

## Grampian Infant Feeding Support Service Improvement Survey 2024

### Executive summary

In September 2024, the Grampian Maternal and Infant Nutrition Group (GMIN) used a Grampian-wide survey to identify where infant feeding information, support, and services are working well and where improvements can be made. This survey was a repeat of the 2021 survey alongside the addition of new questions around infant feeding intentions and health behaviours including, oral health, Screening, and smoking.

Alongside other work, the main recommendations from the survey will be included in the Grampian Maternal and Infant Nutrition Action Plan 2025-2030, to allow all children in Grampian to have the best start in life. The GMIN Action Plan will include outcomes and targets from the following national frameworks and local strategies:

- The outcomes from the Scottish Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework\* (Supporting pre-pregnancy health, infant feeding, Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative, and preventing childhood obesity).
- Scottish Government breastfeeding initiation and drop off targets\*.
- Grampian Public Health, Health Improvement Strategy 2025-2030.
- Grampian Child Health Strategy 2024.
- Grampian Child Healthy Weight Review.

\*Await publication of renewed Framework and breastfeeding targets for 2025-2030.

### **Respondent Information**

In total there were 222 respondents to the survey. 8 of which were not eligible to complete the survey.

14 of the respondents (6.3%) were currently pregnant and would have been asked the Peer Support Service and antenatal questions.

16 respondents (7.2%) were currently under the care of their midwife in the postnatal period. They would have been asked the Peer Support Service, antenatal and postnatal midwifery questions.

182 respondents (81%) were under the care of their health visitor or family nurse and would have been asked all the questions in the survey.

2 respondents (1%) moved to Grampian after the baby was born and would have been asked all the questions.

**Age:** The respondent ages ranged from 20 to 44 years, with an average age of 32.

**Ethnicity:** Of the 220 people who completed this question, 205 British/ Scottish/ English/ Welsh/ Northern Irish. 15 respondents identified as Eastern European,

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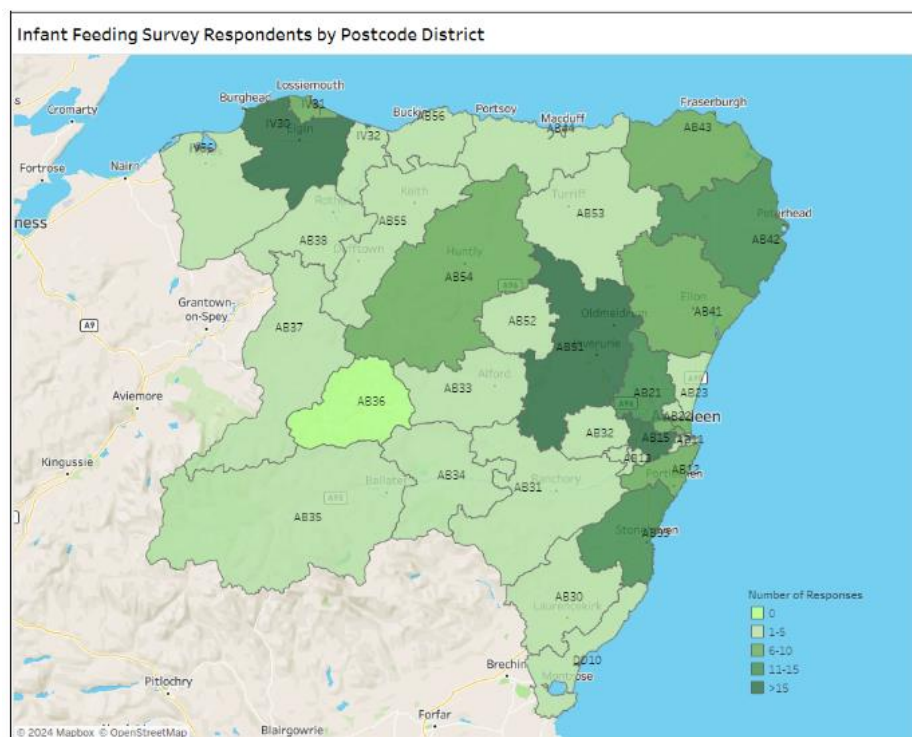
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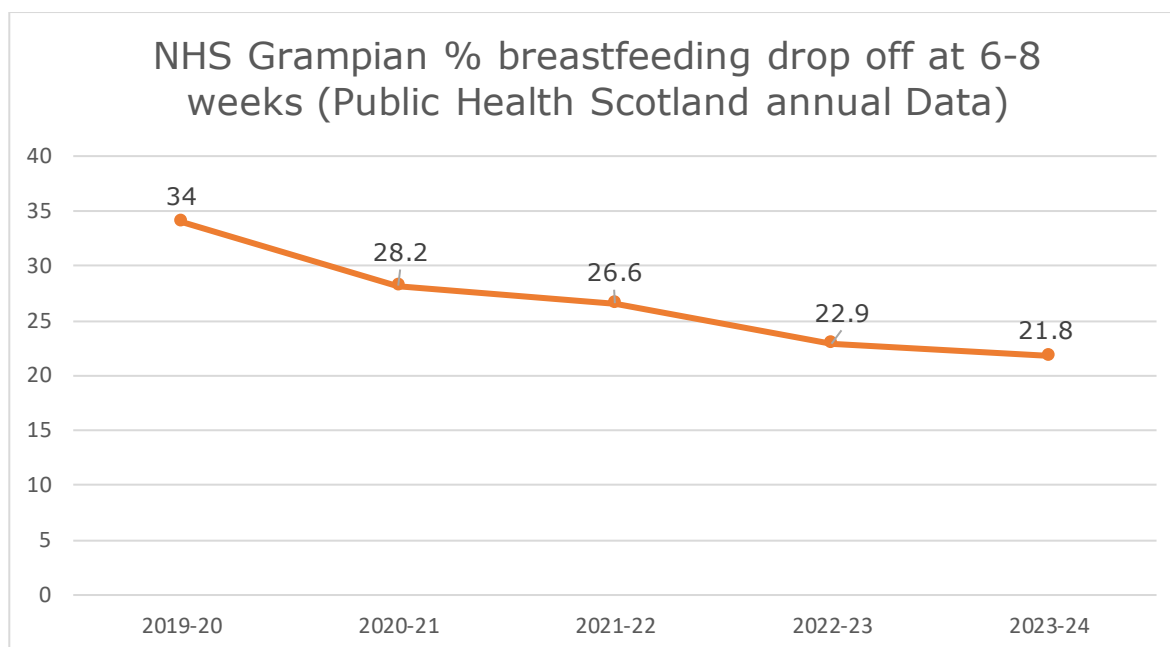
Responses to the Infant Feeding Survey 2024 came from all but 1 postcode area in Grampian, with most responses from those areas with higher population density.



