



Doncaster Council

Doncaster
Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 12 January 2023

Subject: Breastfeeding - A Public Health Priority.

Presented by: Laura Quinn, Public Health Improvement Coordinator CYPF

Purpose of bringing this report to the Board	
Decision	
Recommendation to Full Council	
Endorsement	Y
Information	Y

Implications		Applicable Yes/No
DHWB Strategy Areas of Focus	Substance Misuse (Drugs and Alcohol)	
	Mental Health	
	Dementia	
	Obesity	Y
	Children and Families	Y
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment		
Finance		
Legal		
Equalities		Y
Other Implications (please list)		

How will this contribute to improving health and wellbeing in Doncaster?
<p>It is well evidenced that breastfeeding has long-term benefits for babies, lasting right into adulthood. Any amount of breast milk has a positive effect. The longer a mum can breastfeed, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits. There are a wide ranging health benefits for mums who choose to breastfeed too.</p> <p>The impact that breastfeeding has on the environment and climate change is less well known, particularly amongst the general public. Climate change, and the varying weather conditions, are impacting on food production, making the cost of food and infant formula more expensive for families. Those on the lowest income are more vulnerable. Climate related disasters can also impact food security again putting infants at risk.</p>

The production of infant formula has a huge carbon footprint, attached to both the production, transportation and safe preparation of infant formula.

Increasing breastfeeding rates, and moving away from reliance of infant formula has many benefits for society, in terms of health and wellbeing, financial gains for families, and reducing environmental impact.

Infant formula is a costly product, (average £12 a tin/tin p/week), with a short shelf life once opened. In order to be made safely it requires clean drinking water (fresh water in the kettle for each bottle made) Bottles should be made up fresh per feed, in which boiling water is required. Climate emergencies can impact on the availability of drinking water and power supplies again, putting infants at risk. The cost of living crisis is also impacting of families disposable income, purchasing infant formula is another expense for families which could be saved, if more babies were breastfed.

In order to highlight the links between the environment climate change and breastfeeding, Laura Quinn has been part of a special interest working group which secured funding from South Yorkshire ICB to produce the following animation:

<https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/services/maternity-services/feeding-your-baby/>

(Can be viewed by scrolling down on the webpage and clicking on the animation under the heading "Feeding your baby and climate change".

The animation will shortly be available on the UNICEF Baby Friendly website, and a new infant feeding page is being developed for the council website.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:-

Consider and note the information presented.

Continue to support breastfeeding as a public health priority, acknowledging all associated benefits.

Encourage venues to sign up to We Support Our Mums. Any business open to members of the public is able to join the scheme for free.

Request that Doncaster Council, as an employer, implements a breastfeeding policy, demonstrating to employees returning to work that we support them.