

# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA)**

## **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT SERVICE**

### **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

This EqIAA supports the proposal to re-commission a local breastfeeding support service.

It also sets out key information regarding inequalities in order to ensure that the service provider is aware of the issues to be addressed by the local breastfeeding support service.

### **SECTION 2 –RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION**

In 2016, a breastfeeding research project was carried out between the Public Health and Wellbeing Division and the University of the West of England (UWE) to enable mothers to share their early experiences of infant feeding, particularly focusing on breastfeeding support.

This involved talking with 24 mothers in depth. We acknowledge that there are a number of limitations to this work. These include the homogeneity of interviewees and the limits of time available affecting selection and recruitment strategy. Some potentially important areas emerged during the course of analysing the data that we would have liked to pursue further. These include perceptions of the role of different practitioners, extended family networks, wider community resources and online sources of support. Nevertheless, we were impressed by the interest and commitment of participants, and the quality and depth of the interviews compensated for some of the potential limitations to the study.

Findings from this project suggest that there are three ‘critical stages’ in supporting a mother to breastfeed and in her experience of breastfeeding.

The report made a number of recommendations mainly directed towards South Gloucestershire Council but are also of relevance to the wider partnership of health and community and voluntary sector agencies.

Recommendations concern:

- the promotion and protection of breastfeeding
- the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of women
- consistent evidence-based personal and timely support
- mother’s awareness of differing professional roles
- evaluation of breastfeeding groups
- consistent approach to signposting women to websites, apps and social media and
- quality assurance of resources and workforce development and

Locally, our research found that most of the mothers interviewed had encountered difficulties with breastfeeding. The findings identified some dilemmas and struggles in accessing breastfeeding support in the early weeks. Our sample included relatively well-educated mothers, mainly in their 30s, who are known to be more likely to breastfeed (McAndrew et al, 2012).

Wider evidence makes it reasonable to suggest that, had we been able to interview further numbers of younger, white women from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, these challenges would be even more prominent in the findings and additional challenges may also have been identified. All women recruited to this study identified themselves as being white with the majority of them intending to breastfeed.

The Infant Feeding Survey (McAndrew et al, 2012) identified the highest incidences of breastfeeding were found among:

- mothers aged 30 or over (87 %)
- women from minority ethnic groups (97 % Chinese or other ethnic group, 96 % Black and 95 % for Asian ethnic group)
- those who left education aged over 18 (91%),
- those in managerial and professional occupations (90%) and
- those living in the least deprived areas (89 %)

The Infant Feeding Survey (McAndrew et al, 2012) identified the lowest incidences of breastfeeding were found among:

- mothers under the age of 20
- At a UK level, increases in breastfeeding rates since 2005 were seen in all age groups, except for mothers aged 20-24
- mothers from White backgrounds
- mothers who have never worked, and mothers in routine and manual occupations
- mothers who were 16 or under when they left full-time education and mothers who left education aged 17 or 18
- the incidence of breastfeeding decreases as deprivation levels increase

### SECTION 3 - IDENTIFICATION & ANALYSIS OF EQUALITIES ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The following table sets out recommendations from local research along with considerations to be taken into account by the breastfeeding support service.

SGC/UWE breastfeeding research project recommendations	Considerations to be taken into account by the breastfeeding support service
Promotion and protection of breastfeeding	Considering the equality groups identified, the promotion of breastfeeding should be relevant and appropriate to the groups identified
Mental and emotional health and wellbeing of women	The mental and emotional health and wellbeing of women within the groups identified is likely to be complex and therefore an understanding of this along with a comprehensive approach to supporting vulnerable and anxious women should be put in place
Consistent evidence-based personal and timely support	Proactively identifying and engaging the equality groups identified in a personal and timely way
Mother's awareness of differing professional roles	Communicate through appropriate means, roles and responsibilities of the breastfeeding support service
Evaluation of breastfeeding groups	Engaging in ongoing evaluation of breastfeeding support service in respect of equalities
Consistent approach to signposting women to websites, apps, social media and resources	The signposting of agreed, credible websites, apps, social media and resources should be relevant and appropriate to the equality groups identified
Quality assurance of workforce development	Ensure workforce have regular training updates regarding equality

### SECTION 4 - EqIAA OUTCOME

State one of the following outcomes and why it has been selected:

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and Justification
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Outcome 1: No major change required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Section 3 of the EqIAA identifies the adjustments which are critical to improving the effectiveness and reach of the breastfeeding support service.
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### **SECTION 5 - ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS EqIAA**

- to ensure consideration of equalities approaches is built into the commissioning process
- to evaluate bids and take into account how each provider intends to tackle equalities and reduce inequalities
- to ensure that the successful bidder engages in ongoing evaluation of breastfeeding support in respect of equalities

### **SECTION 6 - EVIDENCE INFORMING THIS EqIAA**

[Dowling, S., Oxford, L., Ellis, N., Jones, M., Fraser, M. \(2017\) Breastfeeding in South Gloucestershire: Mothers' Early Experiences of Infant Feeding. Project Report, University of the West of England, Bristol and South Gloucestershire Council.](#)

[McAndrew, F., Thompson, J., Fellows, I., Large, A., Speed, M. & Renfrew, M.J. \(2012\) The Infant Feeding Survey 2010, Health and Social Care Information Centre.](#)