



Report of the Directors and Financial Statements

**For the year ended
31 March 2025**



**Company Number: SC330639
Scottish Charity Number: SC027007**

The Breastfeeding Network 2024/5 in Numbers

1,163 registered volunteers
(27% increase on last year)

43,710 hours donated to
deliver services

23,000 individual mothers
and families supported in
England and Wales
(13,510 in 2023-24)

Approximately 25% of
BfN service-users
reached in Scotland live
in the 10% most
deprived communities

More than 3,581 unique
enquiries answered by
our Drugs in Breast Milk
Information Service
volunteer pharmacists

21,159 volunteer hours from
the Drugs in Breast Milk
Information Service, National
Breastfeeding Helpline and
social media services
(20,671 hours in 2023-24)

The expanded National
Breastfeeding Helpline
service reached 46%
more callers than in
December 2023

249 new venues joined
our BfN Breastfeeding
Friendly Scheme
(81.75% increase on 2023-24)

48 courses run by BfN
to train Helpers,
Helpline Supporters
and Supporters

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Company Number: SC330639

Scottish Charity Number: SC027007

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
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THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Directors, who are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. The financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Breastfeeding Network's (BfN) charitable objects are:

1. To inform, educate and support families in feeding and nurturing babies and young children;
2. To enable communities to support breastfeeding through sharing information, training and volunteering;
3. To contribute to evidence-based policymaking for government, healthcare providers and educators;
4. To promote the mental and physical wellbeing of mothers and babies through supporting breastfeeding.

Purpose

How an infant is fed and nurtured strongly influences future life chances. Independent, practical, evidence-based information and skilled support on breastfeeding is essential for women, parents and their families. This support should be available at every stage of the breastfeeding journey. As the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative report highlighted, The UK has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world and support for women, parents and families falls short of what is wanted and needed. See [Vision & Aims of the Breastfeeding Network](#).

Throughout this report we use the words 'woman', 'mum', 'mother' and 'breastfeeding'. We recognise that there are parents and individuals providing breastmilk, breastfeeding or seeking to breastfeed who may not identify as female, may use other terms to describe themselves and may prefer the term 'chest feeding' to breastfeeding. BfN treats all parents with dignity and respect. When providing support our person-centred services refer to parents using their preferred language.

"What an absolutely amazing service - experienced, competent staff providing invaluable advice exactly when it is needed, through the most difficult hours of (in our case) one of the hardest periods of our lives (the first week of parenting). We have come away feeling heard and understood, reassured and more confident, and with practical advice and tips to enable us to be the best parents we can be. It's really hard to overstate the importance of this sort of support. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts."

Service user NBH@Night, England

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Our approach to the high cost of living and inequalities

In 2024-25 inflation did not rise at the level witnessed in recent years, however according to a House of Commons briefing, *'the cumulative effect of rising prices means households face a much higher cost of living than in 2021. Households that were struggling before the period of high inflation have been most severely affected'*.¹

The consequence of year-on-year cost-of-living increases has been a reduction in family incomes. The lowest 10% incomes fell by 6.6% between 2019 and 2023 and real household incomes fell again between 2022 and 2024 by 2%.² Between 2019 and 2023, the proportion of working-age adults who could not afford basic items increased from 19.6% to 22.2% and the percentage of food insecure households rose from 7% in 2021 to 11% by 2023.

Feeding babies and young children is a poverty issue with life-long consequences. As the Women's Budget Group highlights, women- the majority of people BfN support- are 'shock absorbers of poverty'. They often go without essentials to protect their children.³ Yet, eating well and staying healthy is vital to mothers in the early years, whatever their infant feeding journey⁴ and according to First Steps Nutrition, 'nutritious diets are essential (from preconception to age 5) to support growth and development, and inadequate diets can have life-long negative implications for child health.' Prioritising price controls on infant formula, robust formula marketing regulations, universal, reliable and accessible infant feeding support⁵ as well as empowering women with adequate nutrition for themselves, are key components of any serious response to the scourge of poverty.

"The first time I attended I received a warm welcome even though the session was close to finishing. Although my baby was fast asleep and did not want to feed, my concerns were listened to and I had some advice about positions and ways to reduce the intake of air during feeding. I went back 2 weeks later for the full session and someone was able to check our latch. It was nice to be listened to and to talk to other mums in a similar position. I wish I had this level of support available 4 years ago when I had my first child"

Service user, Stoke

Commercial formula companies have continued to sustain profits of 50-75% annually. These are some of the highest weighted profit margins across the food industry. Parents continue to pay high prices for commercial formula selecting highly priced formula over cheaper products of equal nutritional value, motivated by their desire to provide the best option for their babies.⁶

¹ <http://commonlibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10100>

² <http://commonlibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10100>

³ <https://www.wbg.org.uk/publication/womens-and-childrens-poverty-making-the-links-2/>

⁴ <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-infants-new-mums>

⁵

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/67f795227136d4324fd71fcb/1744278819219/Child+Poverty+Unit+consultation.pdf>

⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67b5b9d43e77ca8b737d3884/Executive_Summary_.pdf

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Breastfeeding information and support are key to addressing health inequalities⁷. Almost 80% of UK women stop breastfeeding before they want to⁸ and women living in areas of high deprivation are 40% less likely to breastfeed than their peers in the least deprived areas⁹. Women from minoritised racial backgrounds are over-represented in areas of high deprivation¹⁰ and less likely to access support on breastfeeding, even where breastfeeding rates in their community are higher¹¹. The Start for Life programme in England committed £50 million to infant feeding over three years, which we welcomed¹². When compared to the estimated £55 billion parent and healthcare professional-directed marketing spend on commercial formula annually¹³, it is easy to see why so many families formula feed. It is questionable the extent to which in the face of a chronic marketing and information/ support imbalance, this is a meaningful choice.

By offering free and accredited training opportunities, flexible work and trusted, free-to-access essential infant feeding support services, BfN plays a key role in helping women, particularly from under-served communities, feed their baby as they wish, re-enter the job market, and increase potential for them and their children to move out of poverty.

Throughout the year BfN challenged itself to go further in tackling some of the key barriers that underserved communities could face in accessing our services. Our commitment is integrated into all that we do and part of the performance objectives of all staff so that action on equality is part of our ongoing work. Some examples of actions this year include prioritisation of services and target groups with under-served communities for fundraising/ commissioning, targeted recruitment and payment of a salary whilst completing helpline supporter training for helpers from under-served communities, targeted accredited training for minoritised groups and new on-line peer-support offers for underserved communities. BfN now continuously reviews equalities data to shape adapted approaches to service delivery.

Over the last year we proactively built on BfN's existing hands-on experience so that services and families hit by crisis situations, will continue to access high quality and relevant infant feeding and parenting support in emergency situations.

In December, BfN responded to an interruption in water supply to tens of thousands of families in Southampton, pulling together evidence-based information for families and leading co-ordination with Public Health and emergency team colleagues. Pioneering research across the UK this year with the Welsh Government and Stirling University and BfN's subsequent work to develop practical resources for families for use during planning and delivery of emergency response, is now being integrated into all BfN services. BfN evidence-based training resources on this topic will also be widely available to book in 2025-26.

⁷ Public Health England (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-of-public-health-services-for-children/early-years-high-impact-area-3-supporting-breastfeeding> ; Scottish Government (2011) <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2011/01/improving-maternal-infant-nutrition-framework-action/documents/0110855-pdf/0110855-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0110855.pdf>

⁸ McAndrew et al (2012); UNICEF <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/about/breastfeeding-in-the-uk/>

⁹ Peregrino et al (2018) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6865869/>

¹⁰ <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/people-living-in-deprived-neighbourhoods/latest/>

¹¹ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2023) Black Maternal Health

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmwomeq/94/report.html>

¹² <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-02-20/debates/D846BC81-F0BC-4FDA-8991-F9BBC71A7A12/GovernmentSupportForBreastfeeding>

¹³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01931-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01931-6/fulltext)

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“We are so lucky to have BfN volunteers supporting alongside us, your knowledge is so valuable.”

Health Visitor

BfN’s work and services continue to be a vital lifeline to all families, whatever their background, circumstances and choices. Throughout the year, BfN continued to work closely with local authority, national government, NHS and charity partners to improve reach of our services to some of the most underserved communities. We delivered services in a wide variety of settings including family hubs, community centres, libraries, homes and hospitals, with a specific focus on neighbourhoods facing high levels of deprivation. All services are offered free to any family who needs them, and our volunteer and staff teams consistently take a highly adaptive approach to delivery of services, responding to the lived experience and health service specifics of the context. Examples include partnering with social prescribers, extending the round-the-clock service capacity and data insight of the National Breastfeeding Helpline, co-locating breastfeeding support with BFI-aligned Baby Banks and pairing training cohorts between areas. By working closely with others, BfN signposted families to practical support including food banks, domestic violence services, tailored mental health services, housing advice, community kitchens and many other forms of targeted community support.

BfN continued to expand virtual groups and 1-2-1 video calls support this year alongside drop-in models, improving access for all where the absence or cost of transport, or time poverty are otherwise barriers.

A 2024 report highlighted the central role of charities in delivering public services, estimating that beyond contributing volunteers and expertise, charities contributed £2.4 billion to subsidise delivery of public services.¹⁴ Because we work alongside colleagues in government and government agencies, BfN understand that budgets are under unprecedented pressure.¹⁵ During the year, BfN continued to experience increased demand and complexity throughout its services. In many areas BfN were asked to deliver at scale and in a tailored manner without receiving comparable increases in resources. We continued to adapt service models and review efficiencies to respond to these pressures in an agile manner. Our commitment to keep our costs low continues to be carefully balanced with preserving our reputation for delivering the safe, accessible and high-quality services that families, local authorities and NHS colleagues trust and value.

Our volunteer and staff team continued to be impressively responsive and resourceful in the face of this challenging service delivery context.

Volunteers and staff continued to report pressures on their own family budgets. Reflecting the experience in the wider sector, recruitment and retention of volunteers in certain geographical and service areas continued to be more challenging than in previous years, often reflecting less time available for volunteering or a need to return more quickly to full-time work to pay for household expenses.

¹⁴ NPC 2024 <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/charities-subsidise-public-services-by-2-4bn-a-year-say-researchers.html#:~:text=SORP,uplifted%20in%20line%20with%20inflation>.

¹⁵ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/no-more-sticking-plasters-lga-survey-lays-bare-local-government-funding-crisis>

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“We've had quite a few women who come in and you can just see... relief after they've been there for a little while and they've been talking to us, talking to other mums in the group... You can just... see them relax, physically relax and they'll get to the end of the group and they... thank you very much for just being here.”

Volunteer, South Wales

BfN became an accredited Real Living Wage employer in 2019 and we are consistent in this commitment in every area we work. In 2024-25, this meant a 5% increase in salary costs, on top of a 10% increase the previous year. BfN continues to actively encourage volunteers to claim expenses. We also continued to experience increases in the cost of professional fees and travel costs.

Commissioned activities can be short-term and take time to formalise. This uncertainty has not lessened with the introduction of the Procurement Act in February 2025. Before the reporting year was out we experienced that whilst updated procedures aim to promote value for money, the additional work to prepare tenders, contract, manage transfers and potentially mitigate against loss of key relationships and local knowledge, represent a significant additional cost to the organisation.