In November each year, Public Health Scotland publish Scotland's Infant Feeding Statistics.

This annual release from Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides an update of infant feeding statistics including data for children eligible for child health reviews. The table below includes the most recent financial year 2023/24. Supporting breastfeeding is an important public health activity, with strong evidence that breastfeeding protects the health of children and mothers. The information is collected at Health Visitor reviews of children at 10-14 days (First Visit), 6-8 weeks, and 13-15 months.

Grampian continues to exceed the current Scottish Government breastfeeding target (Set in 2019) to reduce drop off at 6-8 weeks by 10% by 2025 (see below). There have been year-on-year improvements with respect to this target since 2018/19. The current drop-off of overall breastfeeding across Grampian is 21.8%.



This is an overall measure for Grampian. We recognise that this is not equitable across age groups, SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) areas, and ethnicity.

Across Grampian, younger age groups as well as white Scottish women have a higher drop off rate. In SIMD areas 1 and 2, there is a higher drop off than in 3, 4 and 5. A priority neighbourhood project is being tested within Aberdeen City, where drop off rates are much higher than in other areas of Grampian.

The aim is to deliver an enhanced support pathway to increase breastfeeding initiation, reduce breastfeeding drop-off, ensure safe and responsive formula feeding, improve self-efficacy to meet infant feeding goals, contribute to child healthy weight and give every infant the best start in life.

This project was shaped by local families and officially began in autumn 2024.

### Service Improvement Recommendations

While theming the data, there were clear improvements required to support our families from across all services. The GMIN group agreed that there were three clear Grampian wide recommendations that all services should work together to embed.

- **Grampian should continue to develop strong leadership to embed good practice across all services included within the survey.**

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- **All staff are kept up to date with infant feeding training, updates, and practical skills review.**
- **All services within the Infant Feeding Survey review and adopt supportive and person-centre language, being mindful of families situation and experiences.**

### **Breastfeeding Peer Support Service**

- Improve the promotion of the Peer Support Service. Ensure it is spoken about during pregnancy by all services in contact with pregnant women/birthing people.
- Make better use of Third Sector social media platforms and webpages to promote the BF PS service.
- Use targeted Recruitment to BF PS Service to address geographical gaps across Grampian.
- Expand the BF Peer support service within the postnatal wards.
- Encourage attendance at BF Peer support groups during pregnancy.
- Test an online support group via the Near Me Platform.

