



## Healthy Norwich Breastfeeding Friendly scheme for GP practices

This scheme aims to support all health colleagues working in Norwich GP surgeries, to provide breastfeeding mothers and their families with helpful advice and guidance. By joining the scheme, your practice will be provided with:

- Training and guidance to help support breastfeeding mothers.
- Signage to display on your premises to show that you are a Breastfeeding Friendly surgery.
- Further information on how to make your practice Breastfeeding Friendly and provision of a breastfeeding policy that can be adapted for your surgery.
- Your practice can be advertised as Breastfeeding Friendly, a status which the CQC has previously referred to as outstanding.

### Breastfeeding in Norwich

About 78% of new mums in Norwich start off breastfeeding. By the 4-6week check-up this drops to about 51%, considerably lower than the national average. National data shows 90% of women who stop breastfeeding in the first six weeks are giving up feeding before they actual want to, due to significant barriers that make breastfeeding “unsustainable”.

By 6 months, 34% of UK babies receive some breast milk, but only 1–2% are solely given breast milk. This proportion is significantly behind many other European and western countries.

Breastfeeding mums should feel supported by all health professionals and their community to breastfeed for as long as they wish to. The Department of Health and the World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant’s life, and then breastfeeding alongside solid food for as long as mother and baby are happy to continue.

### Why increasing breastfeeding rates is important for your practice?

Not only does breastfeeding help to develop a secure parent-infant relationship and attachment, it also protects babies from:

Gastrointestinal infections

Chest infections

Ear infections

Urine infections

Risk of sudden infant death syndrome

Childhood diabetes

Eczema

Obesity

Atopic diseases

Babies that are breastfed have 15% fewer GP consultations than babies fed on artificial formula during their first 6 months of life (McConnachie, A. et al [2004]). This is because breast milk is the most appropriate form of nutrition for all infants due to its nutritional and immunological advantages.

National UK evidence reports that if breastfeeding rates at 4 months increased to 45% there would be fewer hospital admissions and GP consultations with:

Gastrointestinal infections  
Respiratory tract infections  
Acute otitis media  
Necrotising Enterocolitis

By avoiding the costs of treating just these four acute diseases in infants, more than £17 million could be saved annually nationwide. (Renfrew et al, 2012)

The study also reports that if half of the women who currently do not breastfeed were to do so for up to the first 18 months, there would be fewer cases of breast cancer and an increase in breast cancer related quality-adjusted life-years (QALYs). This would save the health service more than £21 million and result in an incremental benefit of more than £41 million over the lifetime of each annual cohort of first-time mothers.

Breastfeeding not only protects mothers from breast cancer, but also ovarian cancer and loss of iron stores.

## Practice champion for breastfeeding

Within each practice, we aim to have a GP **breastfeeding champion** who will be the contact for breastfeeding related issues and responsible for information sharing within the practice. They will also ensure a high quality of breastfeeding support offered to mothers and their families.

It is hoped this will result in increased efficiency through reduced readmissions and improved community health across the practice catchment area.

The practice champion will have free access to the **RCGP/UNICEF online breastfeeding training package (0.5 CPD points)**. The training package provides GPs with all the information they require to support mothers to breastfeed. They will also be invited to a free

annual half day training event (worth 4 CPD points).

The practice champion will also become a member of the GP Infant Feeding Network and signposting to specific resources for prescribing in breastfeeding.

## Breastfeeding policy

Practices will be provided with the infant feeding policy for Norwich and are welcome to adapt it for their own practice use. This will ensure that all staff within the practice understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting expectant and new mothers, their partners and families, to feed and care for their baby in ways which support optimum health and wellbeing.

The policy is also designed to support good professional practice in order to maintain standards. Once signed, your practice will:

- Support and encourage methods known to facilitate breastfeeding
- Discuss the importance of breastfeeding with pregnant women to enable them to make fully informed choices, without judgement.
- Be aware of barriers which prevent mothers from breastfeeding for as long as they want.
- Prescribe appropriate treatments which will not undermine breastfeeding
- Refer breastfeeding problems to appropriately skilled members of staff and partner agencies
- Support mothers in the decisions on how to feed their babies in a non-judgemental manner.
- Adopt a maximising breastmilk outlook when supporting mothers, encouraging combination feeding rather than exclusive formula feeding.

Further research on the importance of breastfeeding can be found online at: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/News-and-Research/Research/>

## Register your GP today!

If you would like to be your practice's **Breastfeeding Champion**, please contact

Rachel Hunt at NHS Norwich CCG -  
[rachel.hunt6@nhs.net](mailto:rachel.hunt6@nhs.net)