We continue to experience high levels of uncertainty about future income despite the reported increase in restricted income for delivering services in the year's accounts. These experiences highlight the ongoing importance to the charity of improving financial resilience through strict financial management, forward planning and securing new funding and income streams. This is of vital importance so that BfN can also innovate with and deploy its own considerable knowledge base, expertise and relationships in ways that the organization itself can demonstrate will impact infant feeding outcomes for families across the UK.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of BfN. Our peers – women with personal lived experience of breastfeeding who complete accredited training that equips them to deliver to the quality standards required by NICE and BFI community standards - share their skills and time with an impressive level of commitment to improving the information and support available to all families. Volunteers are the reason that BfN's services are trusted and available to families who need them. This year the evidence of the esteem in which BfN volunteers are held included the commissioning of, and immensely positive response to the successful NBH@Night 24-hour service and the invitation to extend training to areas of high deprivation in Wales. In both cases, these significant achievements were only possible because of the outstanding reputation of our volunteer-run services including public and healthcare professional trust in the day-time National Breastfeeding Helpline, operated by volunteers from BfN and The Association for Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM).

Our diverse board of Member and Non-Member Directors lead BfN's mission and as volunteers, also give generously of their time. This year, we were also delighted to benefit from voluntary expertise of media and social media professionals through the Media Trust's Women's Voices event.

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Over the course of 2024-25, BfN appointed additional staff to support the delivery of services at antisocial or fixed times. This included staff to operate the night-time service of the National Breastfeeding Helpline and weekend activities in family hubs and hospital wards. BfN's volunteer: staff ratio remained over 5:1, significantly higher than the national average, of 3:1 in the wider sector.¹⁶

A recent CAF report highlighted that 1.5 million fewer people volunteer across the UK than in 2019¹⁷. Volunteering levels throughout the UK have not recovered since the pandemic, in part, because many potential volunteers now feel the urgency of prioritizing work in the current economic climate.

"This is such an underrated service. I recommend it to anyone looking for support around breastfeeding. The volunteers are patient, incredibly knowledgeable and make me feel better. Motherhood can be a lonely place, especially when those around you seem to have stopped breastfeeding. I can't emphasise my gratitude enough. I honestly don't think I would have continued breastfeeding as long as I have without their support."

Caller to the National Breastfeeding Helpline

The high level of commitment to consistently provide high-quality support to women and families on their feeding journey meant that an impressive 1,163 registered volunteers donated their skills and time to support families (914 in 2023-4) and a further 372 started their training journey with BfN in 2024-25 (285 in 2023-4). These figures represent increases of 27% and 30%, respectively, on last financial year.

In total, a massive **43,710 hours** were donated to deliver services in 2024-25. This is a significant increase on the previous year and includes attendance of supervision, where volunteers reflect and learn to improve their practice¹⁸ and costed using equivalent market rates, this amounts to the equivalent of an additional £715,863.74 investment over the year.

Despite the financial pressures on volunteers described above, and the demands of the delivery context, BfN, its callers, families, health professionals and those that commission us, continue to benefit from exceptional levels of skill, investment in continuous improvement and reflective practice as well as time. Without this incredible contribution, BfN services would not have the reputation they do and would simply not be possible.

The Drugs in Breast Milk information Service, run by pharmacist volunteers, the National Breastfeeding Helpline, which operates daily throughout the year, and the increasingly busy, social media services, account for a whopping 21,159 hours, (20,671 hours in 2023-24) of volunteering time this year.

All service areas recognise volunteer contributions with regular thank you cards, newsletter features, certificates and ongoing training opportunities. Volunteer's Week, Breastfeeding Weeks, local social media activity and BfN's annual conference provide key moments to thank volunteers and showcase their work.

NBH volunteer recognition badges are awarded to volunteers who have marked their 100, 250, 500, 750, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500 and 3,000 calls answered and for 'long service' including those who have loyally donated their time and skills to families on the helpline for 5, 10, 15 and even 20 years.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-data-points-to-growing-social-and-economic-impact-of-charity-sector-amidst-challenging-financial-environment>

¹⁷ UK Giving Report 2025 <https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/uk-giving-report>

¹⁸ Volunteer Scotland (2023) <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Calculating-the-economic-value-of-your-volunteers-Guidance.pdf>

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A huge thank to every single one of BfN's inspirational volunteers who contributed to our work in 2024-25. Thank you once again for everything that you made possible for women and families over the last year!

Our Work with Women, Families and Communities

In the past year, if each visitor to a Drugs in Breast Milk Information Service information sheet, user of a peer support service or user of our Helpline services, was assumed to be a woman and their family, BfN supported 1.05 million service users.

In practice, we understand both, that women and their families use more than one BfN service, that service users frequently include health service professionals and community groups, who themselves support women and families and importantly this year, the algorithms for calculating engagement with factsheets, have changed. Over 70% of BfN's peer support services in England and Wales are delivered in communities with high levels of deprivation where research shows, breastfeeding rates tend to be lower. In Scotland, this figure is higher still. In addition, 25% of families benefiting from BfN's activities are from the 10% most deprived communities in Scotland. BfN continues to work hard to improve access to all our services and ensure ongoing relevance amongst those groups and communities whom the evidence shows need our support most.

These are striking figures. As the National Breastfeeding Helpline service expanded its services to 24 hours/ day throughout the reporting year, BfN's targeted social media, data use and outreach roles helped to ensure that more families from under-served populations were supported throughout the England, Wales and Scotland.

National Breastfeeding Helpline

The National Breastfeeding Helpline is an essential source of confidential support for women and families. We run this service with the support and partnership of The Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM). On 29th March 2024, following confirmation of funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, the long-awaited NBH@Night service launched, expanding the service from a 12 hour/day, 365-days/ year service to a round-the-clock service. To maintain a safe service for families, marketing was scaled carefully so that the service could respond to demand. Once established, we trialed social media services at night, without advertising their existence. This additional pilot demonstrated considerable demand.

The WHO and UNICEF reference the importance of support from peers (also referred to as breastfeeding counsellors) in community and healthcare settings, as a key contributor to delivery of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. The 2025 Monitoring Manual for Baby Friendly Initiative recommends that hospital staff assure themselves of the quality of this peer support provided.
<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/381022/9789240103764-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

According to The Scottish government 'a peer supporter will provide social, emotional and practical infant feeding support to mothers and families'. This is 'pivotal' and 'complementary to health professional support.'

NHS England recognises the benefits of peer support as a form of 'personalised care', which can be accessed at a time right for them. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance NG247, updated in 2025, recommends 'appropriately trained... peer supporters' who can provide 'out of hours support (such as the national breastfeeding helpline) and peer support', which provides 'individualised, practical, emotional and social support to maintain breastfeeding.'

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An independent evaluation confirmed that the pilot had been successful whilst maintaining the quality standards and trust that families and healthcare professionals expect from the day-time volunteer team of ABM and BfN. By the end of the year and informed by evaluation data and feedback, the Department for Health and Social Care invited BfN to extend the capacity of the service in 2025/6 so that 24-hour social media support could be formally launched.

The expanded service reached 46% more callers than in December 2023 and 21% of callers were from the 30% most deprived areas. By the start of the new financial year, 33% of callers were from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, and the service was reaching more than the proportionate percentage of young people in the parent population. Parents calling at night were more likely to have very young babies, report higher levels of distress and talk through their concerns with the team for longer. Increased numbers of families seeking support were evident in all areas of the UK and especially notable from outreach activity throughout South Wales, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford, Middlesbrough, Sefton, Hull and Lewisham. The overwhelming majority of calls continued to be within the scope of the helpline and the evaluation continued to highlight that health professionals and local authorities across the UK trust the service we provide and continue to consider it an important support to the work they do with families.

The predominant reason for contacting NBH@Night however remains that people are looking for support from an independent, trained, person with experience of infant feeding (82%). If this timely support was not available from NBH@Night then it is feasible that people may present at A&E or other frontline health services.

QA evaluation of the first year of the round-the-clock service, 2025

Over the year the National Breastfeeding Helpline team answered almost 29,500 calls, including 10% from a partner/father. Social media-based services met increasing demand for online support over the year and a marked increase on the previous financial year. Although many callers to the service seek support on a range of topics including stopping breastfeeding, 89% of callers reported feeling more confident to continue breastfeeding after contacting the service.

We continued to offer a staffed voicemail service with call backs to all voicemails left within 24 hours. This enabled the helpline to provide timely support to more families at particularly busy times.

Drugs in Breast Milk Information Service (DIBM)

Since 1997, BfN has run DIBM, offering independent, evidence-based information and support to parents and health care professionals on the safety of medication in breast milk.

Seven trainees were in training at the end of the financial year, which will take the total number of clinician peer supporters in the team to 30. This increased capacity improves the resilience of the volunteer pharmacist team and strengthens the governance process through which BfN's popular library of factsheets for parents is updated.

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"It is an amazing service, easily accessed and understood by both professionals and parents. Quick and easy to use. I use it on a regular basis and continually sign post parents to and send them relevant fact sheets. So much quicker and more informative than the BNF [medicines guidance] allowing parents to make an informed choice."

Health Visitor, Wales

"Just, please don't stop doing it, how you do it, and because someone like me who's really very, very vulnerable, it has given me some confidence back, even as a single parent... it's just been like a relief to have people respect you and validate your concerns."

Service user, DIBM, Scotland

The team of volunteer pharmacists answered more than 3,581 unique enquiries during this period.

In a recent external evaluation, 92% of healthcare professionals 'agreed that the service supports infant feeding and infant feeding roles' within the NHS. Healthcare Professionals appraised the DiBM Service as being 'invaluable', 'life changing', 'beyond beneficial' and 'user friendly'. The service was praised both for its evidence-based parent-facing information and the 'timely' response of the service for both professionals and families.

"Absolutely wonderful services. So incredibly valuable and important. I hope you're available for women for years and years to come. So polite and direct with clear information. Incredible, genuinely 10/10"

Service user, DIBM, England

Commissioned Peer Support Services in England and Wales

In 2024-25 The Breastfeeding Network was commissioned to deliver breastfeeding peer support in the following areas across England: Birmingham, Brent, Derbyshire, Dorset, Enfield, Greenwich, Haringey, Isle of Wight, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Northwick Park Hospital, Portsmouth, Reading, Sandwell, Shropshire, South and East Hampshire, Southampton, Southwark, St Helier and Epsom Hospitals, Stoke-on-Trent, Sutton, Tameside/Oldham (in partnership with Homestart), Telford & Wrekin, Tower Hamlets and Wokingham. BfN continued to deliver smaller-scale, volunteer-led services in Gloucestershire and North Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Northeast Essex and its respected training and supervision services in Walsall, South Tyneside and North-East Lincolnshire.

In 2024-25 The Breastfeeding Network was also invited to deliver peer support in Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Cardiff and Vale. Although initial funding was short term, an independent evaluation highlighted what BfN working in partnership with the local health boards had achieved in a very short space of time. Apart from establishing new services, all groups consulted as part of the evaluation, noted that breastfeeding was becoming more visible and talked about in areas where breastfeeding rates were very low and local families now understood that there was more support available to them. The team including BfN, were also recognised with an award for Excellence in Public Health Leadership at the Royal College of Midwives awards for their work on this project.

