



Being the Best We Can Be

The Electronic Newsletter of the Breastfeeding Network



Sophie, Skye, Evie and Teddy at Brixton Market

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53.1 Message from the Directors

I took up the role of chair of the board in April this year, having been a director for three years. I have been an active tutor in Tameside, Greater Manchester but my history with the Breastfeeding Network goes back even earlier to 2004 when I started as a volunteer helper. I have a good knowledge of our wonderful charity, which is essential for anyone playing a key role in steering it.

2013 has been a big year for BfN! We have recruited our first ever chief executive, Shereen Fisher, joined us in March. Having this role head-up the management of the charity is an important step towards strengthening our board and professionalising our approach. We also welcomed three new directors, [Wendy Barber](#), [Ann Kerr](#) and [Maddie Lowe](#). These changes have had a big impact on how the board works and which matters it now considers. Through well planned meetings we now devote more of our time to strategy rather than operational tasks.

The role of chair is like that of any other board member, but there are a few important differences. I work closely with Shereen, and we speak regularly during a working week. This means I can guide, feed-in and support the work of the charity as well as giving me an opportunity to keep in touch with all the parts of BfN. As chair, I also dedicate time to building a cohesive and effective board. This means getting the best out of people, giving time for conversations with board members and being accessible to people. Managing being chair, an active tutor and mum of two is no small task so here is a taste of how I do it and what a typical day looks like.

On a weekday I wake naturally by about six thirty. On a weekend my two children wake me at the same time. For them the weekend means get up and get going!

After staggering out of bed I like to have a cup of tea as I shift into overdrive and make the usual morning arrangements. I bake potatoes for the girls packed lunches and field the usual moans about why they don't get the same treats as other kids. Then a little light cramming for a spelling test and finally urgent encouragement at a higher pitch to get out of the house in time for school.

If I am tutoring I head straight off for the hour-long drive to Tameside for a supporters session followed by a helpers session, with no lunch break. I drink a lot of tea.

During breaks I check my BlackBerry for messages and updates. Most days there is some dialogue either from other directors or between the CEO and me. Some things can be dealt with in a simple exchange of emails and some need more consideration.

Often I finish my training and then rush home to pick up the children and ferry them to football training or athletics, or to have friends over. After a chaotic dinner I pick up my husband from work. We downsized to one car last year and now have complex transport arrangements.

Once the children are in bed (around nine these days) I can start to look at the documents and emails sent earlier in the day by the CEO and other directors. Sometimes we have a phone conference for two hours. Once a week, usually on a Friday, I have another phone call with Shereen and we work on topical aspects for BfN and matters arising from all parts of the country. Our conversations are wide-ranging and inform the papers which are brought to the directors at our face-to-face meetings. These occur approximately four times a year and last all day. In addition I also attend on-going training to help inform my role, and meet for a day-long meeting with Shereen approximately four times a year.

As the role of director in a charity is an unpaid one all the work must be done in volunteer time. I try to get on NBH too but my link worker will tell you this is rare!

It is an honour to be in this role and I hope always to support our CEO and fulfil the role in the best interests of this wonderful charity we all work for.

Around ten thirty I watch something rubbish on the TV, drinking my vanilla chai and then to my welcoming bed hoping I will not be woken by one or other of the children in the night!

Sukie Woodhouse

This is not an Editorial

The intention was to make this newsletter a little shorter than the last one, to make it easier to read online. But the content just kept on coming. And it was all good. So what to leave out?

News of innovations in breastfeeding support in Ayrshire?

An overview of changes at NBH?

Isabella checking out the breastfeeding scene in South Africa?

Rapping about the less talked about after-effects of childbirth at the AGM?

The answer to why Sukie needed the scissors at tutors' day? (Was it to get into the fortune cookies?)

The articles about what to do with the press and social media? (Not after the '£200 for breastfeeding' news stories.)

Pictures of the new faces on the staff team?

In the end I decided it all had to stay, but the editorial could go. So it did.

Veronika Tudhope

The Electronic Newsletter: What Do You Think?

