

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
20 January 2016

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| Agenda Item | 14. |
| Report No | ECAS 10/16 |

UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report provides an update in relation to the positive outcome of the re-accreditation process for the UNICEF baby friendly initiative in Highland and highlights excellent joint working across NHS and Council staff.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a global programme of UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, which works with health services to improve practice so that parents are enabled and supported to make informed choices about how they feed and care for their babies. Health care organisations that adopt practices to support successful breastfeeding receive the prestigious UNICEF/WHO Baby Friendly Initiative Award.
- 1.2 In the UK, the Baby Friendly Initiative is commissioned by various parts of the health service to provide advice, support, training, networking, assessment and accreditation.
- 1.3 The aim of the BFI is not to force all women to breastfeed, but to ensure that parents are provided with information to enable them to make informed decisions about feeding their babies, and then to support those who choose to breastfeed to do so successfully.
- 1.4 The Highland Council area of NHS Highland achieved full Baby Friendly accreditation in 2013, and retained this status during a re-assessment visit from UNICEF in October 2015.
- 1.5 UNICEF BFI implementation is co-ordinated by the Public Health Department of NHS Highland. This includes strategic planning, policy and guidance implementation, training, audit, peer training and management, management of Infant feeding support workers, implementation of the WHO code and provision of specialist services.

2. Reassessment Process

- 2.1 The assessment involved auditing the following standards.
 - All staff who have contact with pregnant or breastfeeding women have appropriate training.
 - All staff who have contact with pregnant or breastfeeding women have the skills necessary to support a woman in her choice of feeding.
 - The health care organisation committed fully to implementing the International Code of Marketing of Breast milk substitutes.

- Women and partners were encouraged to form close and loving relationships through responsiveness whatever the chosen method of feeding.
- Policies and parental information were in place to ensure non conflicting advice and good practice.
- There is a process for implementing, auditing and evaluating the standards
- There is evidence of collaborative working.
- Women have the appropriate support in their local area to ensure that they can breastfeed for as long as they wish – peer support via telephone or support groups.
- There is a local mechanism in place where women can access specialist advice and support from a member of staff.

2.2 The methodology involved identifying evidence and a range of interviews.

- Interviews with both breast and bottle feeding mothers to ensure that they have received appropriate advice and support from local staff to enable safe and responsive feeding.
- Interviews with team leaders, service leads and infant feeding lead.
- Interviews with local midwives, health visitors and infant feeding support workers.
- Evidence of local initiatives to assess breastfeeding using an assessment tool.
- Evaluation of specialist services for continued breastfeeding – specialist breastfeeding clinic and tongue tie service.
- Evidence of additional work to improve care for mothers and babies related to the standards – Infant feeding support workers.

3. The Results

3.1 Highland has met all of the criteria for continued Baby Friendly accreditation and the staff were commended for their hard work to maintain the standards established. It was clear to the assessment team that pregnant women and new mothers receive a very high standard of care.

3.2 The re-accreditation was supported by the following comments:

- Great efforts had been made to ensure that staff received education about the revised standards and that all staff had been updated. This is noteworthy given the geographical challenges within Highland. It is also quite remarkable that many of the revised standards have reached a pass grade at this early stage in the transition period. The infant feeding adviser and her support staff were commended for the thorough and enthusiastic approach they have taken to ensuring that all staff were equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement the revised standards.
- There are robust peer support and breastfeeding support worker programmes in place showing very promising results on first evaluation. Appreciation for the support these programmes provide was clearly reflected in the positive comments received from mothers during the assessment visit.
- There are some excellent in-house materials for mothers/families which are designed to encourage, enhance and support early and ongoing close and loving mother baby relationships and this was highly commended.
- Since the integration of NHS Highland and Highland Council in April 2012, there

has been an improved multi-disciplinary approach to the support for breastfeeding and a greater focus on the work of the early years.

- Only a small proportion of mothers interviewed during this assessment had visited a clinic, mainly to have their baby weighed. They reported that the clinic(s) were busy and that the opportunity to ask questions was limited. A slightly larger proportion of mothers had attended a support group and/or baby massage and found this helpful.
- Both Heads of Service were obviously committed to and knowledgeable about the process. It was clear that the achievement and maintenance of the standards is valued within the service.
- It was noted that the infant feeding adviser post is permanent and highly valued within the organisation.
- A key workers programme exists whereby key workers, throughout the geographical area, are trained in the use of the new audit tool, provide a specialist service for mothers in their areas and provide update training for staff.
- Two breastfeeding support groups were visited during the assessment visit. A warm, friendly and comfortable environment was observed at both groups. Staff were available to answer any questions and to support mothers who may be experiencing problems.
- There was good evidence of collaborative working between the health visiting service and the maternity service, the neonatal unit, the voluntary services and the family nurse partnership and the services were commended for this.

4. Future Assessment

4.1 The next re-assessment is planned for October 2018.

5. Implications

5.1 **Resources:** Mainstream child health services in Highland Council are funded as part of the commission from NHS Highland. Highland Council has allocated an additional £2m to early years services, as part of preventative spend.

5.2 There are no other implications

6. Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report, and to welcome the ongoing UNICEF/WHO Baby Friendly Initiative Award.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 8 January 2016

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