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*"Ultimately, this small-scale short-term project achieved this when often much larger projects do not and is an important consideration when reflecting on what works....
...Local health teams observed that working with BfN had many benefits, including their experience and reputation which meant they could roll the project out quickly and effectively. This was particularly important due to the short time scale of the project. BfN were trusted, experienced and the teams knew that they would deliver the support needed."*

Evaluation of the Welsh Government-funded BfN project with Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Boards, Swansea University

First Milk Matters training was also successfully delivered as part of wider programmes to community staff in Aneurin Bevan, Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Greenwich, Powys, North-East Lincolnshire, and Telford & Wrekin.

"I received support very promptly, having a Saturday call back was great for my flexibility. Having the face to face sessions every week is really reassuring"

Service user, Birmingham

In 2024-25, the charity continued to deliver and expand commissioned services across England with additional funding from the Start for Life and Family Hubs programme. Embedded peer support services were expanded in multiple locations. This included ongoing training and supervision, targeted outreach to under-served communities and areas of high deprivation, co-ordination with other early years services and breastfeeding support in hospital and community settings. In some services BfN was able to offer home visits and targeted training to parents under 25 years old. Successful use of this funding continued to demonstrate BfN's agile approach allowing the charity to adapt quickly to provide pop up groups at a variety of community settings, playgroups, soft play, cafes and community events and forums, according to the needs of families and communities.

"...I cannot recommend your services highly enough! I had both my first son and second son (2 months ago) at UCLH and was visited by your team at the post natal ward. I called up for help with my first son and someone came over to my house the same day/next day and was very helpful and kind. This time I also received a phone call reminding me your services were available. I feel very supported and knew exactly who to contact if I needed help. Thank you for your excellent work!"

Service user, Islington

Continued funding through the Family Hubs programme in 2024-25 enabled BfN to offer targeted training and support in; Birmingham, Brent, Telford & Wrekin, Stoke on Trent, Sandwell, Southampton, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Lambeth, Islington, Haringey, Enfield, Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark. We look forward to continuing the work in 2025 to extend our reach to families.

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"Seeing me as a new mum and being kind was almost as valuable as the session itself. There is a huge void in perinatal in this area and the times I went to the breastfeeding sessions were the times I felt most cared for. They were great for my mental health"

Service user, Southwark

Through BfN's funded services the charity's staff and volunteer teams in England and Wales provided invaluable, responsive infant feeding support to a significantly increased 23,000 individual mothers and families (compared to 13,510 in 2023-24 and 13,224 in 2022-23). This took place via 1-1 support in hospital postnatal wards, home visits, breastfeeding clinic appointments in children centres/family hub venues, telephone, and online video, as well as through our groups and walks. This work is underpinned by the commitment and dedication of volunteers who provided over 13,200 hours of volunteer support in England and Wales throughout 2024-25.

Peer support in Scotland

In 2024-25 volunteer and staff peer supporters ran 1,800 individual peer support groups (face-to-face, online and walking groups) and supported 1,300 different families, of which approximately 25% live in the 10% most deprived communities in Scotland.

"I originally came with a specific issue and got loads of one-to-one help with that. Afterwards I kept coming because everyone was so friendly and I learned a lot about breastfeeding that I wouldn't otherwise have learned"

Service user, Glasgow

Volunteer and paid peer supporters run almost 40 peer support groups per week across Scotland, including face to face groups, Walk, Talk and Feed groups and a weekly online group. 75% of BfN's groups in Scotland take place in areas with high levels of deprivation.

Organisationally including in Scotland, BfN has continued to work to increase the diversity of the charity's volunteers and in so doing, continue to improve the relevance and reach with communities that BfN seeks to serve. Over the financial year, training courses were again targeted to help increase the number of volunteers from minoritised ethnic groups, from areas of high deprivation as well as targeting young mums and those who speak additional languages.

BfN peer supporters helped around 600 Families on hospital wards in Forth Valley as well as supporting 500 women on a 1:1 basis over the phone in the first three week after their baby arrived. In addition, 113 pregnant women and their families were supported to get breastfeeding off to a good start through 11 in-person antenatal sessions.

In Ayrshire, peer supporters provided support to almost 1,000 different families in the first 6-7 weeks after their baby arrived through home visits, phone and text support. This took place through a unique integrated service which supports all breastfeeding mums in Ayrshire, co-developed and delivered in partnership by BfN with NHS colleagues.

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"The most supportive group I've ever been too. I went there when my baby was 2 weeks old and I was really struggling with breastfeeding but determined to continue. The volunteer was incredible: she listened, comforted and helped me immensely. I still love going with my 6 month old. This group is what has allowed me to still feed my 6 month old and we've made friends with other amazing mums. Thank you!"

Service user, Scotland

Also in Ayrshire, the antenatal Bump Buddy team supported 200 families with face-to-face antenatal sessions, with blocks of three sessions for parents to attend. 100% of parents attending these sessions reported that they felt more confident to achieve their feeding goals once baby arrived after attending.

Staff in Scotland worked with colleagues from Education Scotland considering how peer supporters could support national aims on early language and communication. A short training session was shared with peer supporters in Ayrshire in February 2025 and this work continues so that this learning will become part of BfN's ongoing training to help improve outcomes for babies and children.

The Scottish Programme Manager contributed to national work to develop a new framework to support families and babies at risk of infant food insecurity, which includes consideration of how best to enable access to formula.

Partners and Networks

BfN continued to build upon our strong partnerships with others during 2024-25, especially our partner on the NBH, the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers.

We continued to work with Government, particularly the Start for Life team in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Children and Families Directorate in Scottish Government, Public Health Wales and the Medicines in Health Regulatory Authority.

As a core group member of the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative, BfN was an active contributor to the UK assessment that was published in 2025.

'The Breastfeeding Network won for its vital, volunteer-led support services, including the 24-hour National Breastfeeding Helpline and expert advice on breastfeeding and medication. Their inclusive, collaborative approach ensures more parents get the support they need to feed their babies with confidence.'

Sustain on BfN's Early Years' Nutrition Legend Award at the Children's Food Awards, February 2025

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Other key partnerships and networks included the re-configured All-Party Parliamentary Group on Infant Feeding and Inequalities, UKDILAS, who provide evidence-based advice to healthcare professionals on the safe use of medicines during breastfeeding, UNICEF's UK Baby Friendly Initiative, Early Years Nutrition Co-ordination group, National Infant Feeding Advisors Network, Baby Feeding Law Group, Home-Start UK, Institute of Health Visiting, Hospital Infant Feeding Network, La Leche League and First Steps Nutrition.

BfN works closely with Local Authorities and the NHS throughout England, Wales and Scotland and has scaled this activity over the year in order to improve knowledge of our national services.

In Scotland, BfN works with Scottish Government, the Scottish Infant Feeding Advisors Network, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, NHS Lothian, NHS Forth Valley, NHS Fife, NHS Western Isles, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Renfrewshire Council, Falkirk HSCP, Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (TSI), CVS Falkirk and the Scottish Breastfeeding Collaborative

We worked with voluntary sector bodies, including Voluntary Health Scotland, Media Trust, ACEVO and NCVO.

BfN is dedicated to ensuring the best evidence is made available to women and families to enable a true and informed choice in infant feeding. In 2024-25 BfN collaborated with research projects including University of Stirling, University of Central Lancashire, Kings College London, The Centre for Impact on Urban Health, York St. John University and with the Baby Feeding Law Group. BfN are also part of a sub-group of the Scottish Breastfeeding Collaborative which continued to work on research around women and breastfeeding with a disability or long-term condition.

We thank all our partners for their time, expertise and funding during 2024-25.

Understanding our impact and performance

The Breastfeeding Network roots the development and improvement of its work in evidence and learning. Our accredited training, services, information resources and public statements are informed by credible evidence as well as the ongoing feedback and lived experience of the tens of thousands of women and families we speak to every year.

Our service delivery teams develop and maintain their skills through ongoing supervision, continuous professional development and reflective practice, which are requirements of their registration with BfN. These are central to the reputation which BfN commands. As part of training and supervision, registered members debrief their own personal experiences of breastfeeding, so that they remain aware of how this could impact their interactions with families they support or delivery of BfN's wider work. This practice upholds BfN's standards of supporting and empowering women's and families' own choice and underpins BfN's trusted network of effective and ethical peer supporters.

"I couldn't have carried on without the support of your team. They were literally a lifeline when I needed them the most. Thank you"

Service user, Portsmouth

In 2024-25 we continued to report against a performance framework, aligned to our five-year strategy. Service teams gathered and analysed data, which were reported to and reviewed by the Board on a regular basis. This data is consistent with existing commissioner monitoring and reporting requirements, which already enables BfN to be accountable for the use of public funding and support improvement activity within individual services.

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Development of our organisation-wide data and reporting has enriched evidence-based assessment and decisions about relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and alignment with infant feeding and early years activity beyond BfN. During 2024-25 a Programme Quality Manager was appointed with a brief to lead additional development of our monitoring and evaluation practice.

In 2024-25, alongside ongoing monitoring and evaluation in all services and teams, individual service evaluations were used to better understand how to increase our impact, and effectiveness in specific services and contexts. In the second half of the year, externally commissioned evaluations took place for both the National Breastfeeding Helpline and our small grant funded activity in Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Whilst both have already been used to inform improvement actions, these evaluations highlighted the outstanding and thoughtful delivery of our teams.

An evaluation by Professor Amy Brown and Karen Hall of Swansea University concluded that in a very short time the South Wales project had demonstrated 'positive changes' to *'partnership working, the experiences of those who undertook training and the parents who were supported. These changes were both immediate in terms of success of the project and impacts upon knowledge and confidence to breastfeed. However, longer term influences were also at play with a ripple effect... going out into communities to help change entrenched social norms around infant feeding.'*

The evaluation of the initial pilot of the NBH@Night 24-hour service took place at the end of the financial year. The evaluation identified that use of the service steadily rose throughout the year, 93% callers would recommend the service to a friend and although some callers seek support with bottle feeding, combi-feeding or stopping breastfeeding, 89% reported that they felt more confident to continue breastfeeding as a result of support they had received. The evaluation also noted BfN's practice of using service data to adapt and improve the service.

Learning and findings from research and evaluations were shared both through organization-wide project lead meetings and management team meetings. Evidence and learning from the NBH@Night interim evaluation and from a Kings College London research study of a London service run by BfN throughout the pandemic were shared with delegates at BfN's popular October Conference to inspire learning, particularly around integration, targeting of services and delivering support in emergencies.

The Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme

The BfN Breastfeeding Friendly scheme was set up to support businesses, venues and organisations in their efforts to welcome breastfeeding women and families. At the end of March 2025 470 venues were signed up to the scheme (and over 700 only 6 months later). This represents an increase of 4.7% on the previous year. During 2024-25 BfN significantly upgraded the scheme, including giving existing venues the chance to update their information and commitment, which resulted in a significant cleansing of the scheme and the removal of 196 venues.

The scheme remains free to join with additional paid options available for example, to access printed materials or join the BfN Venue Finder. Over the year there has been an overhaul of Scheme materials, creating a new sign-up form, new posters, window stickers and certificates of commitment, and new designs for use across social media.

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"I signed up to the scheme straight away as breastfeeding is promoting the health of future generations and I want the mums and families who visit my café to feel a 100% comfortable when Mum needs to breastfeed. I already have a changing area for families and so this scheme was perfect in expanding the family environment I already provide to my customers."

Iain Garner, Ruby SoHo Café, Bridlington

'In the East Riding Bridlington is our first Breastfeeding Friendly town, and currently 100 businesses have signed up to the Breast-Feeding Friendly scheme'

NHS Humber Teaching Foundation Trust

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 249 new venues joined our national Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme. This means 81.75% more new venues signed up to the Scheme in 2024-25 than during 2023-24. New venues include NHS premises, children's centres, galleries, cafes, restaurants, nurseries, local community venues, a group of libraries, 19 railway stations from TransPennine Express and a group of 22 leisure centres.

All marketing resources for national scheme venues now include a date. This allows BfN to monitor which venues are maintaining their commitment to the Scheme and to manage associated risks. BfN has developed a free online training module that is available to venues to introduce staff or volunteers they work with to breastfeeding and what the scheme means for their work. This was launched in late February 2025 and accessed by 20 venues in the first fortnight.

During 2024-25 local government partners in 10 different areas were working with BfN either as part of BfN's Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme or a locally commissioned scheme. BfN was commissioned to deliver the BfN Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme in Wandsworth and Richmond, Telford & Wrekin, Wokingham. In Haringey, Isle of Wight, Islington, Portsmouth & Southampton the charity has delivered local Breastfeeding Welcome Schemes, applying learning about how to both stimulate increased local commitment to support breastfeeding women and families, whilst ensuring consistency of minimum standards.

BfN staff continued to contribute to the Scottish Government's Breastfeeding Advocacy and Culture Change Advisory group to promote a national Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland scheme run by the Scottish Government.

Training (Courses)

The charity offers comprehensive and accredited peer support training to volunteers at no cost to trainees. Provision of training is subject to funding available, and the delivery demands on the BfN and the NBH.

Following comprehensive review in 2023-24, from 1st April 2024, delivery of training was co-ordinated and resourced by a central training team, significantly improving BfN's ability to plan and respond to training requests and offering more stable employment for women in these roles.

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Accredited Courses

BfN is a recognised centre with Open College Network London (OCNL) and the assessor's judgement when auditing BfN's performance this year is testament to the consistently high quality work of BfN's skilled training, training development and quality assurance team.

BfN's continued 'Direct Claims Status' with OCNL demonstrates that the charity has the skills, knowledge, and robust systems in place, including internal moderation, to maintain high quality training provision.

'The centre continues to provide excellent training and continues to make new developments around supporters for breastfeeding mothers.'

Assessor, Open College Network, February 2025, upon auditing BfN's performance as a recognised centre

BfN offers three levels of accredited training: Helpers, Supporters and Tutors. The BfN's Helpers Course comprises two units at OCNL Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs/National 5 in Scotland and worth 6 credits). Traditionally delivered face to face, adaptations over recent years mean that it is now often delivered online and via group video calls or using a blended approach with some sessions delivered in person and others online.

"I lost my career as a hair dresser many years ago when I had an accident that caused me to have a chronic neurological disorder and my confidence was completely dashed, doing the course has given me a huge confidence boost and doing the accreditation gives me hope that I can find a career in the future in this area, I've found a new passion for helping people and since having my children for breastfeeding too and being able to help others the way I've received support on my journey gives me such a huge boost."

BfN Volunteer, Birmingham

The BfN Supporters Course initially comprises two units at OCNL level 3 (equivalent to GCE A Levels/Highers in Scotland and worth 12 credits) and can be delivered face to face, online, or a combination of both. The full Supporters course adds another unit at level 3 (worth 6 credits).

The BfN Tutor Course includes a module from OCN, adapted for BfN, at OCNL level 3.

From April 2024 to March 2025, BfN ran 48 training courses resulting in 219 Helpers, 22 Helpline Supporters and 32 Supporters completing their training with BfN. This represents a slight reduction in the number of courses run last financial year (50 in 2023-24), but a small increase in the number of additional trainees. Specific targeted courses for women from Black and Asian backgrounds continued to be run this year and the fully-funded Helpline Supporter training finished enabling five Helpers from areas of deprivation to secure paid roles on the new NBH@Night Service.

Throughout the year, BfN teams continued to adapt training design and delivery to remove barriers to under-represented groups. BfN reviewed and updated training policies and is currently piloting a revised version of Helpers, better adapted to online delivery.

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"...I think that having that kind of specialist knowledge and training about infant feeding is really important. There's so much misinformation and societal norms or stuff that gets passed down... something that I really value about the helpline is I feel like I can really trust what they tell me..."

In-depth interview participant evaluation, NBH@Night, England

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

BfN provide training and networking opportunities for volunteers, supporters, staff, tutors and supervisors to maintain skill levels and knowledge about key topics related to BfN's work. Key events included:

- BfN's Annual Conference and AGM
 - Dedicated quarterly Tutor and Supervisor events
 - NBH Study Days and area hosted Study Days, including in Lambeth, South Coast and for Scottish volunteers
-

"Brilliant course to help me reflect on my practise and how I support families. Really enjoyed the course content and the global outlook too, including the videos from 3rd world countries. Thoroughly enjoyed the golden hour after birth and the research element of how this can benefit mothers with breastfeeding. Found Sally's knowledge brilliant, she really does know her facts and her experience translated across well. Thanks for the privilege of developing my learning"

SIFIYP course participant

A fund to support tutor and supervisor attendance at external CPD sessions was made available and used with those attending sharing learning with colleagues.

Non-accredited training

Following a of Supporting Infant Feeding in Your Practice (OCN Endorsed) two further cohorts started this course in 2024-25, with one under-way.

BfN delivered 'First Milk Matters' Breastfeeding Awareness sessions throughout the year, including for 65 participants from Telford and Wrekin, Stoke and 35 in Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Morgannwg. This is a short session that covers general information about why breastfeeding is important and how everyone can support it.

The Swansea University evaluation of work in Wales said that First Milk Matters: *'had a particularly novel effect because it increased awareness amongst different volunteers and staff who might not have previously considered that their role had any impact upon breastfeeding. Although health professionals received training on supporting infant feeding, FMM training was aimed at those working in places attended by new families. These staff rarely have training in supporting breastfeeding yet might have an impact through their attitudes and advice.'*

Further courses are in the process of review or piloting, which will be delivered in 2025-26.

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"I sought support in regards to introducing bottle feeds to my baby, and maintaining my supply when returning to work. The friendly support offered was practical, factual and reassuring. It was invaluable in helping manage my concerns and boosted my confidence"

Service user, Stoke

This year, BfN developed and launched the short 'induction' to the Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme to underpin organisational commitment to enabling breastfeeding.

An on-line course, Breastfeeding for Physicians launched late in 2024, and has already been well-received.

Membership and Friends Scheme

BfN Membership is open to registered volunteers and current trainees who are up to date with supervision and have completed all mandatory training. Members enjoy reduced ticket price for the Annual Conference and an invitation to the AGM. All Members have voting rights, elect Directors and receive regular copies of the BfN Newsletter.

At the end of the 2024-25 financial year BfN had 1,163 Members (2023-24: 914). The charity will support further member engagement in 2024-25.

Friends of BfN and DIBM are individuals and organisations who want to show their commitment to BfN's vision and mission. Friends receive discounted access to BfN's annual conference and receive BfN's newsletter. Friends do not need to meet the requirements of Membership and therefore do not have voting rights at BfN's AGM. We are immensely grateful for their continued solidarity.

BfN Newsletter

Our online magazine, BfN News, continues to be sent quarterly to Members, Friends, and Supporters. It includes guest writers, service news and other information relevant to our subscribers.

Fundraising activities

For the second time this year, BfN participated in one of The Big Give's match funding campaigns. This raised an impressive £13,556 from individual donors and match funders. Whilst BfN's funds for delivering services have been rising, this has not been matched by funding for essential central services which underpin the quality for which BfN is known (finance, communications, safety vetting, recruitment, IT), and commissioned work tends to be agreed on a relatively short term basis, sometimes with gaps between one contract and the next. This funding has already proved essential over the last year to address gaps.

"It was really great to have this service available- I have just put baby to the breast for the first time (which happened to be the middle of the night) after 2 weeks of purely expressing and it was painful so I wasn't sure if there would be support available. Being able to speak to an expert has been amazing"

Service user, NBH@Night

We are enormously grateful to all the individual and organizational donors who fundraised and donated to the Breastfeeding Network in 2024-25.

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In 2024-25 BfN welcomed a fundraiser to the team who has begun the work of raising awareness of our cause with different groups of funders. This will help BfN to safeguard central support that underpins quality, extend reach to groups who remain under-served in infant feeding support, and to fund innovation in existing and new services, to make best use of BfN's extensive knowledge, expertise and lived experience in breastfeeding and the design and delivery of services that achieve impact. During the financial year, this resulted in funding for the Drugs in Breast Milk Service to start to share trusted information in new formats and Welsh language, therefore improving accessibility to under-served communities.

'My intention was to let you know how much BfN has meant to me — both in my personal journey as a mother learning to breastfeed, and later in my career. ...BfN truly shaped who I am today. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude, and I look forward to giving back in a way that aligns with your values.'

Emily, donor

Communication, website and social media

In 2024-25, the Breastfeeding Network's main website was accessed by 1,262,022 users. Around 43% of UK visitors were from London, 3.4% from Birmingham, 3% Wolverhampton, 3% Milton Keynes, 2.7% Edinburgh and over 2% each from Newcastle upon Tyne, Cardiff and Belfast. The overwhelming majority of users (86%) are accessing the site from their mobile. The most popular page visited was BfN's Antibiotics and Breastfeeding factsheet, which attracted almost 12% of visitors.

"Great to see this really positive summary of our new research on hashtag#breastfeeding and #maternal #mental hashtag#health in the latest Blog article from The Breastfeeding Network (UK). The Breastfeeding Network (UK) are providing the exact type of support that mothers in our research are reporting that they need - accessible, timely, compassionate and evidence-based 🙌"

Dr Elizabeth Braithwaite, Manchester Metropolitan University

At the end of March 2025, followers of The Breastfeeding Network were 54,744 for Facebook (3.8% increase), 30,543 for Instagram (15.1% increase), and 11,627 for X (Twitter) (2.4% decrease). Engagement levels remain strong across all platforms providing good opportunities to improve the reach of services, influence public understanding of breastfeeding and outreach for volunteer and staff recruitment and recognition.

BfN's following on X has declined and whilst the charity continues to review our presence on the platform. At present it remains an effective means of promoting national services to specific audiences.

Financial review

In the year ended 31 March 2025 BfN's total income was £2,801,689 (2024: £2,671,552) and the total expenditure was £2,848,233 (2024: £1,803,737). There has been further expansion during the year including the first complete year of operation for the NBH Night Service, continued funding from the Start For Life Programme in numerous areas, and the large tenders won last year in Lewisham, Greenwich and Birmingham. Some of the increase reflects income received during March 2025 for projects commencing in the new financial year.

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The total funds carried forward at the end of the year were £2,036,872 (2024: £2,083,416), of which £1,113,412 (2024: £1,341,194) were restricted funds and £902,760 (2024: £742,222) were unrestricted funds. The movement in unrestricted reserves was a surplus of £161,027 (before transfers) (2024: surplus of £154,540 (before transfers)).

BfN's Directors continue to prioritise seeking out new funding opportunities, particularly for unrestricted income. A clear focus of strategy is to improve financial resilience of BfN and its key services to allow for better longer-term planning.

BfN thanks everyone who has supported our organisation with grants and other forms of support that made our work possible in 2024-25, including

- Allied Vehicles Charitable Trust
- Arran Community and Voluntary Service (Arran CVS) on behalf of Scottish Government
- Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust of London House
- Borough of Telford & Wrekin
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Derbyshire Community Health Services NHS Foundation Trust
- Dorset Council
- Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Fife Voluntary Action
- Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Greater Glasgow Health Board
- Home Start Oldham, Stockport & Tameside for Tameside Council and Oldham Council
- Islington Council
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London North West Healthcare NHS Trust
- Lothian Health Board
- Midlothian Voluntary Action (MVA), part of Midlothian Third Sector Interface
- National Lottery Community Fund - Tea and Tots North Ayrshire
- National Lottery Funding - Cardiff
- National Lottery Funding - Glasgow
- National Lottery Funding - Community Fund - South and East Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- NHS Forth Valley
- NHS Lothian
- NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICB
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust
- Oswestry Community Action, Qube
- Portsmouth City Council
- Postcode Lottery
- Renfrewshire Council
- Royal Borough of Greenwich and The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Lewisham
- Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

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- Scottish Government
- South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- South Tyneside Council
- Southampton City Council
- Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise Ltd and Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface
- Stoke-On-Trent City Council
- The Big Give
- The Mayor & Burgesses of the London Borough of Brent
- The Mayor & Burgesses of the London Borough of Enfield
- The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Haringey
- The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Islington
- The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Lambeth
- The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Southwark
- The Media Trust
- Welsh Government - Communities & Tackling Poverty Team
- Walsall Housing Group
- Wokingham Borough Council

Reserve policy

BfN's reserve policy is designed to ensure we have adequate financial resources to navigate uncertainties and continue our work without interruption. Reserves provide a crucial safety net allowing us to respond to unforeseen challenges and maintain operational continuity during periods of fluctuating income.

The Directors actively review the reserves policy of the charity. The required level of reserves is reviewed in depth on a routine basis, at least bi-annually, gathering input from the auditors at least once per year. The Finance Audit and Risk Committee meet on a quarterly basis and makes the recommendation to review the reserves policy out of cycle if the organisation faces a material risk to its income or cash flow, or an unforeseen level of expenditure, for example, because of unprecedented price rises.

BfN provides high quality and responsive breastfeeding support and has an exceptional reputation for doing so. As a result, the organisation is regularly commissioned by local authorities, The Department of Health and the Scottish Government. This kind of funding represents the majority of BfN's funding. Whilst we continue to secure these commissions, we understand that local and national government are facing significant pressures on their own finances. As a result, BfN is at risk of delays to funding being agreed, short term funding contracts, sudden cancellation of funding streams or refusal to absorb price increases BfN faces as a Real Living Wage Employer, for example.

In May 2024 Directors agreed it was prudent to work towards a revised target of 12 months of staffing and operational costs, given the context that BfN is operating in. For the financial year 2025-26 this stands at £801,761, of which 7.3 months' running costs are held (£494,398); in 2024, 6.5 months were held).

Designated Funds

The Directors have designated several funds to allow BfN to be responsive to the needs of the charity and to support long-term planning, particularly in light of the short-term nature of a large proportion of commissioned income.

Finance and Business Development Fund

In November 2022, Directors took the decision to designate up to £130,400 to under-write the cost of employed Finance Manager and Business Development Manager positions over a two year period. These decisions were a direct result of the perceived risk of dependence on funding that may at times be at threat. The Finance Manager

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has been in post since May 2023. The Business Development Manager (role renamed to Funding Manager) commenced in June 2024. The Directors agreed to maintain the fund at its current level for a further two years due to the crucial nature of these roles. 2025-26 is the second year and then the fund will be reviewed.

Redundancy Fund

Given the long service of many of our employees, we make provision for redundancy costs, beyond what can often be reasonably charged to our commissioning contracts. The reserve for these costs has increased to reflect BfN's new liability at 31st March 2025, to £172,251 (2024: £135,482).

Capital Costs

BfN has a designated fund of £30,000 for capital costs, including IT. Maintaining a secure cyber environment is becoming increasingly complex and demands additional resources to comply with accreditation requirements. The Directors recognise the importance of a dedicated fund to support these needs.

Training

£10,000 is ring-fenced to maintain the skills of the tutors, supervisors and volunteers, so essential to the continued quality of BfN services.

DIBM Support Fund

Certain services delivered by BfN are irreplaceable to end beneficiaries and to health workers we partner with, yet at times difficult to finance. The Directors will, based on systematic review, make the decision to under-write the costs of individual projects or services, where these are judged to face a funding risk. Among these are The Drugs in Breast Milk information Service, which has £56,423 allocated to cover a basic service.

Impact on Inequalities Fund, Pan London and National Programmes Funds

Three new funds were set up in 2024-25 after a fully comprehensive review of project balances. Upon meeting certain criteria (commissioner approval, project completion and a review of local work). Directors agreed to the creation of the three funds and the transfer of appropriate balances. On 31st March 2025 funds were; Impact on Inequalities £1,918, Pan London £3,927 & National Programmes £3,521.

Investment policy (deposits)

In July 2023 BfN set up an account with Flagstone IM which gives us access to 100 accounts from over 30 different banks. Funds held in excess of operating requirements are placed in the accounts with the most favourable rate of return with minimal risk. All banks on the platform are members of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), BfN ensures that funds deposited in individual accounts do not breach the maximum limit for FSCS protection. During 2024-25 this generated interest of £20,443 (2024 : £12,184)

The policy and funds deposited are reviewed on an annual basis.

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Risk management

The Board of Directors prioritise effective risk management to ensure the safeguarding of BfN's assets, ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and prudent decision making.

A robust risk management framework not only protects our reputation and fosters trust amongst donors and stakeholders but ensures operational continuity in the face of disruptions.

Risk is a standing agenda item at all Board meetings and a consideration in the appraisal of any strategic work. The charity maintains a risk register which is regularly reviewed together with mitigation strategies and action needed, by the Board, and in detail by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR), ahead of Board meetings. At an operational level, managers review and agree action on risk at fortnightly meetings. The Chair and CEO regularly meet to review any emergent risks, referring to the FAR or the Board, where the need arises.

All projects complete a thorough risk assessment process and business continuity planning, which is monitored by the responsible member on the management team, and referred for CEO or Board approval when appropriate.

BfN has a comprehensive library of policies, many of which support the management of specific risks. These are also reviewed and updated according to a timetable approved by the Board. Policy reviews and updates are informed by learning and incidents from our own practice and the wider contexts in which we work. Where the Board considers it appropriate, authority is delegated to the FAR or the CEO to authorise policies, in line with the agreed Scheme of Delegation.

| 1. Risk Description – Financial |
|--|
| <p>Local Context</p> <p>A large proportion of BfN income comes from commissioning at a local level. Since BfN works predominantly within areas of high deprivation, many areas have significant income pressure and must respond to complex needs across their mandate. The likelihood of commissioning is therefore dependent in part on the relative priority given to infant feeding / early years. To some extent, BfN's risk is diversified because we work across many geographical areas, however, these are often shaped by the same wider political / economic factors.</p> <p>National Context</p> <p>The prioritisation and resourcing of infant feeding is shaped by government understanding and attitudes to infant feeding, and again this will depend in part on prioritisation relative to other policy areas.</p> <p>The forthcoming re-tender of the National Breastfeeding Helpline is a risk to BfN. We are synonymous with this service and our operation of the service has led to its reputation for quality and independence. The service extends our reach, influence and accounts for a significant proportion of our income. Independent evaluations highlight that BfN is uniquely competent to operate this service, in partnership with our delivery partners, ABM.</p> |
| <p>Strategies to manage risk</p> <p>BfN has a robust system for assessing and evaluating projects for future funding (using a RAG status: Red, Amber, Green). This includes; demonstrating impact and outcomes, effective stewardship of relationships, consideration of longer-term sustainability, transparent and timely reporting, stakeholder engagement and support, and development of new relationships across the sector.</p> |

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Regional strategies include developing relationships with elected representatives who then better understand and develop commitment to our work and infant feeding.

BfN will continue to seek out new funding opportunities particularly for unrestricted income, including increased efforts on trusts and foundations fundraising, training income and low input fundraising (e.g. Give as you Live). A dedicated Funding Manager was recruited in June 24.

In July 2023 BfN set up an account with Flagstone IM which gives us access to 100 accounts from over 30 different banks. Funds held in excess of operating requirements are placed in the accounts with the most favourable rate of return with minimal risk.

DIBM has a sustainable structure in place with staff team roles and a team of volunteer pharmacists covering the volunteering rota. BfN regularly reviews and seeks funding for the service.

BfN is a recognised leader with a reputation for quality and integrity. We are flexible and continually work to improve our performance. BfN holds itself to high standards in delivering our existing contracts, we also continue to develop our skills and our evidence-based offer. This work both further develops our unique competence to run commissioned services and mitigates the risk to BfN's overall reputation and impact if we are not awarded existing contracts in future.

A robust reserve policy is in place. In May 2024 the reserve target was increased to 12-month staffing and operational costs. Several designated funds have been created for specific future needs.

2. Risk Description – Environmental and External

Inflation and rising costs of living continue to affect BfN, despite recently easing. The inability of both BfN and families to cover costs due to inflation may increase the demand for higher salaries/improved terms, reduce the availability of volunteers and result in an inability to afford travel costs while waiting for reimbursement may directly affect the availability of local services.

In April 2025 the UK Government increased Employer National Insurance rates. This added a significant additional cost to payroll for 2025-26 rates

Strategy to manage risk

BfN is a real living wage employer. We also delivered a cost-of-living salary increase in 2024-25 and will continue to monitor salaries against inflation.

Spend is monitored against budget on an ongoing basis. We regularly review how we budget, especially for core costs and staffing to ensure appropriate costing and full cost recovery in all bids, tenders and sold pieces of work. We investigate options for central purchasing and alternative ways to cover costs without the need for staff and volunteers to incur expenses.

Our services are free of charge to all and consideration is given to accessible venues and meeting times, notably for those who may not have time or money to travel. The staff and volunteer expenses policy was reviewed in 2024-25.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

| |
|--|
| 3. Risk Description – Cyber Attack |
| <p>The risk and impact of a cyber-attack can be significant and multifaceted. Impacts can include data breaches, financial loss, reputational damage, operational disruption, legal and regulatory consequences, increased security costs and impact on fundraising efforts.</p> <p>In March 2025 a third-party provider experienced a ransomware attack impacting access to BfN’s financial systems. This was resolved in line with the risk management strategy outlined below. All necessary reporting continued to be performed in time, and no further impact is expected.</p> |
| <p>Strategy to manage risk</p> <p>BfN has invested significant time and technical skills in reviewing and innovating our IT systems over the last few years. Technical support is in place and security measures have been appraised. Cyber Essentials accreditation has been secured for the fifth year. Good practice and relevant policies are maintained in terms of managing IT equipment and systems access and monitored at Board level. Mandatory annual staff and volunteer training was introduced in 2024. Backups are now in place and restoration of data are tested. Cyber Insurance is in place with Coalition.</p> <p>BfN completes the annual data toolkit assessment through the NHS and this was successfully submitted in June 2024.</p> |
| 4. Risk Description- Infant Feeding and breastfeeding not prioritised/recognised as key issues |
| <p>There are many demands on decision-makers at present and as the Parent Infant Foundation has highlighted, the early years are rarely prioritised. Breastfeeding is frequently misunderstood until it is experienced and unfortunately many decision-makers either do not have this lived experience or have themselves not accessed the support they needed when they needed it.</p> <p>Beyond this, other sectors and stakeholders may be nervous about breastfeeding and unhelpfully seek to deny the importance of breastfeeding to women, rather than supporting women and families in their desire to access trusted support to breastfeed. This challenge is compounded by an industry that stands to gain commercially when public health information and women’s sense of self-efficacy are undermined.</p> |
| <p>Strategy to manage risk</p> <p>BfN’s work is evidence based and rooted in lived experience. In our training / practice our message is absolutely clear that we support women/ families in their decisions, whatever these are.</p> <p>Publicly we will work to shift an unhelpful narrative. We have started working with a communications professional, who is also trained as a BfN helper, to support us.</p> |

Plans for the Future:

BfN’s vision is that women in the UK breastfeed for as long as they choose to and are able to access support when they need it. Their mental and physical health is central to the support they receive, which is informed by evidence.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

In 2023, the Board approved the following objectives and focus for our work over the following five years:

1. In our nationwide services, including our national helplines, information services and Drugs in Breast Milk Information Service (DIBM), BfN will continue to:
 - Increase our reach to under-served families who need our support
 - Secure resources to sustain our high-quality information and support
2. In our Scotland activities, BfN will:
 - Expand and diversify services to women and families facing deprivation
 - Work to strengthen public and decision-maker commitment and behaviour to support women's informed choices
3. In our England and Wales activities, BfN will:
 - Increase the reach of services for women and families in areas of high deprivation
 - Work to strengthen decision-maker commitment and investment in lasting, high quality breastfeeding support for all
4. In our work with volunteers, BfN will:
 - Work towards volunteering activity that works for all women
 - Ensure BfN has the volunteer, tutor and supervisor capacity and skills in place to respond to women and families
5. As the Breastfeeding Network, we will:
 - Seek to secure the right financial support needed to deliver the work that is most needed
 - Ensure we have the right people in place to help families who need our support most

In 2025-26, this means some of our key priorities are to:

- Use evidence to continue to develop our service offer, stay responsive to families, and continue to be the trusted leader in breastfeeding support
- Deliver, market and secure an effective National Breastfeeding Helpline @ Night service, and further enhance volunteering capacity on established high-quality daytime helplines
- Based on research, partner input and BfN practice, ensure services are responsive to crises/ emergencies facing families and communities
- Continue to progress delivery of BfN equality and inclusion priorities, informed by collection and analysis of disaggregated data and taking action to improve representation in our volunteer and workforce and strengthen staff action in all work areas
- Ensure high quality delivery of existing local peer support and work with commissioners to strategically plan, sustain and further develop services for under-served groups in future
- Work with government –nationally, in the devolved nations, regions and local/ strategic authorities -to improve understanding and commitment to resilient peer-to-peer information and support services for all who need them
- Develop our approach to programme quality so that fundraising, training, delivery, continuous improvement, influencing and communications and informed by insight and data
- Harness the lived experience and volunteer skills within our network to inform public, decision-maker and professional awareness
- Review processes for complex services so that BfN central functions continue to underpin safe, high-quality delivery and support staff through a period of transition
- Gear up fundraising and income generation activity that supports achievement of ambitious targets that enable BfN to sustain and increase its impact

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Directors (who are also the trustees of The Breastfeeding Network for the purposes of charity law) are responsible for preparing the Directors' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with the applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed; subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charitable company will continue to operate on that basis.

The Directors are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities & Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The Directors are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

| | |
|--|---|
| Charity Name | The Breastfeeding Network |
| Company registration number | SC330639 |
| Charity number | SC027007 |
| Registered Office/ Principal Office | Unit 49, Sir James Clark Building Abbey Mill Business Centre Paisley PA1 1TJ |

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Bankers

Bank of Scotland plc
The Cross, Gilmour Street
Paisley
PA1 1DD

Flagstone
First Floor, Clareville House
26-27 Oxendon Street
London SW1Y 4EL

Senior Statutory Auditor Independent Auditors

Fiona Haro CA
Thomson Cooper
Statutory Auditors
3 Castle Court
Dunfermline, KY11 8PB

Directors/Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Dr Sarah Turner (Chair)
Joy Hastings (Vice Chair)
Dr Caroline Polley (Treasurer)
Dr Ernestine Gheyoh Ndzi (Caldicott Guardian)
Claire Fradley (resigned 5th October 2024)
Emily Carpenter (resigned 22nd September 2025)
Jeskirat Johal
Nicola Lando
Fiona Stewart
Laura Thorne (resigned 26th February 2025)
Shruti Arora
Rebecca Vowles
Russell Hazelhurst (appointed 24th July 2025)

Key Management Personnel

Chief Executive

NBH Manager

HR Manager

Programme Manager

Programme Manager

Programme Manager (Scotland)

Programme Manager

Finance & Systems Manager

Programme Quality Manager

Catherine Hine
Hester Schofield
Julie Muir
Nina White
Anthea Tennant-Eyles
Sarah Edwards
Eleanor Johnson
Fiona Walker
Hannah Clarke

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

The Breastfeeding Network is a charitable company limited by guarantee incorporated on 7th September 2007. The company was incorporated under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles.

Recruitment and Appointment of Board of Directors

The articles were updated in October 2024 to increase the maximum number of Directors from 12 to 14. It remained that non-members should not form a majority. Under the Articles, new directors are elected by members, or appointed by current directors. Non-member directors are asked to stand down every year and are eligible for re-election. Directors are unremunerated.

The Board has made a commitment to regularly assess its effectiveness and skills-set and knowledge it requires to operate at a high level. Trustees are appointed from diverse backgrounds for their expertise, knowledge, and interest in infant feeding.

The key duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees include making decisions on strategic, organisation and financial policy affecting the charity, including Information Governance, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, reserve policy, investment decisions and annual budget approval.

Board of Directors: Induction and Training

New directors all receive an induction pack and are invited to participate in an induction programme which includes meetings with the other Directors, Chief Executive, members of staff and volunteers. The induction pack is updated regularly, incorporating good practice guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Director training on roles and responsibilities, information governance and infant feeding awareness is carried out as required.

Directors adhere to a Conflict of Interests policy and a Register of Interests is held and regularly reviewed. Interests are declared at the start of each board meeting.

The member directors retire from the Board by rotation. The longest serving third of the Board step down at the AGM. Board members can then stand for re-election.

Organisational and Decision-Making Structure

The Board of Directors meets quarterly and is responsible for the strategic direction and key policies of the charity. The Chief Executive has delegated responsibility to oversee the operational management of the charity and ensure delivery of the strategic plan with support from a central management team.

There is currently one sub-committee that supports the work of the Board in a specific area.

- Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee, a formal Board sub-committee, overseeing financial matters, compliance and the risk register.

During the year, the charity employed 4 full-time members of staff, 219 part-time members of staff and 1,163 volunteers of which 372 are in training who underpin the work of the charity. For each staff member, there is a staff handbook, HR policies and process, a job description and person specification and support from a line manager. For each volunteer, there is a task description, access to a volunteers' handbook and policies and support from a supervisor

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

and their nearest project management. All registered staff and volunteers enjoy regular support and supervision and all staff receive regular 1-1 supervision and appraisals.

Pay policy for senior staff

The Board of Directors consider the Chief Executive Officer, NBH Manager, HR Manager, Finance Manager, Programme Quality Manager and the Programme Managers to be the key management roles in the charity. The pay of the senior staff is reviewed periodically.

All directors give of their time freely and no director received remuneration in the year. Details of directors' expenses are disclosed in note 8 to the accounts.

Auditor

Thomson Cooper were appointed as auditor to the company and Directors will consider a resolution to re-appoint them at a forthcoming meeting.

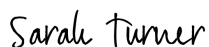
STATEMENT AS TO DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUDITORS

So far as the Directors are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the company's auditors are unaware, and each Director has taken all the steps he or she ought to have taken as a Director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

SMALL COMPANY PROVISIONS

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10th November 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Sarah Turner (Chairperson)

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Breastfeeding Network (the "Charity") for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statement, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustees' report; or
- proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Extent to which the audit was capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the company operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), Companies Act 2006, Employment Law, Data Protection Act and Money Laundering Regulations.

We assessed the extent of compliance of the laws and regulations identified above by inspecting any legal correspondence and making enquiries of management.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

We reviewed the laws and regulations in areas that directly affect the financial statements including financial and taxation legislation and considered the extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

With the exception of any known or possible non-compliance with relevant and significant laws and regulations, and as required by the auditing standards, our work in respect of these was limited to enquiry of the officers and management of the company.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be the override of controls by management, existence and timing of recognition of income and posting of unusual journals.

We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included:

- Enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities.
- Sample testing on the posting of journals.
- Reviewing meeting minutes.
- Detailed substantive testing on the completeness of income.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

These inherent limitations are particularly significant in the case of misstatement resulting from fraud as this may involve sophisticated schemes designed to avoid detection, including deliberate failure to record transactions, collusion or the provision of intentional misrepresentations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities]. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1) (c) of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Other matters

We were engaged to audit the financial statements of The Breastfeeding Network for the year ended 31 March 2025. We were not engaged to audit, nor did we audit, the financial statements of The Breastfeeding Network for the year ended 31 March 2024. Those financial statements were audited by Whitelaw Wells, whose report, dated 9 September 2024, expressed an unqualified opinion on those financial statements.

Fiona Haro

Fiona Haro (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Thomson Cooper
Dunfermline

12-11-25
.....