### **Antenatal support (Midwifery)**

- Recommence Monthly online infant feeding information sessions for all pregnant women/birthing people between 21-28 weeks' gestation to encourage them and their partners explore feeding choices and support available.
- Antenatal classes to be made available to all families across Grampian from Community Midwifery.
- Develop antenatal videos that explore all parts of infant feeding, to reinforce learning from antenatal sessions.
- Ensure pregnant women/birthing people have access to resources to assist with infant feeding (both hard copies and via the Women's Portal).
- Promote the use of the Women's Portal and other evidence-based NHS Grampian websites.

### **Post-natal support (Midwifery)**

- Review staff training to ensure consistent information is given to parents to avoid confusion.
- Use 'Talk Back' to check parents understanding of the information that has been delivered.
- Full feeding assessments carried out before discharge from Midwifery Services.
- Build staff confidence in supporting families with milk transfer, position and attachment, feeding frequency through UNICEF BFI Breastfeeding and Relationship Building training and Practical Skills Assessments.

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- Improve partnership working between ward staff, parents and the Infant Feeding Specialists, when baby weight loss occurs.

### **Postnatal Support (Health Visiting Service)**

- Review staff training to ensure consistent information is given to parents to avoid confusion.
- Ensure all staff communicate clear and consistent messages to families.
- Provide equitable access to weaning information, support, and resources.
- Promote the NHS Grampian weaning website and videos to reinforce learning and support for families.

### **Specialist Infant Feeding Support (Infant Feeding Specialists- IBCLC)**

- Continue to deliver UNICEF BFI Breastfeeding and Relationship Building training and carry out Practical Skills Review with all relevant staff to allow them to support families.
- Ensure all midwives, health visitors and family nurses know how to assess and refer families for specialist support.
- Promote the specialist Infant Feeding Teams, their credentials, and their role to support staff (via peer learning) and families across Grampian.

### **'Birth in Grampian' website**

- Promote the website to all relevant health care staff, public health colleagues, Third Sector and via social media.
- Complete regular reviews of content to ensure up to date, evidence-based information is available.

### **Tongue Tie Service**

- Proactive information provided to families about tongue tie and its treatment in NHS Grampian.
- Ensure that families know what to expect around tongue tie assessment and treatment.

### **Dental and Oral Health Team**

- Aim to increase awareness of at what age you can register your child with a dentist.
- Promote the Grampian Dental website as a means of accessing information on which dentists are currently accepting NHS patients.

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## Recommendations for Cervical Screening Service

- Improve training for primary care staff (GP receptionists, midwives, health visitors) to better understand the nuances of cervical screening when pregnant and post-birth.
- NHS Grampian Screening team to work alongside maternity services, gynaecology services and national teams to assess whether changes to invites for cervical screening when pregnant could be made.
- Improve facilities to support mothers who have childcare responsibilities and/or are in employment to attend cervical screening.

## Recommendations for Pregnancy Screening

- Primary care should be informed of the positive feedback received about the explanations given on pregnancy screening during 12-week scan and reminded about the importance of these conversations.
- Explore opportunities for re-screening should baby be in position where screening is not possible.
- Increase community awareness about the process, risks and benefits of pregnancy screening, as well as the time frame in which it is possible.

## Recommendations for smoking Cessation and Healthpoint Services

- The Healthpoint and Smoking Cessation animations require continued promotion through the NHSG and partner social media channels
- The smoking cessation pages on the Birth in Grampian website are to be reviewed and updated.
- The new smoking cessation pathway for pregnant women who smoke will allow the service to engage with more women and offer wellbeing support alongside smoking cessation advice.

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### Special Thanks:

Thank you, to the pregnant women/expectant parents and families across Grampian who took the time to complete the Infant Feeding Support Survey. Your experiences will be used within practical training as scenarios to improve staff knowledge and will continue to help all services to shape and improve support across Grampian.

Thank you, to Fiona Murray, Ross Lavin, and James Norman for your tireless support to bring both the quantitative and the qualitative data to life and give our families a voice.

### Staff involved with implementing and overseeing the Grampian Maternal and Infant Nutrition (GMIN) and UNICEF BFI Action Plans.

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#### Aberdeen City HSCP

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Moray HSCP  
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### **Maternity Services Infant Feeding Team**

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Yasmin Roberts- Infant Feeding Team lead- Aberdeen Maternity Hospital (AMH)  
Gillian Swinscoe- Quality Improvement Infant Feeding Advisor (AMH)  
Amanda Ross- Infant Feeding Midwife-Moray  
Karen Morrison- Quality Improvement Infant Feeding Advisor (AMH)  
Ann Low- Infant Feeding Midwife (AMH)  
Leah Will- Health Care Support Worker- Infant Feeding Improvement Project  
Tyler Hepburn- Health Care Support Worker- Infant Feeding Improvement Project

### **Neonatal**

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### **Family Nurse Partnership**

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