

BRIEFING	TO:	Health and Wellbeing Board
	DATE:	22 June 2022
	LEAD OFFICER	Sally Jenks Health Improvement Principal
	TITLE:	Breastfeeding Friendly Borough

Background

1.1 Rotherham Council formally adopted the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight in January 2020, signed by Sharon Kemp, Chief Executive, Cllr David Roche, Cabinet Member for Public Health and the former Director of Public Health, Terri Roche. Further work on the Declaration was paused from March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Healthy Weight Declaration is a statement of intent, demonstrating that the Council, working together with partners, is committed to exploring opportunities in relation to promoting healthy weight and reducing obesity. It offers a way to bring together all the work already going on under one umbrella and explore new opportunities to promote healthy weight locally. The Declaration principles look at the wider obesogenic environment. There is not one single solution: tackling the problem requires a long-term, system-wide approach that makes healthy weight everybody's business, is tailored to local needs and works across the life course. A whole-system life-course approach ensures that all opportunities to create healthy environments and make healthy choices available and easy for everyone are explored and implemented where appropriate.

A key line of action within that document refers to creating supportive environments for all children, young people and parents by:

- promoting good relationships with food and physical activity from an early age, through childhood and into teenage years
- promoting healthy eating and activity during pregnancy
- creating supportive environments to help normalise breastfeeding

The move to establish Rotherham as a Breastfeeding Borough and have a local Breastfeeding Declaration will clearly articulate the commitment of the council, the Health and Wellbeing Board and key partner organisations to support change.

References are made to 1001 days (the period from conception to a child's second birthday), which is a key theme of the Best Start and Beyond Framework. Breastfeeding is a fundamental strand within that document and cross cuts multiple strategies locally.

This briefing is to raise awareness of the actions currently underway and planned to develop Rotherham as a Breastfeeding Friendly Borough.

Key Issues

2.1 System Leader

The 1001 days and breastfeeding agenda uses our role as an anchor institution to normalise breastfeeding. By adopting the Declaration, the council will agree to the commitments set out in Appendix A, the draft declaration, and an intention to explore opportunities where the council has power and influence to improve and support breastfeeding opportunities for Rotherham people.

The vision is that the Declaration will not only be adopted by the council, but as a Rotherham-wide declaration, which includes commitments of local partners via Health and Wellbeing Board and the Prevention and Health Inequalities Enabler Group to collectively address across the place.

Compassionate Approach

Rotherham has committed to taking a compassionate approach to the Healthy Weight agenda. This approach reduces stigma and normalises universal approaches, making them more inclusive and accessible. The Breastfeeding Declaration is an opportunity for Rotherham to contribute to addressing the challenges of breastfeeding, and thus healthy weight whilst taking a compassionate approach. This focuses on an approach which is not stigmatising or blaming but is rather based on creating healthy supportive environments for everyone.

Such an approach is especially warranted in relation to breastfeeding in the UK, where eight out of ten women stop breastfeeding before they want to¹, and most report that this is due to feeling insufficiently supported. This also frequently results in feelings of guilt and failure.

Annual rate for Rotherham 2020/21

All Rotherham values are worse than the England average

Feeding style	2020/21 Rate (n = 3,491)		England rate
	Actual	%	%
Totally, or partially, breastfed	916	34.2	47.6
Totally breastfed	647	24.4	31.9
Partially breastfed	269	10.1	15.7
Not breastfed at all	1,659	62.0	39.5

Current Rotherham rates for 2021/22

Quarter 1 and 2 of 2021-2022

Breastfeeding prevalence at 6 to 8 weeks after birth (experimental statistics)	Number of infants due a 6 to 8 week review	Infants totally or partially breastfed	Infants totally breastfed	Infants partially breastfed	Infants not at all breastfed
Quarter 1 2021 to 2022	669	264 (39.5%)	180 (26.9%)	84 (12.6%)	401 (59.9%)
Quarter 2 2021 to 2022	694	259 (37.3%)	176 (25.4%)	83 (12%)	419 (60.4%)

¹ [Breastfeeding in the UK - Baby Friendly Initiative \(unicef.org.uk\)](https://www.unicef.org/uk/breastfeeding)

Key Actions and Relevant Timelines

3.1 Below is an update on the breastfeeding work in line with 1001 days and Healthy Weight Declaration, the timeline for development was initiated in February 2022 and is initially planned for the next 12 months. The summary of action is grouped into themes to enable a quick oversight of coverage.

Theme - initiatives

Develop a Rotherham Breastfeeding Borough Declaration for the Council, Health and Wellbeing Board partners, anchor organisations and wider businesses to sign up to. Breastfeeding Friendly Borough ethos; a Borough that supports feeding anywhere not just in 'special' designated hidden spaces and places (in line with and an objective in the Healthy Weight Declaration).

Breastfeeding Friendly places – RMBC needs to become a system leader on this issue with our community venues welcoming and supporting feeding parents. The estates team are planning an audit of sites which would be suitable to support breastfeeding, note this is not just a private feeding room, this is about a suitable public space, normalising and supporting feeding in public spaces.

Theme – policy and workplace

The Corporate Maternity policy is now being refreshed and updated (existing version dated 2014) because of a conversation about the outdated perspective of breastfeeding in the existing policy. Commenced February 2022, breastfeeding remains as a section within the Maternity Policy which is part of a now wider corporate policy update. An analysis of whether we, the Council can currently meet the standard and what actions it would take to meet as a council will be produced.

Once the RMBC corporate policy refresh has concluded, the next step is to engage with the Chamber of Commerce regarding Breastfeeding Friendly policy and places with its members.

A breastfeeding policy template has been produced and is being included in the Wellbeing at Work award template resource. It is not feasible to be incorporated into the assessed award schedule.

Theme – communications

The new Public Health communications lead will now be linked in with TRFT's communications lead to ensure a consistency of messaging is being produced and disseminated across the Borough. As covid communications demand is waning, this will also include the CCG communications lead.

There will be a need to develop a borough specific branding for breastfeeding to align to this work including the development of website and social media across the Place.

The expectation will be social media platforms used to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, the breastfeeding support services and link to UNICEF Baby Friendly resources. Peer support workers (housed within the 0-19 service) can use this platform to respond to questions relating to breastfeeding and use social media to gauge the level and type of support needed by breastfeeding mums. This channel will be used by feeding parents to rate their experiences of the breastfeeding friendly venues

across the borough, building a social movement and creating momentum for a self-improving system of places, services and facilities.

In turn this will support borough-wide communications and campaigns associated with breastfeeding in association with climate change, bonding, health links, supporting cultural change and social norms. Breastfeeding day/week events would be encouraged, especially locally inspired campaigns and events.

Theme – training and embedding into practice

Breastfeeding Friendly was proposed as a Health Improvement Standard in the CCG Primary Care Quality Contract. Confirmation was received on April 3rd 2022 that there will be no new standards added for 2022/2023 as the 2021/2022 standards are being 'rolled over'. This will not mitigate the opportunity for general practice sites to become Breastfeeding Friendly, it just means the process will need greater effort to engage and promote, Primary Care Networks and the Practice Mangers network will be contacted to explore opportunities for this agenda in practices.

Breastfeeding Friendly training and awareness activities, proposed schedule commencing May 2022 including:

- a) Application to run a Protected Learning Time event for primary care submitted.
- b) Scoping to present at relevant Directorate RMBC SMTs.
- c) Work with Rotherham Local Pharmaceutical Committee to discuss links with Healthy Living Pharmacy programme and the essential services contract.

Creating community networks for action by working with our neighbourhoods teams and voluntary sector partners, engaging with local communities to inform and support with the agenda and create hyperlocal networks whether virtual or real.

Theme – contracts and procurement

The new 0-19 service specification published week commencing 4th April 2022 includes requirement for [Early years high impact area 3: Supporting breastfeeding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-high-impact-area-3-supporting-breastfeeding) and the expectation delivery model will address supporting breastfeeding by:

1. delivering an effective breastfeeding peer support service that meets the needs of the breastfeeding community across Rotherham
2. targeting service support in the Borough at families in deprived areas to contribute to reducing health inequalities
3. working in partnership with Children Centres
4. maintaining a register of all breastfeeding peer supporters in Rotherham
5. coordinating the Service, to organise and support the peer supporters to work across Rotherham
6. providing ongoing educational support and guidance to breastfeeding peer supporters to ensure the best care is given to breastfeeding mothers
7. all peer supporters receive appropriate guidance for service delivery, communicating with midwives and health visitors as appropriate
8. creating logs of all active breastfeeding peer supporter's activity
9. promoting the Service to families across Rotherham in a variety of ways including utilising social media
10. managing the accreditation of local organisations/establishments for Rotherham UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Standards.

Implications for Health Inequalities

- 4.1** The first 1001 days are increasingly understood to be the most critical phase when the foundations for lifelong health are built and breastfeeding is an important factor, it promotes health, prevents disease and helps contribute to reducing health inequalities giving babies the best start and beyond.
- The first 1001 days offer a unique opportunity to influence future health states of the Rotherham population. Investing at this stage of life should bring huge social benefits and considerable savings in the long term. The effects of any investment may still be apparent in future generations. During this time so many health and developmental advantages and disadvantages are laid down with lifelong consequences for an individual's life chances. How well or how poorly mothers and children are nourished and cared for during this time can profoundly affect a child's ability to grow, learn and thrive. Moreover, a baby brought up in a supportive environment, within a strong loving partnership with a committed other(s), can have a huge impact on their wellbeing.
- Not every baby born in Rotherham has the same opportunities as their peers for a healthy life. Nutrition through pregnancy and choices for feeding and weaning in the earliest parts of a child's life play a fundamental role in development and the potential to thrive. Poor nutrition in the first 1001 days can set up an irreversible disadvantage in a child's development and breastfeeding rates are lowest in disadvantaged groups.
- The earliest nutrition a new-born child receives is milk, either through breastfeeding or through bottle feeding. Compositional regulations ensure that infant formula meets the basic nutritional needs of the exclusively formula fed infant. However, it must be remembered that breastmilk remains nutritionally superior due to several components that cannot be replicated in formula and additionally provides non-nutritional benefits, including immunity protection and hormonal processes that support bonding and attachment. Breastfed babies have a lower risk of diarrhoeal disease and respiratory infection in infancy, including hospitalisation for these conditions, and they are less likely to become overweight or obese in childhood.

Recommendations

- 5.1** The Council in the first instance agree their commitment to principle of becoming a Breastfeeding Borough by endorsing the Declaration; becoming individual and organisational champions of the Breastfeeding Declaration and committing to making our borough breastfeeding friendly.
- Acknowledge that engagement and implementation work will be required prior to formally ratifying the Declaration in 12 months' time. This will enable a full understanding of our current ability to comply with the standards and any engage partners in actions required to be able to address the gaps and action plan development (see recommendation below).
- To challenge where current policies or practice hinder progress towards to aims of the breastfeeding declaration and aim to become a breastfeeding borough.
- To further consider where Rotherham can best focus efforts to improve and maximise opportunities to support the agenda.
- To agree the council-based breastfeeding declaration action plan, including the governance and accountability processes.

To acknowledge that this work also addresses actions in wider place-based action plans such as the Best Start and Beyond Framework, Health and Wellbeing Board (Aim 1), Prevention and inequalities Enabling Group and Healthy Weight Declaration Action Plan.

6.1 Appendix A - Breastfeeding Declaration (Draft)



BFeeding Borough
declaration FEB 15 22

Related Information / documents

Healthy Weight Declaration (2020)

Best Start and Beyond Framework (2022)

Health Needs Assessment 0-19 (2021)

Health Needs Assessment Healthy Weight (2021)