Thomson Cooper is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

| | | Total | Total | TOTAL | RESTATED |
|--|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | | Unrestricted | Restricted | Funds | TOTAL |
| | | Funds | Funds | 2025 | Funds |
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | 2024 |
| | | | | | £ |
| Income and endowments from: | | | | | |
| Donations | (2) | 13,504 | 1,871 | 15,375 | 11,755 |
| Charitable activities: | (3,4) | | | | |
| Peer support | | 344,844 | 1,469,997 | 1,814,841 | 2,030,112 |
| Helplines | | 116,792 | 508,074 | 624,866 | 448,005 |
| Training & development | | - | 301,201 | 301,201 | 148,245 |
| Information dissemination | | 6,616 | - | 6,616 | 2,104 |
| Other trading activities | | | | | |
| Fundraising | | 3,327 | 15,020 | 18,347 | 19,147 |
| Investment income – bank interest | | 20,443 | - | 20,443 | 12,184 |
| | | | | | |
| Total Income | | 505,526 | 2,296,163 | 2,801,689 | 2,671,552 |
| | | | | | |
| Expenditure on: | | | | | |
| Raising funds | (5) | 23,512 | - | 23,512 | 305 |
| Charitable activities | (6) | 320,987 | 2,503,734 | 2,824,721 | 1,803,432 |
| | | | | | |
| Total expenditure | | 344,499 | 2,503,734 | 2,848,233 | 1,803,737 |
| | | | | | |
| Net income | | 161,027 | (207,571) | (46,544) | 867,815 |
| | | | | | |
| Transfers between funds | (14) | (489) | 489 | - | - |
| | | | | | |
| Net movement in funds | | 160,538 | (207,082) | (46,544) | 867,815 |
| | | | | | |
| Funds brought forward | | 742,222 | 1,341,194 | 2,083,416 | 1,215,601 |
| | | | | | |
| Funds carried forward | | 902,760 | 1,134,112 | 2,036,872 | 2,083,416 |

The company has no gains or losses other than the results for the year as set out above. All activities are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 39 to 51 form part of these financial statements.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

BALANCE SHEET

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

| | <u>Note</u> | £ | <u>2025</u> £ | <u>2024</u> £ |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | | | |
| Tangible assets | 10 | | 4,328 | 6,288 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | | | 4,328 | 6,288 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | | |
| Stock | | 1,808 | | 657 |
| Debtors | 11 | 461,108 | | 458,148 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 2,036,172 | | 1,713,984 |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| | | 2,499,088 | | 2,172,789 |
| CREDITORS | | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | 12 | (466,544) | | (95,661) |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | | | 2,032,544 | 2,077,128 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| NET ASSETS | 15 | | 2,036,782 | 2,083,416 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| FUNDS | | | | |
| Unrestricted funds: | 14 | | | |
| General Funds | | 494,319 | | 379,917 |
| Designated Funds | | 408,441 | | 362,305 |
| | | <hr/> | | |
| | | | 902,760 | 742,222 |
| Restricted funds | 14 | | 1,134,112 | 1,341,194 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | | | 2,036,872 | 2,083,416 |
| | | | <hr/> | <hr/> |

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the special provision of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS102) and are for circulation to members of the company. [Company no. SC330639]

Approved by the Board of Directors on 10 November 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Sarah Turner
.....
Sarah Turner (Chairperson)
Director

Caroline Polley
.....
Caroline Polley
Director

The notes on pages 39 to 51 form part of these financial statements.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

| | <u>2025</u> | <u>2024</u> |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Net cash provided/(used) by operating activities (as below) | 303,303 | 743,158 |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | |
| Interest income | 20,443 | 12,184 |
| Purchase of tangible fixed assets | (1,558) | (1,414) |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Net cash provided by investing activities | 18,885 | 10,770 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year | 322,188 | 753,928 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year | 1,713,984 | 960,056 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year | 2,036,172 | 1,713,984 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

| | <u>2025</u> | <u>2024</u> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Net income for the year (per Statement of Financial Activities) | (46,544) | 867,815 |
| Adjustments for: | | |
| Add depreciation charge | 3,518 | 3,129 |
| Deduct interest income shown in investing activities | (20,443) | (12,184) |
| (Increase)/Decrease in stock | (1,151) | (237) |
| (Increase) in debtors | (2,960) | (137,929) |
| Increase in creditors | 370,883 | 22,564 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Net cash flow provided/(used) by operating activities | 303,303 | 743,158 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS represented by:

| | <u>2025</u> | <u>2024</u> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Cash held in current accounts | 1,564,589 | 1,355,152 |
| Cash held on short term deposit | 471,583 | 358,832 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 2,036,172 | 1,713,984 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

The notes on pages 39 to 51 form part of these financial statements.

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019) – Charities SORP (FRS102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The Breastfeeding Network meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

(b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

Despite the uncertain economic outlook, the Directors are of the view that the charity has secured enough longer-term funding for the next 12 to 18 months and on that basis the charity is a going concern.

(c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity is entitled to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants (whether capital or revenue) or contracts is recognised in the statement of financial activities when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants/contracts has been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Where the grantor or donor has specified that the grant or donation is to be spent for a particular period, the portion which relates to a future period is treated as deferred income and included in creditors.

Donated goods, services and facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102), volunteer time is not recognised. On receipt, donated goods, services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay for the equivalent item in the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Training fees, shop income and other income are accounted for when earned.

Investment income is included when receivable.

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(d) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay for expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. The charity is registered for VAT but for expenditure which includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, the VAT element is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Cost of raising funds comprises costs associated with fundraising costs.

Expenditure on charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the charity in providing activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature (administration, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs) necessary to support them. The basis on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 6.

(e) Operating lease agreements

Rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged against income on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

(f) Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are originally recorded at cost. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Fixtures & Fittings, Equipment | 25% straight line |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|

The charity's policy is not to capitalise items that cost under £750.

(g) Stock

Stock is held at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

(h) Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount.
Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any discounts due.

(i) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes petty cash and bank deposits.

(j) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

(k) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objects of the charity.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor/grantor.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(I) Pensions

The charity contributes to a defined contribution pension scheme for all employees who are eligible to participate. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the Charity to the scheme in respect of the year.

2. DONATIONS

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | 2025 Total £ | 2024 Total £ |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Donations | 4,954 | 1,871 | 6,825 | 2,972 |
| Membership subscriptions | 8,550 | - | 8,550 | 8,783 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total income from donations | 13,504 | 1,871 | 15,375 | 11,755 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |

Income from donations was £15,375 (2024: £11,755) of which £13,504 (2024: £11,134) was unrestricted and £1,871 (2024: £621) was restricted.

The charity benefits greatly from the involvement and support of its many volunteers. In accordance with FRS102 and the Charities SORP (FRS102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognized in the accounts.

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | 2025 Total £ | Restated 2024 Total £ |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Peer Support Programmes | | | | |
| <i>Grants/contracts (Note 4)</i> | 344,844 | 1,469,997 | 1,814,841 | 2,030,112 |
| Helplines | | | | |
| <i>Grants/contracts (Note 4)</i> | 116,792 | 508,074 | 624,866 | 448,005 |
| Training & Development | | | | |
| <i>Grants/contracts (Note 4)</i> | - | 300,881 | 300,881 | 143,887 |
| <i>Other income</i> | - | 320 | 320 | 4,358 |
| Information dissemination | | | | |
| <i>Other income</i> | 6,616 | - | 6,616 | 2,104 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total income from charitable activities | 468,252 | 2,279,272 | 2,740,908 | 2,628,466 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |

Income from charitable activities was £2,740,908 (2024: £2,628,466) of which £468,252 (2024: £377,707) was unrestricted and £2,279,272 (2024: £2,250,759) was restricted.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4. GRANT/CONTRACT INCOME

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | 2025 Total £ | Restated 2024 Total £ |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Peer Support Programmes – Grant/Contract Income | | | | |
| <i>Grants</i> | 72,259 | 196,391 | 268,650 | 242,993 |
| <i>Contract income</i> | 272,585 | 1,273,606 | 1,546,191 | 1,787,119 |
| | <u>344,844</u> | <u>1,469,997</u> | <u>1,814,841</u> | <u>2,030,112</u> |
| Helplines | | | | |
| <i>Grants/contracts</i> | | | | |
| Scottish Government | - | 13,800 | 13,800 | 13,500 |
| SERCO/OHiD | 116,792 | 494,274 | 611,066 | 434,505 |
| | <u>116,792</u> | <u>508,074</u> | <u>624,866</u> | <u>448,005</u> |
| Training | | | | |
| <i>Grants</i> | - | 35,158 | 35,158 | - |
| <i>Contract income</i> | - | 265,723 | 265,723 | 143,887 |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>300,881</u> | <u>300,881</u> | <u>143,887</u> |

5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | 2025 Total £ | 2024 Total £ |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Staff costs (note 8) | 23,209 | - | 23,209 | - |
| Other fundraising costs | 303 | - | 303 | 305 |
| | <u>23,512</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>23,512</u> | <u>305</u> |

Expenditure on raising funds was £23,512 (2024: £305) of which £23,512 (2024: £255) was unrestricted and £nil (2024: 50) was restricted.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

6. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| | Peer Support £ | Helplines £ | Training ¹⁹ £ | Information ²⁰ £ | 2025 Total £ | 2024 Total £ | Basis of Apportionment |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Direct Costs | | | | | | | |
| Staff costs (note 8) | 1,561,165 | 457,914 | 340,416 | - | 2,359,495 | 1,467,438 | |
| Other staff costs | 1,031 | 235 | 240 | - | 1,506 | 750 | |
| Recruitment costs | 230 | 329 | 4,639 | - | 5,198 | 3,916 | |
| Travel and Subsistence | 34,548 | 1,344 | 2,978 | - | 38,870 | 32,398 | |
| Goods purchased for resale | 73 | 198 | - | 1,033 | 1,304 | 464 | |
| Staff training & conference costs | 15,691 | 1,139 | 3,208 | - | 20,038 | 6,451 | |
| Helper & Supporter course costs | - | - | 22,269 | - | 22,269 | 16,635 | |
| Room hire and refreshment costs | 25,989 | - | 1,592 | - | 27,581 | 22,408 | |
| Childcare costs | 678 | 1,026 | - | - | 1,704 | 3,158 | |
| Volunteer costs | 6,374 | 947 | 104 | - | 7,425 | 6,266 | |
| Project materials & resources | 27,415 | 31,292 | 5,920 | - | 64,627 | 59,826 | |
| Marketing/advertising | 13,363 | 921 | 33 | - | 14,317 | 2,222 | |
| Indirect Costs | | | | | | | |
| Establishment costs | - | - | 11,379 | - | 11,379 | 11,062 | % utilisation of area |
| Office expenses | 67,274 | 8,258 | 89,557 | - | 165,089 | 128,590 | Invoiced costs |
| Other professional fees (inc consultancy) | 10,266 | 19,034 | 38,445 | - | 67,745 | 28,647 | Invoiced costs |
| Audit fees | - | - | 10,680 | - | 10,680 | 7,680 | Governance |
| AGM and Trustee meetings | - | - | 1,976 | - | 1,976 | 2,392 | Governance |
| Depreciation | 1,004 | - | 2,514 | - | 3,518 | 3,129 | n/a |
| | <u>1,765,101</u> | <u>522,637</u> | <u>535,950</u> | <u>1,033</u> | <u>2,824,721</u> | <u>1,803,432</u> | |

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance costs, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are apportioned between the four main strands of charitable activity undertaken (Peer support, Helplines, Training & development, Information dissemination). Funding restrictions mean that it is impossible to allocate all support and governance costs to the key charitable activities. Expenditure on charitable activities was £2,824,721 (2024: £1,803,432) of which £320,987 (2024: £264,886 (restated)) was unrestricted and £2,503,734 was restricted (2024: £1,538,546 (restated)).

