



# EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
<b>DATE:</b>	Friday, 19 April 2024

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Departments

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (All Wards);

**SUBJECT:** The expansion of Blackburn with Darwen's infant feeding support service on the wards and birthing unit.

## - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is proposing to provide a grant of £183k of the Family Hub funding received from the Department for Education to East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) to expand the current infant feeding peer support service from 54 hours over 5 days they currently provide to 75 hours over seven days.

To deliver this additional provision, ELHT will recruit:

- **3 x Band 3 Infant Feeding Support Workers – to increase the service provision to 75 hours per week (12 hours over a weekend and 63 hours during the week) and to start providing phone call support at the 10 days mark (data tells us this is the key point when women stop breast feeding)**
- **1 x Band 6 – Increase Infant Feeding Specialist's hours (backdated from 1<sup>st</sup> October & 2024/25 costings)**

FIXED TERM UNTIL MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup> 2026

Band 3 NHS staff including clinical support workers, therapy assistants, pharmacy assistants, administrative workers, and clerical staff.

Band 6 staff including junior sisters, charge nurses, midwives, paramedics, newly qualified pharmacists, and biomedical scientists.

Language and cultural barriers will be overcome by ensuring they recruit locally and ELHT will access a translation service if required.

We will ensure that the service continues to be promoted through BwD Start for Life web site, ELHT web site and with all our local community partners including VCSF.

Blackburn with Darwen Start for Life web site also has software (ReachDeck) built into the website. This reads our website pages, it can highlight and read text aloud as well as translate into other languages

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member: agree to provide a grant of £183k (under a grant agreement) to ELHT to support Blackburn with Darwen's expansion of the current infant feeding peer support service on the maternity wards and Blackburn with Darwen birthing unit.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Breast milk is the most nutritious source of food for infants and has numerous health benefits for both mother and baby, including improved child health and cognitive development, maternal health, and mother-infant bonding. Not breastfeeding is associated with a higher prevalence of childhood obesity and medical conditions such as gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases, allergies, otitis media, and dental disease. It is also associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer in the mother, and a successful breastfeeding experience can protect against mental health issues such as postnatal depression.

Blackburn with Darwen 0-19 Service, Lancashire South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Family Hub /Children Centre Network have been highly commended by UNICEF for the quality of the evidence submitted and the thorough way in which the necessary processes to embed and further develop care related to the Baby Friendly standards has been planned and implemented.

UNICEF reported a true partnership approach is in place with staff at all levels working closely together to progress Baby Friendly care. There is a real sense of pride in our achievements and a deep understanding of the importance of the work and the goals to be achieved.

The 0-19 Health visiting team are merging with ELHT (our Gold maternity service) in April 2024. This affords several opportunities including greater robustness of data, enhanced engagement with families, initiation of a vulnerable parent's team and the opportunity to work with the children's hospital.

Blackburn with Darwen has striven to become a Breastfeeding Friendly Borough, with signage declaring this across the area. Feedback from mothers has demonstrated that this has made them feel more confident to breastfeed. Other initiatives to encourage more breastfeeding include a major local event to celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness week, Breastfeeding Friendly places which are numerous and well promoted, community parents and peer supporters from with all communities.

Other innovations include:

- Expansion of the peer support service to seven days
- Expansion of the sling library
- Increased availability of breast pump loan and more breastfeeding support group availability
- Colostrum for every baby
- Antenatal one stop shop
- Social care prebirth team training
- The ANYA app

Blackburn with Darwen have good breastfeeding initiation rates, currently 72%, however we see a drop at 6-8 weeks to 53%.

ELHT has been providing infant feeding services for 20 years. They have successfully implemented BFI standards across BwD and hospital services, which support delivery of key Public Health objectives.

Band 3 Baby Friendly support workers offer ward support to families on the postnatal ward, to help establish breast feeding (using breast pumps, if necessary,) advising around breastfeeding in the neonatal wards and signposting to local help for when families are back at home.

This support currently provided by 2 members of staff operates for 54 hours a week: Monday – Friday 8 – 3pm. By increasing the hours to 75 once the additional workers are recruited, the service could extend in the evening (to around 8pm) and include weekends, reducing the likelihood of parents missing this valuable support. This additional support will also include an element of community support and could include home visits to those experiencing feeding difficulties.

We will also expect the worker will contact breast feeding mothers at the 10-day mark. Our data tells us this is the key point when women stop breast feeding. This could be due to challenges such as latching difficulties, insufficient milk or discomfort, postpartum depression. Additionally, a lack of support can contribute to early cessation of breastfeeding. Providing additional support by contact between mothers and workers at this point should enable more mothers to continue breast feeding for longer.

Our goal is to increase our continuation rates as well as grow our initiation rates.

### **3. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

Investing in the expansion of our current offer demonstrates that Blackburn with Darwen is continually pursuing excellence.

What this will mean for our families:

- all parents and carers will have the information, practical advice and support they need (including out of hours) to support breastfeeding initiation and continuation, expressing breastmilk, and/or formula feeding where that is more appropriate.
- those least likely to access services are engaged as early as possible to help them understand the benefits of breastfeeding and how to access the support available to them, helping to reduce inequalities.
- the workforce demonstrates an awareness of the needs of families with protected characteristics, such as disability, race, sex and sexual orientation, and is able to adjust their infant feeding support accordingly.
- breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates are improved.
- babies are breastfed for as long as possible, where appropriate and where parents can do so – ideally exclusively up to 6 months, in line with WHO recommendations.
- improved outcomes for mothers and babies, including child health and cognitive development, maternal health, and mother-infant bonding.

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

. The Infant feeding strand of the Family Hub grant received by the Council will fund this additional provision. The Family Hub grant ceases in March 2025, however the Department for Education have confirmed that they are happy for Blackburn with Darwen to grant the funds to ELHT for the two years as long as the funding is spent (sent to ELHT) by March 2025. The DfE understand there may be some case-by-case instances where delivery needs to continue post March 2025 due to delays etc

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

. Making this grant to ELHT is not considered to be a breach of Dept for Education requirements in relation to the Family Hub Grant monies because DfE has consented to the Council taking this action. There will be a grant agreement between Blackburn with Darwen and ELHT in respect of these funds.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Family Hub Grant will support any resource activity.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

**Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.**

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Not applicable

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

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<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Maria Nugent</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	04/04/2024
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	