service in order to reduce the abandonment rate and provide support to an increased number of women and families.

The investment in a pilot night-time service was made to:

1. run a night-time service between 21:30 and 09:30, 7 days a week for a 12-month trial;
2. work with an external, independent evaluation team (who are to be approved by the Buyer but selected and managed by the sub-contractor) to design an evaluation framework, for the night-time service trial, which is approved by the Buyer;
3. be responsible for collecting the data and qualitative feedback required for this night-time service evaluation and engage the external partner who will conduct an independent analysis of the data and produce an evaluation report;
4. run the extended opening hours National Breastfeeding Helpline night-time service between 21:30 and 09:30, 7 days a week from the end of the 12-month trial until 31 March 2025 if the 12-month trial is successful and continuation is authorised by the Buyer;
5. Analyse postcode data of the current service helping to support understanding of the use of the helpline and the gaps in usage;

Purpose and objectives of evaluation:

A credible evaluation is a requirement of the contract with OHID (via Serco). It should measure progress against the objectives, KPIs and targets for the service.

In relation to NBH@ Night, it is expected to assess evidence of the performance of the pilot service, and the key factors influencing this. In particular:

- Who is using the helpline (including % profile by deprivation, geography, demography relative to the UK population)
- Main reasons for calling



- How the service addresses caller reasons for calling
- Volume and main call times for NBH@Night
- How the NBH@Night responded to demand for the service (calls taken and satisfaction)
- Evidence-based recommendations for future improvement

For the established The National Breastfeeding Helpline day-time service, the evaluation should assess evidence of its reach and impact, including performance on the following priorities since an evaluation in 2021-22:

- Take up of the service amongst target under-served communities by race, area of deprivation (top 20% IMD), disability, age
- Effectiveness of improvement actions taken
- Recommendations to further improve the impact and reach of this service

The evaluation should also review the integration and influence of NBH@Night and NBH Daytime services on each other and make recommendations on how the service could be further developed through investment in a holistic service in future.

Expected outputs:

- Evaluation framework designed and agreed with the BfN (and approved by the commissioner);
- Early insights and findings to be shared and presented with agreed audiences (ideally from October 2024);
- Full draft evaluation (shared with the BfN Board in January 2025);
- Final evaluation findings to be presented to OHID by start March 2025 to inform decision-making and policy
- Summary version of evaluation for external sharing (March 2025)

Prime contacts:

Beth Harrison-Little – day-to-day planning in relation to NBH@Night

Caroline Bolton – relationship with Association of Breastfeeding Mothers and liaison with daytime service

Lisa Bowen – Contact for progress on overall evaluation including day-time, social media, voicemail and DIBM

Catherine Hine – management of relationship with Serco, OHID and Scottish Government

Start date:

It is anticipated that evaluation activity will begin no later than 1st September 2024

Selection process:



Expressions of interest will be scored by an assessment committee based on the criteria provided above. Questions of clarification will be followed up with shortlisted evaluation teams.

Applicants are asked to provide names and contact details of two independent professional references able to vouch for the quality of relevant work.

A statement of compliance with the WHO international Code on the Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes will be required from all applicants.

There is a maximum budget of £20,000 available for this evaluation. Whilst not the only consideration, price will be a factor in the selection of the successful expression of interest.

Further details of the current contract are available to applicant evaluation teams by emailing ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk