

# **Public Health and breastfeeding**

## **How FeedFinder supports local priorities**

Roz Rigby

Health Improvement Practitioner

# Current infant feeding guidelines

- The UK Government policy advises exclusive breastfeeding for around the first 6 months of life.
- Babies should then start solid foods alongside continued breastfeeding at around 6 months.



# Breastfeeding benefits the baby from top to toe<sup>7,8,9</sup>

**NOT breastfeeding is linked to an increased risk of**

ear infections (otitis media)

tooth decay & dental malocclusion

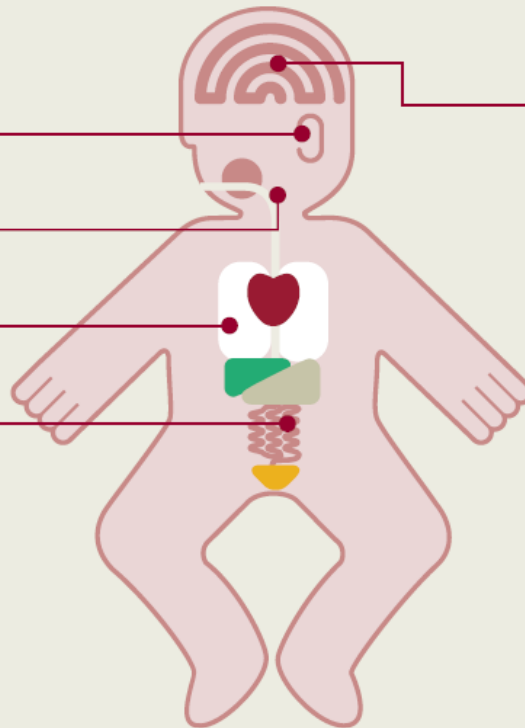
chest infections (lower respiratory infections)

diarrhoea & vomiting (gastroenteritis)

death from gut infections in sick and premature babies (necrotising enterocolitis)

overweight/obesity later in life

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)



**There is evidence to suggest**

there may be a link between breastfeeding and educational attainment



Breastfeeding supports close and loving relationships which helps the baby's brain development



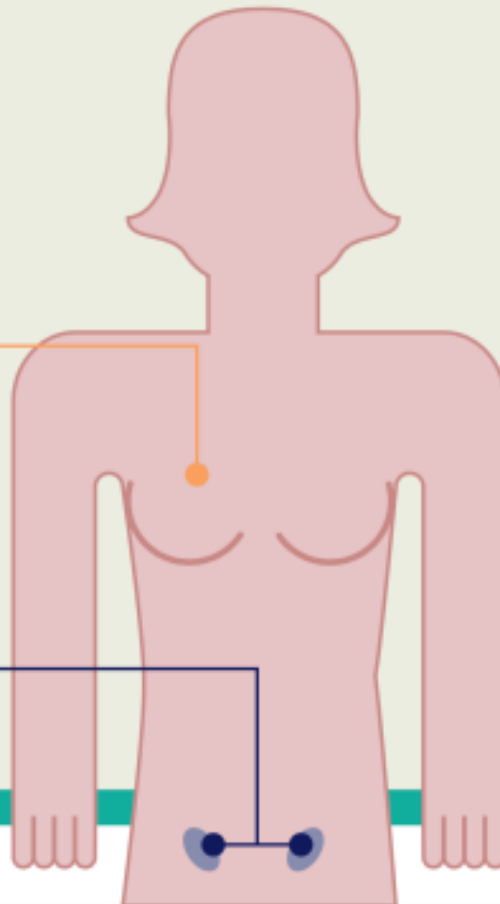
# Maternal health benefits of breastfeeding<sup>10,11,12</sup>

There is good evidence to suggest that breastfeeding decreases the risk of

**Breast cancer**

There is some evidence to suggest that breastfeeding protects against

**Ovarian cancer**



Breastfeeding supports close and loving relationships, improves mental health and can reduce the risk of postnatal depression

Babies receiving any breastmilk by six months

UK	34%
US	49%
NORWAY	71%



# Public Health and Breastfeeding

- Environment: UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative provides a robust evidence based framework to develop a whole system approach.
- Support for families: PHE's Start4Life campaign provides parents and parents-to-be with trusted NHS advice on pregnancy and early years.
- Programmes: 0-19 service delivers the Healthy Child Programme.
- Data: PHE's child health profiles to see local level data on breastfeeding initiation and rates at 6 to 8 weeks.

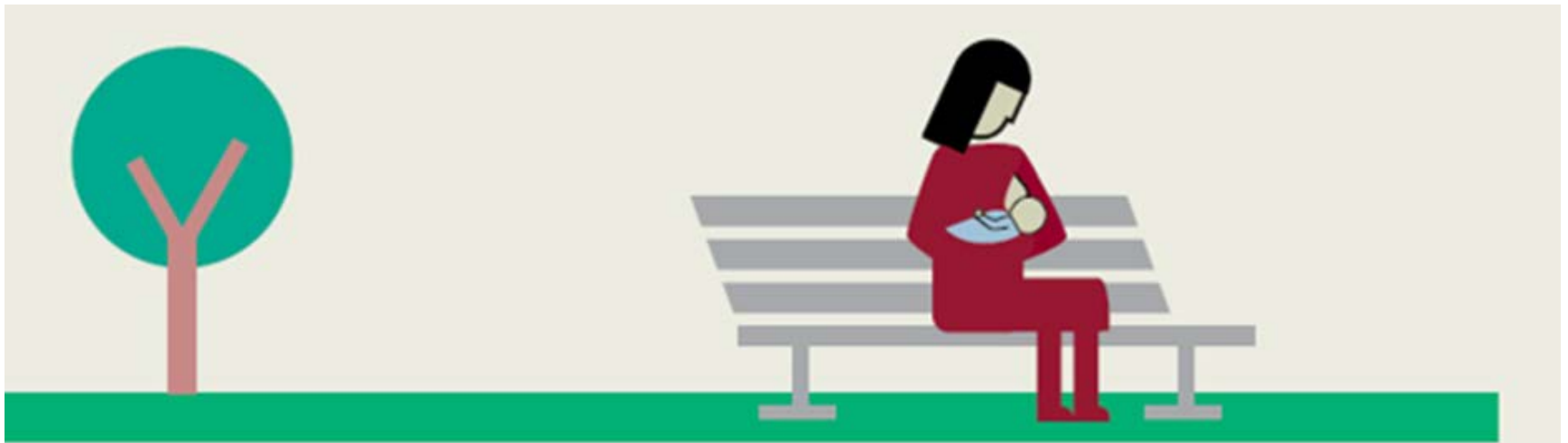
# Breastfeeding initiation rates

Area	Recent Trend	Neighbour Rank	Count	Value	
England	↑	-	463,152	74.5	
North East region	→	-	16,292	59.0	
County Durham	↓	-	2,924	56.0	
Darlington	—	-	684	*	
Gateshead	↑	-	1,654	75.6	
Hartlepool	↓	-	376	37.9	
Middlesbrough	—	-	941	47.9	
Newcastle upon Tyne	↑	-	2,236	69.4	
North Tyneside	↑	-	1,428	65.4	
Northumberland	↑	-	1,806	65.6	
Redcar and Cleveland	—	-	700	49.9	
South Tyneside	→	-	879	55.6	
Stockton-on-Tees	↓	-	1,060	48.7	
Sunderland	↓	-	1,604	56.6	

# Breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks

Area	Recent Trend	Neighbour Rank	Count	Value
England	—	-	251,190	42.7*
North East region	—	-	8,750	32.1*
County Durham	—	-	1,446	29.0
Darlington	—	-	361	31.9
Gateshead	—	-	754	*
Hartlepool	—	-	232	*
Middlesbrough	—	-	546	29.8
Newcastle upon Tyne	—	-	1,505	46.9
North Tyneside	—	-	893	*
Northumberland	—	-	1,039	36.7
Redcar and Cleveland	—	-	391	27.2
South Tyneside	—	-	414	26.2
Stockton-on-Tees	—	-	462	*
Sunderland	—	-	707	24.6





Many English mothers feel unsupported and find breastfeeding

- very difficult
- not acceptable in public
- difficult to combine with work and lifestyles

# Unicef Call to Action



“It is time to stop laying the blame for a major public health issue in the laps of individual women and acknowledge the collective responsibility of us all. It is time to change the conversation.”