When I published the first electronic newsletter in July I immediately received nineteen positive emails from members who were pleased to have the new newsletter. I have also had 39 responses to the survey (now closed).

From the survey and online statistics I can see that that the directors' report, congratulations and pictures of milk run were most popular for browsing and people most liked to read the articles about Japanese breastfeeding practices and breastfeeding support in the prison service.

Generally responses to the newsletter now being available on line were positive, though with some ambiguity. 68% respondents are pleased that the electronic copy is going to save BfN money which can be used elsewhere.

Generally you seem to be happy with the length, quality and quantity of information, variety of content, attractiveness of design, pictures and humour. You like the quality of information and number of pictures but you would like more information. Disappointingly some of you felt there was altogether too much cake – but not everyone thought so, so to please those who like it I have put them on a [secret cake page](#) (but don't tell anyone)

I will be taking your comments into account as I write the newsletter. To adapt to the online format this issue will have more links to online resources and be a little shorter. Please continue to give me feedback, of any kind, about the newsletter. It's aimed at you and I need to know I am ~~knitting~~ hitting the target.

The paper copy of the newsletter had a who's who of the staff and directors towards the end. You can now find information about the [board of directors](#) and [central team staff](#) on the website.

Alternative arrangements are being made for members who do not receive emails.

53.2 Congratulations and Thank You



Congratulations and Well Done

Full supporters

Eleanor Johnson, Sabine Kahl, Tara Lock, Karah Mew, Anthea Tennant-Eyles, Hannah West, Justine White

Thank you to their tutors and supervisors

Deborah Behrman, Zoe Chadderton, Claire Davis, Susy Gilvin,
Rachel Thorpe and Wendy Jones

Supporters starting their probationary period

Sarah Bamford, Leah Castell, Emma Faulkner, Rachel Fleetwood, Joanne Fradd, Clara French, Jolea Green, Toni Howard, Ada Janusiene, Elizabeth Kidd, Sarah Lane, Kate Ludley, Jennifer Murray, Tamella Pettit, Catt Roden-Taylor, Elisha Tunstall, Janie Rose, Joanne Sharples, Lydia Smith, Emma Taylor

Thank you to their tutors

Lesley Backhouse, Linda Bloor, Claire Davis, Wendy Jones, Joy Hastings, Jane Neesam, Gladys Perrier, Helen Palmer, Jacqui Stronach, Rachel Thorpe, Mary Whitmore and Nicola Worsnop

And to all newly qualified helpers

Rachel Thorpe's

Sam Wilkinson
Faye Hounsome
Carolynne Woodgate
Deborah Jones
Florence Mason-Callaway
Maxine Bailey
Polly Lodge
Marnie Clements
Caroline Tryon
Louise Durbin

Nicola Worsnop's

Sonia Bailey
Lyndsey Brown
Victoria Clements
Dawn Grainger
Stacie Kilcullen
Stella King
Becky Lipton
Rosemary Sonley
Laura Spry
Colette Plews
Philippa Storey
Sonia Potter
Victoria Simpson

Naomi Harvey's

Michelle Marley
Cattis Lundell
Shari Macdonald
Stacey Neville
Angela Wong

Jacqui Stronach

Lindsey Morgan
Natalie Shewring
Ivana Zak
Heather Barrable
Zoe Byford

Gladys Perrier's

Dominique Bonnett
Maja Cekrlc
Lisa Corrigan
Jo Clayton
Penni Frampton
Emily Haines
Helen Jackson
Jennifer Jackson
Liz Oakham
Barbara Paske
Hannah Quinton

Abbi Ayers'

Ayala Ochert
Rebecca Furner
Andra Raymond
Ingrid Cropper
Nasima Mamun
Tianna Wright
Natalie Merritt
Hannah Stogdon
Nadezhda Salfarlie
Lisa Clare

Thank you and goodbye to

Sandra Cowan, Laura Rushton and Rachel Thorpe



53.3 National Breastfeeding Helpline



New Look Call Centre

Don't panic – it's not all changed again. It's simply a new interface for the system that's easy to use and allows you to see who else is logged on, creating a feeling of teamwork.

Here are some simple solutions that might help if you've had any problems with the new system:

1. Use either Google Chrome or Firefox as your browser to support the new look call centre.
2. If you have a pop up blocker, ensure that pop ups are enabled for the call centre site.
3. Refresh the call centre window after every call and before you log off.
4. Log off with the 'log off' button on the main Call Handling page, not on the pop up.
5. Use your usual password. If this is not working for you, contact your link worker or me to reset your information.

If you only ever log in via telephone, then nothing has changed.

The guide on how to use the new look system (with screenshots) is posted in supporter files. If you cannot see it just [email me](#) for a copy.

[Can You Take a Call This Week?](#)

Exciting Developments for the Helpline!

If you weren't at our AGM you might have missed the latest exciting NBH news. We will be piloting a live web chat support channel for the NBH from early next year.

As far as we're aware, no other charities offer this kind of breastfeeding support. Research suggests that a higher number of younger people tend to access this kind of help, enabling us to reach a different audience. People with hearing or speech impairments will also be able to access support via the NBH, as well as anyone who cannot or does not want to use a phone.

If you're interested in taking part in the trial and being amongst the first to offer breastfeeding support this way, please [contact me](#) as soon as possible. There will be a training day early next year, then a trail of a limited service for a number of months before deciding whether it works for us.

Felicity Lambert, National Breastfeeding Helpline Manager (with thanks to Lorna Hartwell)



Felicity at the AGM

53.4 Breaking News: A Standing Ovation for Hollie McNish at the BfN AGM 2013



There was curious tone to the laughter when [Hollie McNish](#) was onstage. It was sound of the slightly embarrassed laughter of recognition – laughing about things we are not accustomed to talking about, never mind laughing about. And no wonder!

Hollie's talent is for saying what we are all thinking, not just out loud but in the best way. From her first words (which already drew laughter) she carried us back into the world of a new baby when you cry because you think the bottom of your rib cage has disappeared and go home from hospital, 'bleeding feeding, crying, knackered...'

She rapped at length about the problems of breastfeeding in public and finding herself in the toilet because of the 'flash of flesh that might offend' and because society is more accustomed to formula than breast milk, 'we are paying for one thing that has always been free'.

She found metaphors between how Transformers, the fantasy toy, work (with helpful notes in case anyone has not been keeping up: Megatron is bad) and changes to a woman's body, beyond the stomach growing, when a baby is made.

Hollie's performance with its apt turn of phrase, witty observations and brilliant sense of timing drew sustained, uproarious applause from the BfN delegates. And then more applause. Would it ever stop?

Hollie won a standing ovation from the BfN women (and solitary man), which in turn made her look embarrassed, though clearly thrilled (we too can bring on paradoxical feelings). Most of us don't keep a diary in verse at the most challenging times of our lives but we really appreciate it that Hollie has done.

Veronika Tudhope



53.5 Project Report – Focus on Ayrshire



Sarah Edwards addressing EYC on the 30th October 2013

Earlier this year the Scottish Government launched a new initiative called the [Early Years Collaborative](#). It aims to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities: so nothing big!

The programme uses [improvement methodology](#) to make it easier to reach targets.

Small 'tests of change' are used to try new ways of working and then results examined before making long term changes or trying something else.

Three questions are asked before coming up with ideas for change:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we know if the change is an improvement?
- What changes can we make that will lead to improvement?

It sounded like a sensible approach with an aim that BfN can definitely agree with so we were very keen to get involved. We identified three initial ideas and planned small 'tests of change' to see what difference they would make.

The first was to get more pregnant mums to come along to our breastfeeding drop-in support groups. At the moment we talk to mums at NHS antenatal classes and encourage them to come along, but very few do. Our first test was to collect contact details from mums at the antenatal classes and then text or email them with a personal invitation to their local support group. All the tests should be small and quick to do so that you can try them quickly and see what happens, so we tried this in just one area for three classes. We found that doing this made no difference to the number of pregnant mums attending the groups, but 25% of

the mums we texted stayed in touch via text message so they did make use of our support just not in the way we planned. This tells us that text messages might be a better way of offering antenatal support and we are thinking about what to do next with this.

