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**Kent Community NHS Trust Infant Feeding Model**

**March 2017**

Nationally Health Visiting Teams lead and deliver the Department of Health’s Healthy Child Programme for all children age 0-5years, healthy eating is an integral part of the healthy child programme. Public Health England (PHE) has identified breastfeeding as one of the six high impact areas for health visiting. PHE state that health visitors are ideally placed to provide both support to individual mothers and to lead implementation and delivery of evidence-based public health programmes across a locality.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This means that provision of support for breastfeeding should be part of the core role of all health visitors. This will increase the reach of nutrition advice to families in Kent through a holistic framework that includes all aspects of infant health and that links to early help and maternity services.

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) Health Visiting teams comprise of Health Visitors, who are highly trained specialist community public health nurses, and Community Nursery Nurses.

Health visiting teams across Kent, both in the antenatal and postnatal period, support parents to form warm and loving parent child relationships and provide their baby with responsive feeding. This includes supporting parents to make informed decisions about feeding their babies.

Where parents choose to breastfeed their baby, the health visiting team provides support and information to enable mothers to breastfeed for as long as they want to. In addition, parents, who choose to formula feed their baby are supported to do so as safely and responsively as possible.

Health visiting support is offered to all parents through the universal health visiting contacts, Antenatal contact, New Birth visit and 6-8 week contact, as well as within community based clinic drop in sessions (Child Health Clinics). All community health care staff providing antenatal information will have a discussion with expectant Mothers regarding feeding. This conversation will be tailored to a Mother’s previous experience. The needs of partners and the wider family, including grandparents and other children will be included.

THE DISCUSSION DURING THE ANTENATAL CONTACT INCLUDES:

* The value of connecting with their growing baby in utero
* The value of skin contact for all mothers and babies
* The importance of responding to their baby's needs for comfort, closeness and feeding after birth, and how keeping your baby close can promote these responsive behaviours
* There will be an exploration of what parents already know about breastfeeding
* The value of breastfeeding as protection, comfort and food
* Getting breastfeeding off to a good start in ways that will optimise the mothers and baby’s health and well-being
* Providing information about sources of information and support with breastfeeding/advice lines/clinics etc.

The Health Visiting service will phone parents within the first ten days of a baby’s life to offer an appointment for the new birth visit. An administrator will make this phone call and one of the questions the administrator will ask the mother is her feeding status. All administrators have received training on how to conduct the infant feeding conversation with the mother. If the mother is breast feeding she will then be asked if she has any concerns with feeding and will be given the opportunity to speak with the duty health visitor. As part of that phone call with the health visitor, infant feeding is discussed and where specific advice is given in response to a concern raised by the mother, the heath visitor will ensure they inform the visiting midwife who is responsible for supporting the mother in the first ten days. They will also be given details of the breastfeeding drop in sessions.

**Drop-In Child Health Clinics**

All parents are encouraged to attend Child Health Clinics to access further health visiting support. Each Child Health Clinic is run by members of the local health visiting team and offers advice and support on infant feeding as well as a range of topics related to babies and young children’s health and development e.g. Active Learner, Introducing Solid Food sessions etc.

**Breast feeding Drop-in Sessions**

As part of the Child Health Clinic the Health Visiting Teams will provide additional breast feeding support sessions which will also be supported by Volunteer Breast feeding peer supporters. Each support session will have a health visitor present. The environment in which the breastfeeding support sessions are undertaken should be conducive to women feeling comfortable and privacy to have discussions about feeding. The aim of the breast feeding support session is to further support mothers who choose to breast feed their babies:

The breast feeding support sessions aim to:

* Assist a mother to understand how to identify that their baby is getting enough milk
* Ensure feeding is a comfortable and enjoyable experience for both mother and baby
* Identify where more help is needed
* Facilitate breastfeeding support via one to one and groups

Wherever possible, breast feeding drop in sessions will run alongside the health visitor led Child Health Clinics to facilitate effective working and encourage all parents to engage with health visiting and children’s centre community provision. All Child Health Clinic sessions, together with their local Children’s Centres, will ensure they have appropriate space to enable breast feeding mothers to feed their babies in comfort and privacy, should they wish to.

