

LEEDS COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE HEALTH VISITING SERVICE

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY: MAINTAINING AND PROGRESSING THE STANDARDS



The Baby Friendly Achieving Sustainability standards (the Gold Award) are designed

to help services to embed Baby Friendly care in their workplace for the long term.

The new standards aim to embed sustainable leadership, a positive culture, ongoing monitoring and continued progression across services. These standards provide a solid foundation on which services can sustain and progress the Baby Friendly standards into the future, helping them continue to promote, protect and support breastfeeding and to support all mothers to build a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Services that are already accredited as Baby Friendly can now be assessed against the new Achieving Sustainability standards, becoming re-accredited as 'Baby Friendly with Sustainability' and receiving a Gold Award if successful.

Working towards the Gold Award acts as an incentive for services to properly embed the Achieving Sustainability standards and so consolidate and protect all the hard work that has gone into achieving Baby Friendly accreditation. The Award is a recognition that the service is not only implementing the Baby Friendly Initiative standards, but that they also have the leadership, culture and systems to maintain this over the long term.

THE ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP

Develop a leadership team that promotes the Baby Friendly standards

CULTURE

Foster an organisational culture that protects the Baby Friendly standards

MONITORING

Construct robust monitoring processes to support the Baby Friendly standards

PROGRESSION

Continue to develop the service in order to sustain the Baby Friendly standards

IMPLEMENTING THE ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

Leeds Community Healthcare (LCH) Health Visiting service received the Gold Award in 2018. We spoke to Sally Goodwin-Mills, Advanced Health Improvement Specialist for Infant Feeding and Maternity at Leeds City Council, about the service's journey to successful accreditation, including what they have learned and the difference the standards have made to the experiences of babies, their mothers and families.

LEADERSHIP

"By helping us focus on leadership, the Achieving Sustainability standards enabled

us to get a commitment to Baby Friendly where we hadn't before – not just from the health visiting service but also across the children's centre and maternity services, and the local council. It's been really valuable to have an engaged leadership team to give strategic support to implementing the Baby Friendly standards. We've got two Guardians; a Councillor from Leeds City Council and the Executive Director of Nursing for LCH. The Baby Friendly manager training really got people on board and helped them understand the value of the standards. Demonstrating that this is a public health issue helped to

get much wider support, and the council are now really pushing for breastfeeding to be supported across the community.

BACKGROUND TO LCH

- **Births per year:** 10,000 (approx.)
- **Facilities:** Health Centres (28); Children's Centers (52); Well Baby Clinics (20+); Breastfeeding support groups (9); Peer support groups (6); Specialist community BF clinic (1)
- **Local demographics:** Leeds is the sixth largest city in the UK, serving a culturally diverse population with large rural areas as well as densely populated inner city areas, where most of the more deprived areas are located. There are a number of transient communities within Leeds including a large student population. The health and wellbeing of children in Leeds is mixed compared with the England average. Infant and child mortality rates are similar to the England average.
- **Baby Friendly accreditation:** Stage 1 2009, Stage 2 2011, Full accreditation 2014, Re-accreditation 2017, Gold 2018.

CULTURE

"The standards have helped the health visiting service to really prioritise having a culture of kindness – both for families and for staff. It's led to a real emphasis being placed on making sure that staff can feedback on the service and feel heard – it's not just a one-way thing, our practitioners need to feel cared for so they can better care for our families. We now recognise that embedding a culture of kindness is crucial to our way of working.

"Families tell us that they're able to have useful and sensitive conversations around their feelings about feeding, and they feel informed about feeding and where to get support, without feeling pressured. Staff feel that these conversations really empower them to enable mums to have skin-to-skin contact and, in many cases, have a first breastfeed.

"The Leeds Community Healthcare November 2017 Health Watch report aimed to bring

families' voices more clearly into our work and the feedback is helping to shape the service. For example, we're working to give families clearer introductions to the different health professionals who are supporting them, based on feedback that the roles and responsibilities of staff in the service weren't always clear. We're also looking at raising awareness of how families can raise concerns or give comments about the service.

"The mother felt she had received conflicting advice ... however after discussion and observation the positioning was correct and baby was feeding effectively, instantly the mother felt relaxed and I discussed the importance of her feeling confident in her own capabilities. The mother was in need of time and space to discuss her thoughts and process these with support. The focus of the visit shifted to be surrounding maternal mood, and giving the mother reassurance her thoughts and feelings were expected and within "normal" limits."

~ Health Visitor reflection

MONITORING

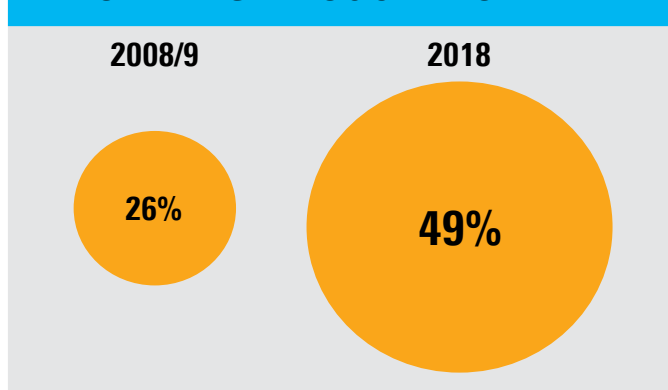
"We have an Early Start dashboard where we include data on breastfeeding initiation, 10-14 days and 6-8 weeks from localities. The leadership team monitors trends in these rates and looks to deal with any issues – having that support helps us to keep going, and it's useful to have people both from the health service and from the council being aware of the challenges.



PROGRESSION

"Our Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-21) feeds into the strategic health and wellbeing plan for the city. Breastfeeding is recognised in all relevant policies, from oral health to child healthy weight. We're also doing some intergenerational work to support breastfeeding – speaking to older adults about their influence on their own children and grandchildren, and working in schools to raise awareness about breastfeeding. We also include infant feeding information in our perinatal parenting programmes – making sure that parents are all getting the same messages. It's not just about us getting the Gold Award, it's about looking beyond that and making sure that at every point of a parent's journey through the local authority

BREASTFEEDING RATES 6-8 WEEKS



and health services they're getting consistent information and support. The standards have helped us appreciate the importance of working across the spectrum and collaborating with many partners."

TOP TIPS FROM LEEDS COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

- "It's taken us a long time to get here, but it means that Baby Friendly care is really embedded now – it's supposed to take a long time to get it right, so don't rush, just focus on making sustainable improvements. Accept that it's a slow process – you're changing a whole culture after all – you won't see all the changes immediately but think about the next generation.
- "Start with your basic fundamentals – a policy for implementing the standards, staff education, and Guardians who can support the strategy. You don't need to be going for Gold to get a Guardian – having a supportive leadership team will help get the rest of the services on board.
- "Local NIFN groups have been really useful to bounce ideas off – use them!"



"Implementing BFI standards has required huge change in practice over the years which has only been achieved with the effort of so many working together. It has been a truly inspirational journey working with such dedicated practitioners to develop their knowledge and skills to enable women and families to make informed decisions about feeding their babies, and then being able to support them in their decision. We are thrilled to be celebrating the success of achieving the Gold Award, it makes all the hard work worthwhile when such a difference is made."
~Sally Goodwin-Mills

"Attending the event made me feel really proud and glad of my choice in coming to work at LCH. It is an indication that the organisation cares about staff and families and the feeling of partnership and positivity in the room felt really good."
~ New Health Visitor attending Baby Friendly Gold celebration event

FIND OUT MORE: [UNICEF.UK/SUSTAINABILITY](https://www.unicef.org/uk/sustainability)