



National Breastfeeding Helpline: Our response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

What we do:

The National Breastfeeding Helpline is open 9.30am-9.30pm every day of the year on 0300 100 0212. We offer accessible, non-judgmental, evidence based, unbiased, friendly breastfeeding support and information to anyone who needs it.

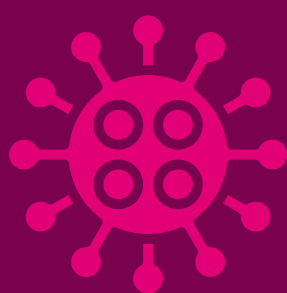
All calls are answered by highly trained volunteers in their own homes via a secure virtual call centre.

We offer confidential support via phone, webchat and social media message.

The Helpline is run as a partnership between the Breastfeeding Network and the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers, and is funded by the Scottish Government and Public Health England.



2020 - A year like no other:



As lockdown came into force in March, face-to-face breastfeeding support became vastly restricted, or completely unavailable, and ante and postnatal support was massively reduced.

Knowing that the helpline was going to become even more important in the circumstances, we moved quickly to step up our offer of support – volunteers answered hundreds more calls, webchats and social media messages from parents desperate for information and reassurance.



Some volunteers returned from retirement and trainees chose to fast-track their training so they could qualify and start supporting sooner. We introduced new measures including a voicemail return service – allowing callers to leave a message if they were unable to get through first time, and increased capacity on both our webchat and social media support options.



We also increased our offer of remote supervision and support for our volunteers, knowing that they were also under additional pressures.

And so, without losing any of the quality and patience that callers to the helpline expect, we were able to support many more families at a time when the support was more needed than ever.

During April and May 2020 more than 10% of callers mentioned Coronavirus or Covid-19 during their calls.

In the six months between April and September 2020, volunteers answered 124% more calls than they did in the same period in 2019.

In the same period, volunteers also spent for 60% longer on the phone supporting callers than they did in 2019.

We have seen an 11% increase in calls about 'breastfeeding basics' - positioning & attachment during this period.

I've been struggling with feeling alone and isolated with a newborn and every call to you has left me feeling empowered, informed and like I have a whole team behind me. You have been wonderfully calm, informative and you help me making decisions rather than telling me what to do. Thank you for being there

this helpline has been amazing in lockdown

Throughout lockdown accessing breastfeeding support has been really challenging however I am really grateful for the knowledge, passion and empathy shown by the volunteers at the National Breastfeeding Helpline.

Thank you very much!



**national
breastfeeding
helpline**

0300 100 0212