The second test was to ask dads if they would like to give their contact details and sign up for 1:1 peer support. Up to now we have only asked mums if they would like to give their contact details (although we obviously spoke to dads as well). We planned to ask three dads initially, and this was done in October. One of the dads we asked said yes and we are following up with him to see if he uses the support and, if so, how useful he finds it.

The final idea was to make better use of the breastfeeding drop-in support groups by offering a limited number of appointments at each group. Some of our groups can have no mums some weeks, but there is still a volunteer sitting in the room. We also hear from health professionals that mums sometimes feel awkward just 'dropping-in' to a group and we wondered if appointments would help these mums feel more comfortable as they would know that someone would be expecting them at a certain time. Again, we are keeping the test small and doing it in just one area for one month and then we will see how it works and what difference it made to mums and to volunteers.

Testing these ideas linked to the Early Years Collaborative has given us a great chance to look in detail at how we do things and try to make improvements that will bring benefits to the families we support. If we also help even a tiny bit in the aim of making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in then that will be an added bonus!

Sarah Edwards

Front Page Illustration: Just like Mummy! Little Evie Broadbent has no qualms about breastfeeding in public. At just 20 months old she is already totally happy to feed teddy while mum Sophie feeds baby Skye, aged one-and-a-half months when the photo was taken. Sophie is a helper and trainee supporter in Brixton, South London, and was taking a feeding break from shopping in Brixton Market when this gorgeous picture was snapped.

Emma Taylor

53.6 Tutor Study Day Report

Isabella: This was the first day I had partly organised. Armed with laptop, Blu-Tack, name badges and delegate list, I thought I was well prepared until Sukie asked for scissors. (Thanks, Kate, for rescuing me.) Guess what will be in my kit next time?

Sukie: I thought it would be a great idea to do fortune cookies and read them out at the end of the day as a farewell. The day loomed and I had failed to purchase them. "Oh well," I thought, "Birmingham must have a Chinatown. I will nip out in the lunch break."

Lunchtime arrived and so did a splendid buffet. I set off with a vague map. Twenty-five minutes later, after much running, I came across a woman who swore I had only to cross the road, go round the church and across the market behind the Bullring and there it was.

Sure enough in another fifteen minutes, sweating and stressing, I found a Chinese supermarket with five minutes to go. I made it back in one of Brum's finest Hackney Carriages with half a minute to spare. Who needs food anyway?

Isabella: From a tutor/supervisor point of view, I really enjoyed the day as I found it very relevant to what I do (which isn't very much) and loved hearing all the wonderful new ideas from colleagues. As I am very isolated from my BfN colleagues, one-to-one supervision is a vital part of study days for me.

Jane: I didn't go to the tutor weekend and I missed... my BfN friends... time to get supervision... a chance to hear what other tutors and supervisors are doing in other areas...the fun we have together... the work we can achieve together...ideas... latest BfN news to share with supervisees... meeting newly qualified tutors and seeing BfN growing... the warm glow I get from being part of an amazing organisation....

Sukie: My fortune cookie read, 'You should remember to plan ahead!'



Toni has been playing on Camber Sands

Can You Take an NBH Call This Week?

If you've not taken any calls on the helpline for a while, now is a great time to give it a go. Perhaps you've had a gap due to holidays, illness or maternity leave? Maybe you've only recently qualified and are feeling nervous about taking that first call. Is there something else putting you off or making you hesitate before logging on?

How about a chat with your supervisor? Together you can find a way that helps you to take that first call, and then the next. You don't have to take loads of calls – you can take one call then log out and have a rest before taking any more. If there are practical issues preventing you from logging in, talk to your link worker – she can set you up with a new username, talk you through getting set up and explain how calls come through.

People call the helpline for all sorts of different reasons. It's not just mums, we also get dads, grandparents, friends, health professionals and occasionally even journalists and policy makers. You never know what you're going to get, but it's always interesting, and if something comes up that you don't feel equipped to deal with, just contact your supervisor, link worker or me.