Each of the 12 districts within Kent will have at least three breast feeding drop in sessions (1.5 - 2 hours) per week available to parents. These drop in sessions will be run by a health visitor and a breastfeeding peer supporter. Alongside the drop in sessions parents receive one to one support with any aspect of infant feeding through the universal health visiting contacts and any additional contacts that are offered in response to identified breast feeding issues.

All mothers are welcome to attend the breast feeding drop in sessions before and/or after they have their baby if they have questions or concerns, or if they just want to chat with other breastfeeding mothers. Fathers and other supporters are always welcome at breastfeeding drop ins. If we are to change the UK culture around breastfeeding, we need to embrace those that influence and support. Care is taken to ensure inclusivity while protecting dignity. Each situation will be handled appropriately

**Volunteer Breast Feeding Peer Supporters**

Volunteer Peer Supporters are mothers who have breastfed their own children and want to support other breastfeeding mothers. Many have overcome a number of common breastfeeding issues themselves.

Recruitment of peer supporters and the ongoing management of the peer supporters will be undertaken through the Children’s Centres Volunteer Programme. Health visitors and peer supporters will have a role in identifying potential peer supporters and referring them to the children’s centres for further information and enrolment.

Training for the volunteer peer supporters will be delivered by the KCHFT Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) leads and will take place in children’s centres. KCHFT are currently seeking accreditation for the Breast Feeding Peer Support Training Programme. The BFI leads will provide Clinical Supervision, four times a year for two hours in a group setting to the Volunteer Breast Feeding Peer Supporters

KCHFT Health Visiting service is aiming to maintain, in the region of 200 breast feeding volunteers by offering two courses per district every six months. Details of the training will be provided to the children’s centres for complete record keeping.

The Health Visitors who are responsible for individual Child Health Clinics in each district will be responsible for ensuring the breast feeding peer support volunteers are actively involved in the breast feeding drop in session.

The Health Visiting service will coordinate the peer support attendance at the clinics.

**Specialist support for breast feeding mothers**

A local specialist breastfeeding clinic appointment will be available to any mother who is experiencing more complex breastfeeding issues, For example, latching difficulties, painful breastfeeding, and low milk production. They also provide support for mothers whose babies are not gaining enough weight and other difficulties which may include issues such as mastitis and tongue tie. The specialist clinic appointments will be provided by the KCHFT Infant Feeding Leads alongside outsourced Lactation Consultants in the interim period as existing staff gain the necessary qualifications. Consultations will be on an appointment only basis, in response to a referral from a health professional according to clinical need.

In addition to the specialist clinic appointments, the Lactation consultants and KCHFT IFL Leads will be available to the health visiting teams, by phone, in order to support the heath visiting teams in responding to more complex issues raised by breast feeding mothers at Breast Feeding drop in sessions or Child Health Clinics. This will ensure that breast feeding mothers get immediate specialist support and advice as and when they need it.

There will be one specialist clinic in each of the east Kent, west Kent, north Kent and Kent coastal areas every week. This service will be by appointment and will be flexible to offer home visits depending on how busy the clinics are.

**Communication**

Information about services will be given at all antenatal and new birth visit contacts. A poster is being distributed to all health centres, child health clinics, children centres and KCHFT will ensure libraries and nurseries have the information. The information will be on the Health Visiting service public view website

**Healthy Eating- Solids and Family Meals**

Part of the core role of the KCHFT Health Visiting Team is to advise all parents on up to date information related to introducing solids and moving onto healthy family meals.

Each district will offer a rolling parent programme which includes a “Solids” Workshop Session. These sessions provide parents with all the information they need to know about healthy eating and healthy start vitamins.

**Ongoing Infant Feeding Advice**

Parents are provided with the contact details, either during the antenatal period or at the first visit, and are reminded at every contact, of whom and how they can contact their local health visiting team. This is always clearly documented in the child’s personal child health record (Red Book) Parents can contact the local health visitor duty line or their own health visitor whenever they feel they need additional advice and support about feeding, or any other issue related to their baby or child.

**Data Collection**

Information currently collected on e-Start re: breastfeeding clinic attendance will be included in the Health Visiting Service data set. The Service will report on access by protected groups, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

1. Public Health England. Early Years High Impact Area 3: Breastfeeding. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/563921/Early\_years\_high\_impact\_area3\_breastfeeding.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)