

Annexe 1 – Examples of breastfeeding friendly cities

Feed Your Way – Nottingham

“Feed Your Way” is a bespoke infant feeding campaign, led by public health, which was launched in 2023.

The campaign aims to support all families in Nottinghamshire to achieve their breastfeeding goals and empower them to ‘feed their way’ for as long as they want to with the support of health professionals and the local community, making Nottingham a breastfeeding friendly city.

Feed Your Way was co-created with families, residents, health professionals and businesses in Nottingham through The Big Nottingham Breastfeeding Survey, which was conducted in April 2022 along with in person focus groups. There were 1,800 responses to the survey which showed that families wanted:

- to feel empowered to feed the way they wanted and for as long as they wanted;
- to have honest conversations about the realities of breastfeeding;
- to understand the challenges to breastfeeding and have access to tailored support.

The campaign is based on the real lived experiences of six Nottinghamshire families who all had very different breastfeeding journeys. These families tell their feeding stories through videos, interviews and photos which portray a realistic image of experiences and expectations. These families feature on posters, billboards and banners across Nottingham City, including the Council House, helping to promote and ‘normalise’ breastfeeding.

There is a dedicated Feed Your Way website which offers support for partners and co-partners, pregnant families, breastfeeding families and family and friends as well as social media pages.

An evaluation of the campaign is planned for later this year.

Breastfeeding Friendly – Leeds

Leeds City Council’s “Breastfeeding Friendly” campaign was led by public health and designed by mums for mums to create an environment

in which breastfeeding families are welcomed, supported and feel comfortable across community settings in Leeds.

One of the main reasons why families stopped breastfeeding in Leeds, or didn't start breastfeeding in the first place, was how uncomfortable or unsupported they felt feeding out and about in public.

The aim of the Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly scheme was to encourage local outlets and business to sign up to become breastfeeding welcome venues to help make breastfeeding families feel more confident about breastfeeding in public and to encourage more to do so.

Venues who signed up to the scheme were asked to:

- Display the Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly sticker and materials in their venue to let families know that they welcome breastfeeding;
- Ensure that all staff actively welcome breastfeeding families and let them feed in all public areas;
- Educate their staff on the benefits of breastfeeding and how to deal with members of the public who are negative towards breastfeeding parents;
- Provide comfortable seating that can be easily moved around if necessary;
- Have the option of a private area if a parent requests it (but not in a toilet) and this area should have enough room for the breastfeeding parent, their partner and other children should they wish to sit with them;
- Provide free drinking water to the breastfeeding parent.

The Leeds Breastfeeding Friendly Venues Directory was developed as part of the campaign which features business and outlets which have made a commitment to be breastfeeding friendly in the city. In addition, a leaflet was also produced for parents with lots of useful tips and advice about feeding out and about in public.

To help promote the campaign photos of local mums breastfeeding in various locations across Leeds were commissioned and a dedicated web and Facebook page were established.

To launch the Breastfeeding Friendly campaign, Leeds City Council introduced a comprehensive breastfeeding policy to support council employees who are breastfeeding and returning to work and members of the public who are breastfeeding and make use of the council buildings.

This ensured that council acted as exemplar role models by ensuring that their buildings are breastfeeding friendly.

The Bridlington Breastfeeding Project – Bridlington

In 2021 a whole community, multi-agency project was launched to improve breastfeeding rates in Bridlington enabling the town to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time, breastfeeding rates in the town were lower than other areas in East Yorkshire.

The project aimed to understand the barriers to breastfeeding and work towards removing them by transforming Bridlington into a breastfeeding friendly town, ensuring that expectant and new parents felt supported and comfortable breastfeeding in public.

Funding was used to conduct qualitative research to fully understand the barriers to breastfeeding in the town. The findings suggested that breastfeeding parents felt judged by those who were bottle feeding and that there was a longstanding culture of bottle feeding which was seen as the 'norm'.

To address this the project team focused on educating grandparents and partners on ways which they can support breastfeeding and its benefits. Books were also introduced to the local libraries and early years setting to help to normalise breastfeeding and influence future generations.

The research also revealed that parents preferred local support services that reached out to support them to breastfeed in the community, rather than expecting them to attend sessions at the children's centres. This identified the need to increase the number of support venues available within the community.

The Breastfeeding Networks 'Breastfeeding Friendly Town' scheme was used alongside the launch of a local breastfeeding support webpage. 100 local businesses signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly Town scheme, including cafes, pharmacies, GP practices, libraries and restaurants.

Promotional resources were developed including thank you for breastfeeding in public cards and posters (Appendix D). These were displayed on public venues throughout Bridlington such as bus shelters and council buildings.

In conjunction with this colostrum harvesting at the 36-week midwifery appointment and an additional Health Visitor contact at six days after birth were introduced.

To measure the impact of the project aggregated breastfeeding data was collected when babies were 10 days and 6 weeks old to provide a comparison pre and post the initiative. Clear changes in breastfeeding rates were demonstrated at both 10 days and 6 weeks with data points consistently exceeding baseline figures.

Breastfeeding. Anytime, Anywhere Campaign - Barnsley

As part of their “Breastfeeding Welcome Here Scheme”, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council launched their ‘Anytime, Anywhere’ campaign in January 2024.

The campaign was in response to drop off in breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks. Data showed that 61% initially start breastfeeding but by 6-8 weeks the rates had fallen to just 33%.

Feelings of anxiety about feeding in public was one of the main barriers identified to breastfeeding.

Key messages in relation to breastfeeding were communicated through the campaign:

- Cost savings – breastfeeding is free;
- Freedom – Breastfeeding gives mums flexibility and freedom;
- Protection – Breastmilk provides immunity for baby and long-term health benefits;
- Comfort – Breastfeeding provides a source of comfort for mum and baby. It can help settle and sooth them, ease pain and help them fall asleep;
- Ease – The ease of breastfeeding means you can feed your baby “Anytime, Anywhere”;
- Eco-friendly – Breastfeeding isn’t just good for your baby, it’s good for the planet too - there’s no manufacturing, transportation, packaging or waste;
- Nutrition – Breastmilk adapts to the changing needs of the child to provide them with the nutrition they need as they grow.

The campaign focused on eight local mums who volunteered to share their experiences in videos and be photographed as part of the campaign. Adverts were placed on bus shelters, digital screens and banners across Barnsley. Breastfeeding appreciation cards were also produced for people to pass onto anyone they saw breastfeeding in public to show their support. The campaign was promoted on The Infant Feeding Teams Facebook page.

Breastfeeding in Public Thank You Scheme - East Riding and Hull

East Riding and Hull introduced a “Breastfeeding in Public Thank You scheme”. The project aimed to normalise breastfeeding in public and support parents who were doing so. Thank you cards were introduced to give to other parents who were breastfeeding in a public place.

Each new mum who chose to breastfeed received a card when she had her baby. The Health Visiting team, Children’s Centres and Peer Support groups also distributed the cards to breastfeeding parents.

Milk Trail – Hull City Centre

In May 2024, Hull City Council, in partnership with Humber NHS Foundation Trust, launched a new trail around Hull city centre to highlight some of the best places to breastfeed.

The Milk Trail was developed with input from local parents and support groups and uses a specially designed map to guide people to nine breastfeeding friendly locations across Hull city centre, which are part of the wider breastfeeding friendly venues network.

The trail includes a quiz about breastfeeding with each of the nine venues having the answer to one of the quiz questions inside. Those who complete the trail can record the answers on their map and then trade the completed quiz in for a Milk Trail Sticker.

The aim of the trail is to ensure that breastfeeding venues are easily identifiable and normalise breastfeeding through education. The initiative will also help to raise the profile of breastfeeding throughout the city.

The maps can be obtained from Family Hubs, libraries, Tourist Information stand, customer service centres or participating v