Many of the calls we receive are similar, asking the same questions, sharing the same concerns, but for that mum it is critical

By the end of most calls the caller knows she has been listened to, valued and supported. Her concerns have been heard, and normalised.

Every call counts and every call makes a real difference.

53.7 Normalising Breastfeeding in the Media

It might not have escaped your notice but there has been talk of babies in the press this summer. One baby in particular. And the question on everyone's lips must be... Does Kate Middleton breastfeed Prince George?

On the 27th July, when he was only five days old, the [Sunday People](#) revealed that not only was he being breastfed, his father had been too, and his Uncle Harry. Even his grandfather had been breastfed for two months by the queen. A senior royal source said '... don't expect Kate to be photographed breastfeeding. She does not want to become a pin-up for the breastfeeding lobby. She feels that it is a matter of personal choice, and that new mums should do whatever feels right for them and their baby.'

Actually, even taking the breastfeeding lobby out of the equation you can see that she might not want to do it in public. When the tabloid photographer in the front row squeezes a squeaky duck there is an interesting sound. George's head whips round and ...oh dear! It's a risk even the most hardened breastfeeder might not want to take.

Even without the royal nipple on the front pages it seems an ideal time to take the temperature of the press on breastfeeding.

For example, what would the press make of this scenario? A veiled mother in a niqab (full face veil), serving on a jury in court, exposes her breast and breastfeeds her baby.

What would the press concentrate on? The paradox between the hidden face and the exposed breast, which seems culturally alien in a society more used to exposing the face and hiding the breast? Breastfeeding in court? Wearing a niqab on the jury? It is unlikely that the breastfeeding would go unnoticed.

If breastfeeding were the cultural norm then it would arouse little public or press notice. In that kind of world mothers would routinely appear breastfeeding in the press while doing other things - such as signing important international trade treaties or addressing parliament. You might see babies being breastfed at public dinners, or while their mother is being interviewed on Newsnight.

In any case that is not the world we live in (yet). As breastfeeding is the physiological norm it can be difficult to make it into a story in the press. ('Woman feeds and comforts crying baby.' So what?) As it is not the cultural norm breastfeeding can make the best headlines by becoming unusual and bizarre.

Commonly this will occur when a mother breastfeeds an older baby, another woman's baby etc.

Why does this matter to us in BfN? How does it affect our practice?

For the highest possible number of mothers to breastfeed successfully for as long as they want we want breastfeeding to be seen as normal. We also want our services to have exposure in the press so that the maximum number of women can access them. Our goals will not be furthered if breastfeeding only makes the news because mothers who are different from us do it.

Once breastfeeding is seen as the cultural norm it becomes part of the package with a baby, like nappies and white patches on the shoulder.

In fact, is it possible that we don't want breastfeeding to get coverage in the press at all? Do we want to cancel that press release about the 50,000th call to Supporterline? Or the mother supported by Skype on a remote island?

We don't! These stories do not publicise the strangeness of breastfeeding. They publicise the support we offer so that more women can access it.

Meanwhile we want to see people in the background breastfeeding, everywhere. Susan Bright, [writing for the Guardian](#) says much the same thing, '[breastfeeding]... is simply not represented in popular culture; it has yet to be normalised by the sheer repetition of seeing it every day online, on television or in print media.'

We are supporting mothers in a culture that while it does not accept breastfeeding as normal does accept an interest in celebrities as normal. Celebrity culture, even if you don't like it, may help achieve the 'normalising by sheer repetition' in two different ways. If breastfeeding is not news (unless it's "weird") the best exposure we are going to get is going to be of celebrities who are photographed often enough to make the wallpaper of popular culture. Also there seems no harm in taking advantage of this and using breastfeeding celebrities as high profile role models. Examples can be found on [health sites](#) and [media sites](#).

Incidentally, by the 30th October [Mail Online](#) was wondering if breastfeeding was the reason why Kate was looking so slim. She may not be setting out to be a 'pin-up for the breastfeeding lobby' but she is doing us no harm so far.

