



Funded by  
UK Government

Familyhub  
TORBAY

# TORBAY INFANT FEEDING STRATEGY 2023 – 2025





## Family Hubs – Start for Life

Family Hubs is a UK Government initiative that seeks to bring together the support for families at the time they need it, providing a welcoming space and a 'front door' for families from pregnancy and beyond.

There are three core Family Hubs in Torbay, including **Brixham, Paignton and Torquay** but the Family Hub network extends to the whole of the Torbay community. To find out more [www.torbayfamilyhub.org.uk](http://www.torbayfamilyhub.org.uk)

Support is available through the Family Hubs programme for Torbay families in many ways including accessing support for mental health especially in the first year after a baby is born, infant feeding, parent-infant relationships, parenting and reducing conflict in the home and developing a positive home learning environment.

The Family Hubs Start for Life Programme in Torbay has funding until the end of March 2025.

## Torbay's Family Hubs Infant Feeding Network

Torbay's Family Hubs Infant Feeding network is a collaboration between healthcare and people with lived experience including parents and those working in the NHS, Action for Children, Torbay Local Authority, and the Torbay voluntary sector.

## Infant Feeding in Torbay

**Breastfeeding and breast milk gives babies the absolute best start in life** as it promotes health, prevents disease, contributes to reducing inequalities and there are links between infant feeding and forming baby and parent relationships, important for developing babies' brains. Breastfeeding has also been proven to protect against some short and long-term illnesses and diseases for both mum and child.

**Breastfeeding can be hard.** Eight out of ten mums stop breastfeeding before they want to and the UK has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates globally.

Around **43% of babies in Torbay are exclusively breastfed (receive only breast milk) by two weeks old, dropping to 34% by six weeks.**

In Torbay we are **committed to supporting women to make the right choice at the right time for them.** The strategy promotes the choice of breastfeeding but importantly supports all families no matter how they choose to feed their baby.

## Our Vision for Infant Feeding in Torbay

We would like Torbay to be a community where **breastfeeding is promoted and normalised**, where parents feel widely supported from pregnancy to explore and identify infant feeding options.

We would like to encourage families from pregnancy to **make informed choices about infant feeding**, encouraged by what they know about child and maternal health and close, loving relationships.

We would like mums, where possible, to be able to **offer the first feed as a breastfeed and have the support to continue to breastfeed if they wish**, including mothers who find it hard both physically and emotionally.

We would like mums and babies with vulnerabilities, including young mums, parents with support needs and those living in poverty to have **one-on-one support** with their infant feeding choices from pregnancy, immediately after birth and as the baby grows.

We would like **fathers, same sex parents, co-parents, grandparents and the wider family and friend network** to be well informed about the benefits and potential challenges of breastfeeding so they are more empowered to offer support.

We would like parents and families to be able to **access infant feeding help and support as when they need to**, through the method they choose including face-to-face in the community, at home and virtually.

We would like more babies to be **weaned no earlier than six months old.**

We would like all mums to feel at **ease and supported when breastfeeding** outside the home environment.

We would like breastfeeding to be an **enjoyable, comfortable, and nurturing experience** both in the home and in the community and to be celebrated as such.

# How We Will Fulfill Our Infant Feeding Vision

The Family Hubs Torbay network, including people with professional and lived experience, are **committed** to developing and implementing the Family Hubs Infant Feeding vision. We will collaborate with families to ensure the programme supports mums to make baby feeding choices that meet their needs at the right time for them.

We will do this by **listening** to mums, dads, same sex parents, co-parents and grandparents and put in place programmes that support the infant feeding journey starting from pregnancy, as detailed below.

## 1. Peer Support

We will establish a comprehensive peer support programme, where **people with lived experience** are at the forefront of the infant feeding support network across Torbay including at the hospital, in homes, at the Family Hubs and the wider community.

## 2. Community Engagement Events

We will, alongside our peer supporters, facilitate community engagement activities to ensure we **understand** what the infant feeding support needs in Torbay are, and deliver support based on what we understand are the barriers to breastfeeding in our community.

## 3. Infant Feeding Activity in the Family Hubs and Across the Community

We will **increase breastfeeding support** in the Family Hubs and wider community led by peer supporters and other professionals in the form of support groups, drop-ins, and clinics.

## 4. Face-to-Face Antenatal Offer in the Hubs and Wider Community

We will **listen to what parents have told us** they want their antenatal offer to look like, and work closely with midwives, Health visitors, peer supporters and the wider health care system to develop and deliver a comprehensive face-to-face antenatal programme.

## 5. Support for Dad's, Same Sex Parents, Co-Parents, and Grandparents

We will offer peer support led sessions both digitally and face-to-face in the Hubs and wider community for Dads, same sex parents, co-, and grandparents so they are **well informed to support mums and babies with infant feeding goals**.

## 6. Targeted Infant Feeding Support for Families

We will make the most of data and local information to ensure support and provision is tailored to the diverse needs of our populations and reduce disparities between groups, ensuring **help is accessible** across all populations.

## 7. Tongue-Tie (Ankyloglossia) Clinics

We will **upskill our Infant Feeding workforce** to diagnose and treat tongue-tie in babies and extend the tongue-tie clinics to the Family Hubs.

## 8. UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)

We will continue to work across maternity and health visiting services to **implement the UNICEF BFI programme and Achieve Sustainability – the UNICEF BFI Gold Award**. The UNICEF UK BFI programme enables public services to support families with feeding, developing close and loving relationships so that all babies get the very best start in life. Torbay's maternity and health visiting services have Level 3 UNICEF BFI accreditation, meaning they have infant feeding policies in place with regular staff training and audits. The Family Hubs are working towards Level 2 accreditation.

## 9. Training and Education

We will increase training opportunities including UNICEF's BFI programme for the Family Hub network, **supporting everyone involved in the care of mothers and babies** to develop the skills and knowledge required to implement best practice.

We will work closely with early years and education settings to develop a comprehensive education programme that supports a community-wide understanding of the benefits of breastfeeding.

## INFANT FEEDING TIMELINE 2023 - 2025

### MILESTONE NO. 1

Peer Supporters are at the forefront of delivering Infant Feeding support to families

1

JUNE  
2023

AUGUST  
2023

2

### MILESTONE NO. 2

Community Engagement activities support us to understand what support is needed and where

### MILESTONE NO. 3

Infant Feeding Support activity is increased in the Hub and wider community

3

AUGUST  
2023

OCTOBER  
2023

4

### MILESTONE NO. 4

Face-to-face antenatal offer in the Hubs and wider community

### MILESTONE NO. 5

Support for Dad's, Same Sex Parents, Co-Parents and Grandparents is available face-to-face and digitally

5

NOVEMBER  
2023

DECEMBER  
2023

6

### MILESTONE NO. 6

Targeted Infant Feeding Support for Families who need it most is increased

### MILESTONE NO. 7

Babies with tongue-tie are identified and referred to clinics operating in the Hubs

7

JANUARY  
2024

FEBRUARY  
2024

8

### MILESTONE NO. 8

Baby friendly and infant feeding training is embedded across the Infant Feeding network

### MILESTONE NO. 9

Support for local businesses is in place to establish breastfeeding friendly environments and support for feeding mums returning to work

9

MARCH  
2024

APRIL  
2024

10

### MILESTONE NO. 10

The infant feeding programme of delivery is fully embedded in the community, with evidence of the impact from interventions measured and recorded supporting investment post 2025

## 10. Support for Businesses

We will work with local businesses to develop **breastfeeding friendly environments**, so mums and families feel supported and comfortable to feed in public. We will offer guidance to businesses on supporting mums to return to work whilst continuing to breastfeed their babies.

## 11. Measuring Impact

We will work hard to **evidence the impact the Infant Feeding initiatives** have on mums, babies, and their families to ensure there is a long-lasting programme of delivery beyond the end of the Family Hubs Torbay initiative. Some of this will include satisfaction surveys, UNICEF BFI audits and engaging in Peer Support research studies.

## How we Will Know we are Making a Difference?

By the end of the two-year programme, breastfeeding rates in Torbay will increase across all stages, including the length of time babies are exclusively breastfeeding and there will be a reduction in geographical disparities. Families will report feeling supported with their infant feeding choices.

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Through fulfilling our infant feeding vision, we can expect to see improved health and inequality outcomes for our population in the longer term, including childhood obesity, maternal and infant mental health and reducing the disease burden for women and children.