[www.unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk)



# Our ambition for England<sup>23,24</sup>

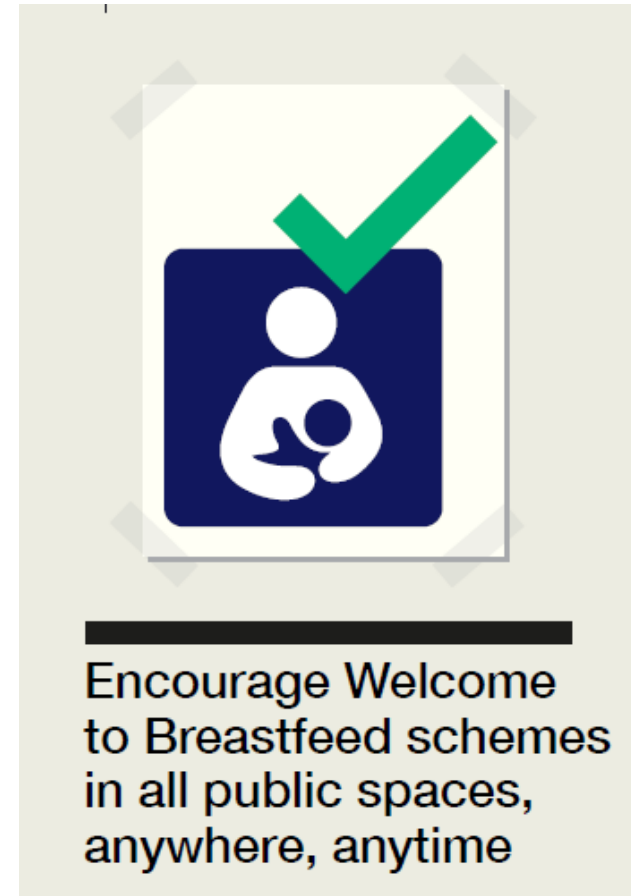


Breastfeeding is seen as normal and supported by everyone – in our public services and in the home, out and about and when returning to work

## Mum called 'slut' for breastfeeding in Costa

# Breastfeeding in public

- In England and Wales, the right to breastfeed in public is covered by [The Equality Act 2010](#) which states, “A business *cannot* discriminate against mothers who are breastfeeding a child of any age.”
- It is illegal for anyone to ask a breastfeeding woman to leave a public place, such as a cafe, shop or public transport.
- A survey by Start4Life found that 72% of people support women breastfeeding in public.



# Local action to support breastfeeding

- Infant Feeding Strategy group
- Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation:
  - Hospital Maternity services
  - Community Health Visiting services
  - Community Family Hubs
  - Neonatal services
- FeedFinder
- Working towards Unicef Child Friendly City
- Better Health at Work award



# Resources:

The Equality Act 2010:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/85008/business-quickstart.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85008/business-quickstart.pdf)

PHE Fingertips Breastfeeding:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/breastfeeding#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E08000021>

Gov.UK Breastfeeding and Dental Health: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breastfeeding-and-dental-health/breastfeeding-and-dental-health>

NHS Breastfeeding benefits: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/benefits-breastfeeding/>

Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/>

Gov.UK Commissioning infant feeding services: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infant-feeding-commissioning-services>

# Contact:

Roz Rigby, Health Improvement Practitioner

Public Health, Newcastle City Council.

[Roz.rigby@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:Roz.rigby@newcastle.gov.uk)