

Infant Feeding Policy

For all staff supporting pregnant women, new mothers, infants and their families who receive care from Lothian NHS Board

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Executive Summary

The Infant Feeding policy aims to support families to build close and loving relationships and respond to their baby's needs however they decide to feed their baby in hospital and community settings. This has been developed by a steering group from across settings and disciplines and reflects the current evidence base, guidelines and feedback from staff and families.

The policy details information regarding the UNICEF Baby Friendly care standards and NHS Lothian's commitment to deliver these, the context and the roles and responsibilities for managers and staff including education and training required.

It is essential that all staff supporting pregnant women, new mothers, infants and their families are competent to do so and supported through clear processes and training to deliver the UNICEF Baby Friendly standards of care. This policy accompanies the detailed procedural Infant Feeding Guideline (version 1:2018-2021) and the Neonatal infant Feeding Guideline (version 1:2018-2021).

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff in NHS Lothian who provide care for pregnant women, infants and their families, understands their role and responsibilities and how they should support families to feed and care for their infant in ways which support optimum health and well-being.

This policy has been prepared to support the achievement of the following outcomes:

- An increase from baseline in any breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding rates at initiation, 10 days and 6-8 weeks and beyond
- Amongst parents who decide to formula feed their baby, that they are supported and guided to do so as safely as possible, in line with Health Scotland guidance
- An increase in babies being introduced to solid foods at around 6 months in line with Health Scotland guidance
- Improvements in parents' experiences of care

Additionally, there will be related outcome measures that will reflect the activities of the Newborn Care Collaborative and the Scottish Patient Safety Programme quality improvement agenda.

2.0 Policy statement

NHS Lothian is committed to:

- Providing the highest standard of care to support expectant and new mothers and their partners to feed their baby and build strong and loving parent-infant relationships.
- Ensuring that all care is mother and family centred, non-judgemental and that mothers' decisions are supported and respected.
- Supporting full implementation of the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative standards across all services.
- Ensuring all staff receive UNICEF Baby Friendly approved breastfeeding and relationship building education and training as appropriate to their role within six months of commencing employment in line with UNICEF Baby Friendly requirements.
- Ensuring all documentation supports the implementation of the UNICEF Baby Friendly standards.
- Ensuring the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes is implemented throughout NHS Lothian.
- Working together across disciplines and organisations to improve mothers'/parents' experiences of care.

- Ensuring parents' experiences of care will be listened to through various mechanisms e.g. the Baby Friendly Initiative audit tool, and parents' experience surveys.
- Providing care and support at an appropriate level for the early intervention of infant feeding issues with a tiered service to meet more complex needs.

3.0 Scope

This policy is mandatory and applies to all employees of NHS Lothian Board in all locations. All staff that provide care for pregnant women, infants and their families should be orientated to this policy and understand their role and responsibilities to support optimum infant nutrition and strong parent-infant attachment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the NHS Lothian Infant Feeding Guideline and/or the Neonatal Infant Feeding Guideline and any other supporting relevant clinical guidelines and documents.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 International Code of Marketing Breast milk Substitutes

This was developed in 1981 by the general assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO), in close consultation with member states and other concerned parties. This Code, and a number of subsequent World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions, recommends restrictions on the marketing of breast milk substitutes, such as infant formula, to ensure that mothers are not discouraged from breastfeeding and that substitutes are used safely if needed. The Code also covers feeding bottles and teats (World Health Organisation 1981).

4.2 UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative works with health professionals to support them to provide the best possible care so that all parents have the support they need to make informed choices about feeding and caring for their babies. It is believed that health facilities should provide this high standard of care for mothers and babies by adopting recognised best practice standards in support of breastfeeding.

5.0 Implementation roles and responsibilities

5.1 NHS Lothian

NHS Lothian will provide mandatory training which is suitable for the roles and responsibilities of each staff group. They will ensure that training meets the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Standards, that it is updated regularly and that the outcomes are frequently audited.

5.2 Line managers

Line managers will be expected to ensure that new staff are orientated to the Infant Feeding Policy and guideline on commencement of employment, that they complete training and

supervised clinical practice within 6 months of taking up post and then attend ongoing updates. They will also be responsible for managing any practice issues and deficiencies.

5.3 All new staff

All new staff in roles which provide care for pregnant women, infants and their families are expected to familiarise themselves with the Infant Feeding Policy and guidelines on commencement of employment. They should attend and complete all elements of the training within six months of commencement of employment to enable them to implement this policy as appropriate to their role. They will then ensure that they attend ongoing updates and other learning and education opportunities in line with the WHO Code compliance.

6.0 Associated materials

Associated guidelines in relation to supporting families with infant feeding in NHS Lothian board settings are available within the [NHS Lothian Infant Feeding guideline](#). It is recognised that babies within Neonatal and Special Care services will require different and/or additional care and this is outlined within the [NHS Lothian Neonatal Infant Feeding guideline](#).

7.0 Evidence base

The rationale for implementing the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative to support all families with their infant feeding decisions and practices is clear.

Published evidence supports and recognises the benefits of breastfeeding which has been shown to make a significant contribution to good physical and emotional health outcomes for mother, baby and society. Furthermore, evidence shows that strong and loving relationships between infants and their parents have a profound impact on the future health and wellbeing of the child including optimising infant brain development.

UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative. 2017. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/12/Guidance-for-neonatal-units.pdf>

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative (2013) Guidance on the International Code for Health Professionals.

http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby_Friendly/Guidance/guide_int_code_health_professionals.pdf

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative. 2017. Guide to the Baby Friendly standards: www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/standards

Baker, J. L., Gamborg, M., Heitmann, B. L., Lissner, L., Sorensen, T. I. A., and Rasmussen, K. M., 2008. Breastfeeding reduces postpartum weight retention. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 88 (6), 1543-1551.

Quigley, M. A., Kelly, Y. J., and Sacker, A., 2007. Breastfeeding and hospitalization for diarrhoea and respiratory infection in the United Kingdom millennium cohort study. *Pediatrics*, 119 (4), e837-842.

8.0 Stakeholder consultation

A steering group was set up to develop this policy and associated guidelines and incorporated representation from all stakeholders in NHS Lothian. This group's membership included: Infant Feeding Advisors, Consultants, a Clinical Reader, Midwives, Health Visitors, Nurses, Public Health and Strategic Planning. An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) was carried with members of the steering group and included parental representation.

9.0 Monitoring and review

The policy will be reviewed and revised every 3 years or as a result to changes in evidence base and/or legislation. The implementation of the policy will be carried out in line with the actions identified below in the table.

Element to be monitored	How	Frequency	Reporting
Care Standards across Neonatal, Maternity and Community services	UNICEF staff and mother audits Parent experience feedback	In line with UNICEF requirements for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ward staff – Community teams – Local steering groups – Clinical manager groups – UNICEF
Outcomes as specified in purpose of policy	TRAK System and Information Services Division (ISD)	Quarterly and annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All staff – Clinical manager groups – Local planning groups