Veronika Tudhope

53.8 BfN on Social Media

If you haven't found the [BfN Facebook page](#) yet this is a good time to do so. Join the 5,000 people (95% female, 5% male) living in over 30 different countries who 'like' it. Feel free to improve our statistics further!



When you go there you will find posts that are a mix of:

- Breastfeeding information
- Topical news stories and links from other known sources e.g. breastfeeding and medication, ISIS, ABM, NBH
- Information about training and volunteering
- Information about getting support
- Topical discussions
- Information about BfN events – e.g. Mum's Milk Run, AGM, or job opportunities
- Letting people know how they can donate to the BfN

You will find a good community feel with lively discussions on subjects such as going on holiday with a breastfed baby, Christmas parties and leaving your breastfed baby, breastfeeding out and about. There are lots of comments from mothers sharing their experiences and giving support on common issues.

What you won't see is our statistics; we reach an average of between 1,500 and 4,000 people with each post.

Sarah Edwards, administering the site, also receives private messages via the page every week. Some ask for support, some ask to be put in contact with training information or to promote something on the page. Sarah also moderates the site, deleting commercial or inappropriate posts.

You can also expand your experience of social media by joining our 400 followers on [Twitter](#). The purpose of the Twitter feed is to promote BfN, engage with stakeholders, and to keep up to date with new information.



Twitter is very useful as a networking tool so BfN follows a mix of professional bodies involved in the third sector (e.g. the Charity Commission and Councils of Voluntary Organisations, CVOs, for England/Scotland/Wales) and health/early years organisations (e.g. local NHS boards, other third sector organisations such as [Children 1st](#)). If you follow BfN you will be in good company joining, [NHS Education for Scotland](#), [UKAMB](#), [Children England](#), [Maternity Action](#), [Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative](#), [Institute of Public Health Northern Ireland](#) and others. There are also lots of individuals involved in breastfeeding support following BfN; doulas, midwives, peer supporters, IBCLCs (lactation consultants) and, of course, mums.

The tweets you'll see will be a mix of professional information, making links with other organisations and general breastfeeding information useful for mums or others working to support breastfeeding. It is unlikely that there will be photographs of cats doing cute things but there might be the odd breastfeeding pumpkin.

BfN has had conversations or been retweeted (BfN post shared by others) by [Royal College of Midwives](#), [British Dietetic Association](#), [First Steps Nutrition](#), [The Scottish Government Health](#), [Girfec](#) and [NHS Inform](#). Between them these organisations have over 14,000 followers so a wide range of people are potentially seeing our tweets.



Many thanks to Sarah Edwards for administering both pages and providing this information.

53.9 Getting into the Press

Imagine the scene. You've spent days ensuring that 40 mothers, breastfed babies and toddlers are present for the launch of the first Breastfeeding Drop-In Centre in your town. The centre is to be named after the local Victorian celebrity, who breastfed all her 12 children while changing the world. A minor celebrity has turned up, in time, to cut the ribbon and say a few moving words. Despite the pouring rain everyone is in place. This is a perfect opportunity to promote the services of the BfN locally and nationally.

How disappointing if the press do not turn up.

Here are a few tips to help ensure that they will.

Have a Good Story

Think about whether it meets the 'so what' criteria? If you think you have a news story, say your headline to someone unconnected to your organisation and if they say 'so what?' it may not be news. The kinds of stories worth promoting might be

- Anniversaries or milestones, e.g. local project trains 100th peer supporter
- Visit to local project by a celebrity
- BfN locally or nationally wins new funding, or releases new research on breastfeeding
- BfN comments on current breastfeeding in public debate. We needn't join the debate, we can use it as an opportunity to promote our information and support
- BfN fundraising drive
- Any unusual activities e.g. supporting a mum on a remote island by Skype or supporting mums in minority languages
- Case studies of extraordinary volunteers or mums

(In each case ensure you have the permission of everyone involved.)

Be Prepared

- Make up a list of media contacts, preferably with people's names (include newspapers, radio, TV, local bloggers and online sources).
- Write a press release announcing the action in advance
- Have a draft press release ready so you can slot in facts and photos as soon as the event is over
- With the local press the clue is in the name - they will write about things that feature natives of the town in the title of the paper. In practice this works best if you can give them a story that includes sensation, danger and excitement too. Perhaps 'Local woman and baby accidentally locked into DIY store on Christmas

Eve eats chocolate decorations while breastfed baby sleeps peacefully in Nativity scene until Boxing Day.' (Mother: *When I had mastitis on Christmas Day I rang Supporterline on my mobile. They were ever so helpful.*)

Link in with Social Media

- Use it to get participants along to your event
- Use it to keep in touch with the press.

Write a Good Press Release

- A press release is a news stories written in a style that can be used by journalists. It should answer Who? What? Why? When? How?
- Journalist will not necessarily use, or even read, your press releases. The key to getting them to write their stories the way you want is to make your news release newsworthy, brief and easy to read.
- There are fewer news stories in the summer and Christmas holidays so it's generally easier to get coverage during those periods.
- Give the journalist your contact details and make sure you are available to answer their questions, or call them back as soon as possible.

Finally, be persistent. You might not make it onto the front page first time but keep trying.

Advice on writing an effective press release and a standard BfN press release blank with notes for completion are both available from BfN HQ (email@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk). You will also find [more useful info on generating local media coverage](#) and further info on [how to write a press release](#) online.

Written with information provided by Felicity Lambert



The Big Latch On in Morecombe attracted [good press coverage](#) using the above methods

53.10 An Emotional Six Months in my Life



In June this year I became the besotted grandmother of a precious little bundle called Stirling George. I was overjoyed to be present at his birth. I spent the first two weeks of his life with him, my daughter and son-in-law near Washington DC. I learned a lot about the support for breastfeeding in the USA, and the difficulties of helping those very close to you, but that's another story.

At the moment (November) I am once again back in the USA. I have returned several times recently following the sudden and unexpected diagnosis of [metastatic cancer](#) in my beloved son-in-law Christian. He was diagnosed in late August and sadly passed away on 1st October. He was aged just 35 years.

As you can imagine, it has been a very traumatic and emotional few months. Throughout all the heartbreak my daughter, Kerensa, has continued exclusively breastfeeding. She has had an amazing supply even though she spent every one of the 42 days, and many of the nights of Christian's illness in hospital. No one ever asked that Stirling should be left at home and the staff even helped arrange his baptism on the ward two days before his daddy died.

In the midst of the heartbreak I have been doing my best to answer emails to the Drugs in Breastmilk helpline whilst Ruth has done an amazing job in running the telephone line and responding to messages. Why? Well I know how much I appreciated the help of BfN colleagues when Stirling was born (thank you Lorna and Rachel) and I guess I'm trying to hang on to some semblance of normality. I'm also writing a book on Breastfeeding for Dads and Grandmas. I am using our experiences alongside the research in the hope that something positive can come out of this nightmare.

I am very grateful to Shereen, Fliss, Ruth and Phyll in particular for supporting me through this difficult time. I'm sorry if any emails I have sent have been a bit terse; operating in a different time zone with little sleep has been "challenging".

Maybe there is a lesson to us all from Christian. He led a full and active life and he said he would die content. Remember to tell the ones you love that you love them, grasp opportunities to enjoy life when you can and live life to the full.



Wendy Jones

HELPLINES

BfN Supporterline **0300 100 0210** National Breastfeeding Helpline **0300 100 0212**

Drugs in Breastmilk **0844 412 4665** Supporterline in Bengali/Sylheti **0300 465 2421**

Supporterline in Tamil/Telugu/Hindi **0300 330 5469**

Postal address: **The Breastfeeding Network**

PO Box 11126

Paisley

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53.11 Under African Skies

In February and March this year I was privileged to visit South Africa with my family for five weeks. My husband was working there for some weeks so we all decided to move out for a while. He worked, my daughter went to school, we all visited a game reserve and I got involved with breastfeeding.

The game reserve was an amazing experience. We saw giraffes, elephants, hippos and rhinos in their natural habitat. We stroked a cheetah, and visited an elephant sanctuary where an elephant with a broken tusk was receiving root canal treatment and even did a little bit of snorkelling. All this is unbelievable, as I don't like animals. To be honest I'm afraid of them.

While there, my landlady asked if I would be interested in visiting a project which she runs for HIV positive mothers. Of course! What an opportunity. The day I was to go, she was teaching baking. Just my thing! I love baking. I soon had my pinny on, though I was shocked to find that only one of the women there has an



oven at home. I also saw the ingenious gift items from recycled materials to raise funds for the project. You can see some of them on their [Facebook page](#) (African Hands) though the text is in Afrikaans.

While we spent the day together my landlady asked me what I was involved in back in the UK. I told her about BfN and the amazing work we do. This was of great interest to her husband, a doctor with contacts in La Leche League. I had a very informative chat with him and then I found out that she also volunteers in the Kangaroo Mother Care Unit of the hospital. This just happened to be the

next building to the HIV project and she asked me if I would be interested in going with her. Wow! Could this get any better?

After our baking session, which was fascinating and humbling, we went to the KMC unit.

I was amazed!

Not least by the posters in the ward.

I had the opportunity of speaking with the mothers. [Kangaroo care](#) means small sick babies are cared for by being held upright, skin-to-skin against the mother's chest for periods of time. This leads to good results in improved health and earlier discharge. In countries with fewer resources it improves the health outcomes at low cost. The 20 bed KMC (Kangaroo Mother Care) unit at Tshwane district hospital opened two years ago.

We gave out packages to the mothers with little knitted hats, booties and cloth wraps for them to strap their babies to their bodies once at home. The mothers were so thankful. They did not expect to receive anything for free. I was so far away from home and all the luxuries we have here. Breastfeeding in South Africa is very much encouraged and promoted - it was great to see and visiting the KMC unit is an experience I will never forget.

Since I came home our Women and Missions Group at church (and my mum) have been busy knitting. We have already sent our first package of knitted hats, booties and cardigans to the KMC unit and have received photographs of the mothers there receiving them.

Isabella Hunter



53.12 New Team Members

New Directors

Wendy Barber is a lawyer with a



background in commercial litigation, based in Edinburgh. Recent, specific areas of responsibility are in relation to contracts, procurement, and information governance (mainly freedom of information and data protection). Wendy is passionate about volunteering and supporting mums to breastfeed.

Madeline Lowe: Maddie is a GP based in Oxford and brings skills to the



board in developing strategies to improve breastfeeding support. She is committed to BfN's stance on independent information and support for breastfeeding mums and is passionate about how BfN can roll out support to other mums.

Ann Kerr has a background as a general and sick children nurse with



obstetric certificate, and has worked in health promotion for over 20 years. She is currently a senior manager in the NHS and has been involved with breastfeeding locally and nationally.

New Staff Members



Jennifer Stone joined us as the new full time programme manager on the 2nd September 2013. Jenny joined BfN after 14 years as a human resource manager, training development advisor and teacher with the British Army. She has managed a number of initiatives around the globe, working with a variety of cultures and backgrounds in changing situations. She is especially keen on professional development and has a BSc in Nutritional Sciences, an MSc in Educational Practice and Innovation and is a qualified teacher. She is a passionate advocate of breastfeeding, breastfeeding her own daughter until after her second birthday. She is delighted to be joining BfN and is determined to make a full and varied contribution by supporting its employees and volunteers.

Jolene Weaver is the new HR advisor for the BfN. She is new to the organisation but has worked in the charitable sector for the past 15 years in various roles. Originally from North Wales she has settled in the beautiful city of Chester with her husband and two small children. Jolene is passionate about breastfeeding, having seen the benefits it brought to both of her babies. She is looking forward to working with the BfN to ensure that families get the support they need to make feeding a success.

Outside of work Jolene volunteers as a trustee for her local pre-school. She loves reading and is a member of a small book group. She loves cake and is part of a cake club. And she also loves cups of tea - although she hasn't found (founded?) a club for that yet.



We also wish to thank **Vicky Magee**, who worked as Shereen's temporary personal assistant from August till October.