

East Ayrshire CHP Committee

22nd March 2010

Subject:	Critical Issue Review - Breastfeeding
Purpose:	To receive a report from the NHS Infant Feeding Programme Board on intensive approaches being taken to increase breastfeeding rates in Ayrshire & Arran.
Recommendation:	The CHP committee is asked to note these intensive approaches and to encourage Community Planning partners to work collaboratively with the Programme Board in their efforts to address this critical public health issue.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Promoting, encouraging and supporting breastfeeding is widely acknowledged as an important public health activity, and has been recognised by the Scottish Government as a priority for Scotland's health.
- 1.2 It is widely acknowledged that there are many factors which influence the decision to breastfeed and these include:
 - Lifestyle, including social and working lives
 - Ethnicity
 - Cultural norms
 - Mothers' perception of public acceptability
 - Care around the time of birth, first few days and postnatal care
 - A common expectation of difficulties with breastfeeding and possible failure
 - A widespread formula feeding culture
 - The influence of partners, relatives and friends
 - The anticipation of return to paid employment.

1.3 The Scottish Government has set a national HEAT target for increasing the number of babies who are exclusively breastfed at 6 weeks from 26.6% in 2006/7 to 33.3% in 2010/11. In light of the very poor rates for breastfeeding in Ayrshire & Arran a reduced trajectory for breastfeeding was negotiated with the Scottish Government within the 2009/10 Local Delivery Plan. Latest figures show that for the last 6 months we have been meeting this trajectory. The trajectory for June 2009 was 18.6%, and actual performance was 19.1%

Although we are meeting the revised trajectory, rates remain very low. This is the case across Scotland where there is a bottle feeding culture; however Ayrshire & Arran continues to have one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Scotland.

2. CURRENT POSITION

2.1 In May 2009 the Infant Feeding Strategy (2008-2013) was ratified by the Board for implementation.

The strategy and associated action plan focuses work in Ayrshire & Arran on 6 key aims:

- To have more teenage mothers and women from less affluent backgrounds consider breastfeeding as an option for themselves and their babies.
- To promote social and attitudinal change across all age ranges and men as well as women, so that breastfeeding becomes accepted as the normal feeding choice.
- To adopt Breastfeeding Best Practice Standards for Professionals.
- To promote and support delayed introduction of complementary foods and drinks until six months and to promote and support healthy weaning.
- To monitor and disseminate breastfeeding rates and changes.
- To provide appropriate support, resources and information for mothers who are not breastfeeding to enable them to safely artificially feed their babies.

The strategy encompasses a multiagency and multifactorial approach that aims to promote social and attitudinal change, so that breastfeeding will become the normal feeding choice for women. An Infant Feeding Programme Board, led by Public

Health, and with representatives from directorates within the NHS, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector meets regularly and is responsible for the implementation and performance management of this strategy.

2.2 In November 2009 due to the continuing low rates the Director of Public Health, Dr Carol Davidson in conjunction with the Executive Nurse Director, Mrs Fiona McQueen, instigated a Critical Issue Review in relation to breastfeeding.

This followed the same methodology used to investigate a critical incident that may occur within the clinical setting, that is, an investigation takes place over a 42-day period and key recommendations are made and implemented to improve practice.

Three meetings took place in November and December and a resultant action plan has now been produced – appendix 1.

The action plan has been remitted to the Infant Feeding Programme Board to implement in parallel to the Infant Feeding Strategy. The action plan from the Critical Issue Review captures operational level issues that require to be addressed in relation to:

- population approach
- work within hospitals
- work within the community
- work that is commissioned from the voluntary sector.

3. PROPOSALS

Partner agencies have an important role to play in addressing ingrained cultural attitudes, and in championing breastfeeding at many different levels.

Liz Smith, Infant Feeding Co-ordinator in the community, is due to speak at the children's Officer Locality Group in East Ayrshire soon and will be discussing work we could do together to promote, support and protect breastfeeding such as

- increasing the knowledge and skills of all early years staff around breastfeeding
- highlighting the opportunity for all Community Planning partners to sign up to NHS Ayrshire & Arran Breastfeeding Happily Here Scheme

- ensuring all Community Planning staff have breastfeeding return to work policies in place
- lesson plans and resources on breastfeeding are contained within the curriculum in schools
- pursue accreditation for Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery status.

4. RESOURCES

In 2008, CEL 36 funding for maternal and infant nutrition was made available to Health Boards until end of March 2011. A prioritisation exercise was undertaken and projects were prioritised for funding, and a number of these projects are related to breastfeeding. Considerable effort is being made to train staff so that capacity and skills are increased within the system over the next year while funding is available.

5. CONCLUSION

The CHP committee is asked to note the intensive approaches being taken to increase breastfeeding rates in Ayrshire and Arran and to consider ways in which the CHP and Community Planning partners can work collaboratively with the Programme Board in their efforts to address this critical public health issue.

Dr Carol Davidson
Director of Public Health
(Elaine Young)