

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	20 May 2020
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Protecting, Supporting and Promoting Breastfeeding in South Lanarkshire
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide the Committee with an update on the current breastfeeding position across South Lanarkshire

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted;
- (2) that Committee members draw on the advantages of their roles as leaders and influencers to support Lanarkshire's strategic vision;
- (3) that a multi-strand working group approach to promote South Lanarkshire as an area of high breastfeeding engagement be approved; and
- (4) that we collectively promote a supportive environment to allow the development of a detailed action plan to be considered at a future Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1. South Lanarkshire Council recognises the short and long term advantages of breastfeeding for both mother and baby and supports breastfeeding as the optimal infant feeding choice for all parents. However, breastfeeding rates in South Lanarkshire are low and NHS Lanarkshire are developing enhanced strategies to increase these rates.
- 3.2. Getting It Right For South Lanarkshire Children, Young People and Families Integrated Children's Service plan 2017-2020 and associated action plan highlights breastfeeding as an area for improvement.
- 3.3. Moderate increase in breastfeeding rates can reduce chronic condition rates, positively impact on cognitive ability, can reduce childhood obesity and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (UNICEF – Preventing disease and saving resources: the potential contribution of increasing breastfeeding rates in the UK).
- 3.4. The action plan includes scoping out partnership strategies to improve the rate of breastfeeding at birth and 6-8 weeks.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. The baby friendly initiative enables mothers to receive this help within healthcare services, delivering a holistic, child-rights based pathway for improving care.

Through their staged accreditation programme services are enabled to support families with feeding and to help parents build a close and loving relationship with their baby.

- 4.2. NHS Lanarkshire has had full UNICEF accreditation for many years and is planning to progress to become accredited as a Gold Baby Friendly Service which focuses on achieving sustainability of standards and as such a reduction in the variability of practice and the effect this has on rates.
- 4.3. Breastfeeding Rates in Scotland are monitored and published annually. A critical indicator is the percentage of babies still being breastfed at the six to eight week review by the GP. Scottish Government statistics show that the Scottish average of babies exclusively breastfed at the six to eight week review in 2017-2018 was 30.7% with South Lanarkshire showing 22%. Latest figures demonstrate a gradual increase in breastfeeding rates in South Lanarkshire:

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Exclusive Breastfeeding %	19.5	19.7	23.1	22.1	24.7
Any Breastfeeding %	26.5	27.1	30.2	30.4	32.2
Ever Breastfeeding			51.9	53.8	53.3
Attrition			-37.5	-42.5	-39.6

- 4.4. In making a positive shift towards improving breastfeeding rates in Lanarkshire it is essential that the profile of breastfeeding is increased and sustained at a high level. In addition, a co-ordinated strategic approach is required which engages key stakeholders such as the NHS, local authority, local population, education and community leaders to start a different conversation about breastfeeding, enabling this to become the first choice of feeding Lanarkshire's babies.
- 4.5. Organisations have an obligation under law to ensure premises and staff are aware of this act and breastfeeding women feel confident and supported to breastfeed anywhere in Lanarkshire.
- 4.6. Key to supporting broader culture challenge associated with increased breastfeeding, South Lanarkshire Council in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire will further develop opportunities to incorporate breastfeeding awareness into the education curriculum from nursery through to secondary school with a view to bringing about increased change in culture and attitudes to breastfeeding.
- 4.7. In addition to this, a cross resource/partner short-life working group to support the Council's broader approach in South Lanarkshire should be progressed.
- 4.8. The Committee should support the broader culture challenge associated with increased breastfeeding. The Council, in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire, will further develop opportunities to incorporate breastfeeding awareness into the education curriculum from nursery through to secondary school, with a view to bringing about increased change in culture and attitudes to breastfeeding.
- 4.9. The Committee would consider access to appropriate breastfeeding facilities within our areas, and as part of any refurbishment of Council premises. The Committee will promote breastfeeding facilities to internal and external audiences where those facilities are currently in place. In addition, Corporate Communications will work with colleagues in NHS Lanarkshire to share promotional messages through the Council's channels.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The law requires that an employer provides an appropriate facility (both rooms and refrigeration equipment) for employees to breastfeed. While it is likely that existing facilities are available in all larger buildings, there are likely to be costs associated with providing such facilities in some Council buildings. This would be progressed or agreed in line with current approval routes for any such changes.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental issues associated with this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. Associated risks lie with inaction. South Lanarkshire is currently very low in terms of breastfeeding rates – this continues to reinforce poor health outcomes in some areas.

- 8.2. Low levels of breastfeeding are linked to a range of socio-economic factors including areas of deprivation, lack of knowledge and difficulty in continuing to do so while managing a need to return to work. Encouraging and supporting breastfeeding is recognised as an important public health activity. There is good evidence that breastfeeding in infancy has a protective effect against many childhood illnesses. Other probable benefits include improved cognitive and psychological development, and a reduced risk of childhood obesity. There is evidence that women who breastfed have lower risks of breast cancer, Type 2 diabetes, epithelial ovarian cancer and hip fracture later in life. The proposed approach supports the Council's responsibility to reduce socio-economic disadvantage. It also evidences that South Lanarkshire is active in recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of children.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. The report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required. However there does require to be consideration of equality issues under Part 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act, this could be considered by the short life working group.

Val de Souza

Director, Health and Social Care

29 April 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Deliver better Health and Social Care for all
- Accountable, Effective, Efficient and Transparent

Previous References

- none

List of Background Papers

- Getting it Right for Every Child: Children's Services Plan 2017-2020
- South Lanarkshire Council Breastfeeding Mothers Policy

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Lynsey Sutherland

Interim Nurse Director

Phone: 01698 453988

Email: Lynsey.sutherland@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk