



## **IHPE Position Statement: Breastfeeding**

### **Key Information**

- Breastfeeding is related to a number of important health outcomes both for the infant and the mother.
- Within the UK and many other countries there are barriers to breastfeeding.
- The prevalence of breastfeeding is low among disadvantaged socio-economic groups and young mothers.
- Breastfeeding rates in the UK decrease significantly over the first weeks following birth.

### **Statement**

1. The Institute of Health Promotion and Education strongly supports breastfeeding.
2. Advice and support should be provided to families in the antenatal and postnatal periods to encourage breastfeeding.
3. Environments including workplaces should be made conducive to breastfeeding. Barriers to breastfeeding in public places should be minimised.
4. Breastfeeding should be an important element of a national long term public health strategy. The strategy should encourage policies and legislation that support breastfeeding and include appropriate training for health professionals.
5. The Institute of Health Promotion and Education advocates that a statutory and comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) programme should be introduced in all schools. Breastfeeding should be included as one important element of this.

## Resources

### **Benefits of breastfeeding (NHS site):**

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/benefits-breastfeeding.aspx>

Boseley S. **UK attitudes to breastfeeding must change, say experts.** Guardian, 1st August 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/aug/01/uk-attitudes-to-breastfeeding-must-change-say-experts>

### **Breastfeeding (WHO site):**

<http://www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/>

Cleminson J, Oddie S, Renfrew MJ, et al. **Being baby friendly: evidence-based breastfeeding support.** Archives of Disease in Childhood - Fetal and Neonatal Edition 2015;100:F173-F178.

<http://fn.bmj.com/content/100/2/F173.info>

Public Health England. **Guidance - Infant feeding: commissioning services (Toolkit for local authorities, infographics and monitoring resource).** Published: 1 July 2016. London, Public Health England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infant-feeding-commissioning-services>

Public Health England. **Press release - New survey of mums reveals perceived barriers to breastfeeding.** Published: 27 March 2017. London, Public Health England.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-survey-of-mums-reveals-perceived-barriers-to-breastfeeding>

### **Start4Life Breastfeeding (NHS site):**

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/breastfeeding-feeding-well>

Victoria CG, Bahl R, Barros AJD, et al, for The Lancet Breastfeeding Series Group. **Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect.** Lancet 2016; 387: 475–90.

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)01024-7/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)01024-7/abstract)

Lead Author: Dr Michael C. Watson  
Institute of Health Promotion and Education

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2017**