¹⁹ Training & Development

²⁰ Information Dissemination

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7. SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE AND RELATED INCOME FOR CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

This table shows the cost of the four main charitable activities and the sources of income directly to support those activities.

| | Peer Support £ | Helplines £ | Training ²¹ £ | Information ²² £ | TOTAL £ |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Costs | (1,765,101) | (522,637) | (535,950) | (1,033) | (2,824,721) |
| Direct grant/contract | 1,814,841 | 624,866 | 300,881 | - | 2,740,588 |
| Earned income <i>Fees/training/Sales</i> | - | - | 320 | 6,616 | 6,936 |
| Net income/(expenditure) from charitable activities | 49,740 | 102,229 | (234,749) | 5,583 | (77,197) |

8. STAFF COSTS

| | 2025 £ | 2024 £ |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Wages and salaries | 2,234,924 | 1,387,309 |
| Redundancy & termination costs | 5,744 | 4,013 |
| Social security costs | 109,986 | 57,919 |
| Pension costs | 32,050 | 18,197 |
| | 2,382,704 | 1,467,438 |

The policy for redundancy follows the statutory redundancy provisions.

The number of employees based on head count was as follows:

| | Number | Number |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Management and administration | 23 | 17 |
| Service provision | 181 | 135 |
| | 204 | 152 |

²¹ Training & Development

²² Information Dissemination

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

8. STAFF COSTS (continued)

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| £60,000 to £70,000 | 1 | - |

The Directors gave their services voluntarily and received no remuneration in their capacity as trustees. One director received reimbursement of £74 for travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses during the year. (2024: £27). In 2025, three directors (2024: three directors) received remuneration as tutors and supervisors, payments authorised by the management committee and out with their roles as trustees totalling £15,411 (2024: £9,411).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Directors, Chief Executive and Business Managers as noted on page 23. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel were £336,824 (2024: £271,216).

9. NET INCOME

The net income for the year is stated after charging:-

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Auditors' remuneration – audit fee | 10,680 | 7,680 |
| Auditors' remuneration – company secretarial fees | 132 | 120 |
| Operating leases – land & buildings | 9,903 | 9,450 |
| Depreciation | 3,518 | 3,129 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |

10. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

| | F&F & Equip £ | Total £ |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cost | | |
| As at 1 April 2024 | 17,032 | 17,032 |
| Additions | 1,558 | 1,558 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| As at 31 March 2025 | 18,590 | 18,590 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| Depreciation | | |
| As at 1 April 2024 | 10,744 | 10,744 |
| Charge for the year | 3,518 | 3,518 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| As at 31 March 2025 | 14,262 | 14,262 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| Net book value | | |
| As at 31 March 2025 | 4,328 | 4,328 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| As at 31 March 2024 | 6,288 | 6,288 |
| | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

11. DEBTORS

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Grants/SLA's receivable | 438,663 | 440,950 |
| Other debtors & prepayments | 22,445 | 17,198 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 461,108 | 458,148 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

12. CREDITORS – amounts falling due within one year

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Other taxes and social security costs | 64,877 | 30,499 |
| Accruals | 102,751 | 62,925 |
| Other creditors | 1,325 | 2,237 |
| Deferred Income | 198,728 | - |
| Provision (Note 19) | 98,863 | - |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 466,544 | 95,661 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

13. TAXATION

The company has charitable status and is therefore exempt from tax on its charitable income under the provision of section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

| | As at 1 April 2024 £ | Income £ | Expenditure £ | Transfers £ | As at 31 March 2025 £ |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Restricted Funds | | | | | |
| National Breastfeeding Helplines | 157,313 | 508,074 | (534,865) | - | 130,522 |
| Peer Support/Training Programmes | 1,183,881 | 1,788,089 | (1,968,869) | 489 | 1,003,590 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total restricted funds | 1,341,194 | 2,296,163 | (2,503,734) | 489 | 1,134,112 |
| Unrestricted Funds | | | | | |
| General funds | 379,917 | 505,526 | (344,499) | (46,625) | 494,319 |
| <u>Designated funds:</u> | | | | | |
| Redundancy fund | 135,482 | - | - | 36,769 | 172,251 |
| Capital fund | 30,000 | - | - | - | 30,000 |
| DIBM Support fund | 56,423 | - | - | - | 56,423 |
| Training fund | 10,000 | - | - | - | 10,000 |
| Finance & Business Development Fund | 130,400 | - | - | - | 130,400 |
| Impact on Equalities Fund | - | - | - | 1,918 | 1,918 |
| Pan London Project | - | - | - | 3,928 | 3,928 |
| National Programme | - | - | - | 3,521 | 3,521 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total unrestricted funds | 742,222 | 505,526 | (344,499) | (489) | 902,760 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| TOTAL FUNDS | 2,083,416 | 2,801,689 | (2,848,233) | - | 2,036,872 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

Transfers Between Funds

The designated fund to provide for potential redundancies in the future has been increased by £36,769 because at the year-end more staff have been employed for greater than two years and would be entitled to redundancy pay.

£9,367 of funds from closed projects have been transferred to three newly created designated funds to fund future work with similar objectives as permitted by funders.

£9,822 of funds from the general fund have been reassigned to restricted projects following the 2024 Big Give campaign.

A net balance of £489 was transferred to restricted funds in the year, to clear small deficits on completed projects.

THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS (continued)

Movement of funds for the year ended 31 March 2024:

| | As at 1 April 2023 £ | Income £ | Expenditure £ | Transfers £ | As at 31 March 2024 £ |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Restricted Funds | | | | | |
| National Breastfeeding Helplines | 15,829 | 448,005 | (292,521) | (14,000) | 157,313 |
| Peer Support Programmes | 622,254 | 2,175,861 | (1,618,070) | 3,836 | 1,183,881 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total restricted funds | 638,083 | 2,623,866 | (1,910,591) | (10,164) | 1,341,194 |
| Unrestricted Funds | | | | | |
| General funds | 254,536 | 47,686 | 106,854 | (29,159) | 379,917 |
| <u>Designated funds:</u> | | | | | |
| Redundancy fund | 110,159 | - | - | 25,323 | 135,482 |
| Capital fund | 30,000 | - | - | - | 30,000 |
| DIBM Support fund | 42,423 | - | - | 14,000 | 56,423 |
| Training fund | 10,000 | - | - | - | 10,000 |
| Finance & Business Development Fund | 130,400 | - | - | - | 130,400 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total unrestricted funds | 577,518 | 47,686 | 106,584 | 10,164 | 742,222 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| TOTAL FUNDS | 1,215,601 | 2,671,552 | (1,803,737) | - | 2,083,416 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS (continued)

Purpose of Funds - Restricted Funds

National Breastfeeding Helplines

Funds to support the National Breastfeeding Helpline and Drugs In Breast Milk information Service.

Peer Support Programmes

Funding received for Peer Support Programmes across the country where a Service Level Agreement is in place or the funding is intended for use in a specific geographical area.

Purpose of Funds – Designated Funds

Peer Support Development & Innovation Fund

The directors have designated historic surpluses from Peer Support contracts to form a development fund for future work with an emphasis on sustainable models of peer support working. This fund has now been closed as the Board develop the future strategic direction of the organisation.

Redundancy fund

A fund to provide for the significant cost of redundancy in the unlikely event of the organisation ceasing.

Capital Fund

A provision for future capital investment.

DIBM Support Fund

The directors are committed to support the future provision of the service in the event of funding shortfalls.

Training Fund

Provision of funds to support the future training of volunteers.

Finance and Business Development Fund

The Board have committed to invest reserves in the future strategy of the organisation and to underpin this with expanding staffing capacity in both finance and business development.

Impact and Equalities Fund

Funds for projects which specifically address inequalities in services

Pan London Fund

Projects which operate across boroughs to support difficult to reach groups

National Programme

Funds for projects with a national focus.

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

15. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | Total £ |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Funds balances at 31.3.25 represented by: | | | |
| Tangible fixed assets | 3,294 | 1,034 | 4,328 |
| Net current assets | 899,466 | 1,133,078 | 2,032,544 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 902,760 | 1,134,412 | 2,036,872 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |
| | Unrestricted Funds £ | Restricted Funds £ | Total £ |
| Funds balances at 31.3.24 represented by: | | | |
| Tangible fixed assets | 4,250 | 2,038 | 6,288 |
| Net current assets | 737,972 | 1,339,156 | 2,077,128 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 742,222 | 1,341,194 | 2,083,416 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

16. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The following operating lease payments were committed to be paid as at the year-end:

| | Land & Buildings £ | 2025 TOTAL £ | 2024 TOTAL £ |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Within one year | 1,121 | 1,121 | 1,036 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |

The amounts charged to the SOFA in the period were £9,903 (2024: £9,450) for land and buildings.

17. PENSIONS

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme, the assets of which are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. Contributions made by the company to the scheme during the year amounted to £32,050 (2024: £18,197). The balance outstanding at the year-end was £7,066 (2024: £nil).

18. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Other than as disclosed in note 8, no director or person related to a director had any personal interest in any other contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year or in the previous year. There were no outstanding balances with related parties as at 31 March 2025 (2024: £nil).

**THE BREASTFEEDING NETWORK
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

19. PROVISIONS

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Underspend provision | 98,863 | - |
| | <u><u> </u></u> | <u><u> </u></u> |

As at 31 March 2025, a provision was made for a restricted project which had encountered significant contractual delays impacting mobilisation. Charity and Commissioner are working together to finalise strategic use of underspend.

Thomson Cooper
Statutory Auditors
3 Castle Court
Carnegie Campus
Dunfermline
Fife
KY11 8PB

Dear Sirs

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of The Breastfeeding Network for the year ended 31 March 2025 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of The Breastfeeding Network as of 31 March 2025 and of the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

We confirm to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations:

1. **General**

We acknowledge and fulfil as officers of the company our responsibilities under the Companies Act 2006 for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you. All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit and all the transactions undertaken by the company have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records. All other records and related information, including minutes of all management meetings, have been made available to you.

2. **Going Concern**

We believe that the charity's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that current and future sources of funding will be adequate for the charity's needs. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that sufficient disclosures relating to the charity's ability to continue as a going concern have been made in the financial statements.

3. **Loans and arrangements**

The charity has not had, or entered into, at any time during the period any arrangement, transaction or agreement to provide credit facilities (including loans, quasi loans or credit transactions) for Directors or to guarantee or provide security for such matters.

4. **Transactions with related parties**

All transactions with related parties have been disclosed in the financial statements. We have made available to you all relevant information concerning such transactions and are not aware of any other matters, which require disclosure in order to comply with the requirement of the Financial Reporting Standard 102.

5. **Laws and regulations**

We are not aware of any irregularities involving the Directors or employees of the charity: nor are we aware of any breaches or possible breaches of statute, regulations, contracts or agreements which might prejudice the going concern status or that might result in the charity suffering significant penalties or other loss. No allegations of such irregularities or such breaches have come to our notice.

6. **Fraud**

We acknowledge and fulfil our responsibility for the design and implementation of internal controls and procedures to prevent and detect fraud. We have disclosed to you any actual or suspected fraud involving the Directors, employees with significant roles in internal controls, and all instances where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

7. **Post-balance sheet events**

There have been no further events since the balance sheet date which necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto other than that already noted in the accounts. Should further material events occur, which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, we will advise you accordingly.

8. **Grants and donations**

All grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you as well as the corresponding expenditure. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions during this period in the application of such income.

9. **Fund Allocation**

We consider the fund balances at the 31 March 2025 to be correct.

Yours faithfully

Caroline Polley

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Treasurer

Date: 12-11-25