

WAKEFIELD'S BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY

Breastfeeding can save lives, protecting the health of babies and mothers immediately and over time. A third (34%) of infants at their 6-8 week check are totally or partially breastfed, compared to the national average of 49% (JSNA, 2022).

Wakefield aims to increase the number of women who choose to breastfeed by fostering an environment that supports, accepts, and advocates for breastfeeding as a cultural choice, ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life.



Public Health commission Wakefield Families and Babies (FAB) to deliver the breastfeeding promotion and community peer-support service, which supports new families with breastfeeding across the district. Working in collaboration with Midwifery and the 0-19 Service.

Between July and September 2024, data has shown that breastfeeding rates at 6 weeks are at 66%, the highest rate ever recorded in Wakefield of those women within the FAB service; the additional ward support, as well as other services provided, have contributed to this increase.

Services provided by FAB include:

- Antenatal Care
- Breastfeeding peer-support groups
- On-ward maternity support
- 24 hour helpline
- Breast pump loan service
- Home visits



Benefits to BABY

- Breastfed children have a boosted immune system.
- They are at a lower risk of developing asthma and/or allergies, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.
- There is a lower risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Benefits of Breastfeeding:

- Reduces risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.
- Breastfeeding can burn up to 500 calories per day, which can aid in weight loss.

Benefits to MOTHER

FAB also supports local businesses to encourage breastfeeding-friendly venues.

Currently in Wakefield, there are 208 businesses signed up to the scheme.

Breastfeeding Friendly Venues



Promoting Breastfeeding

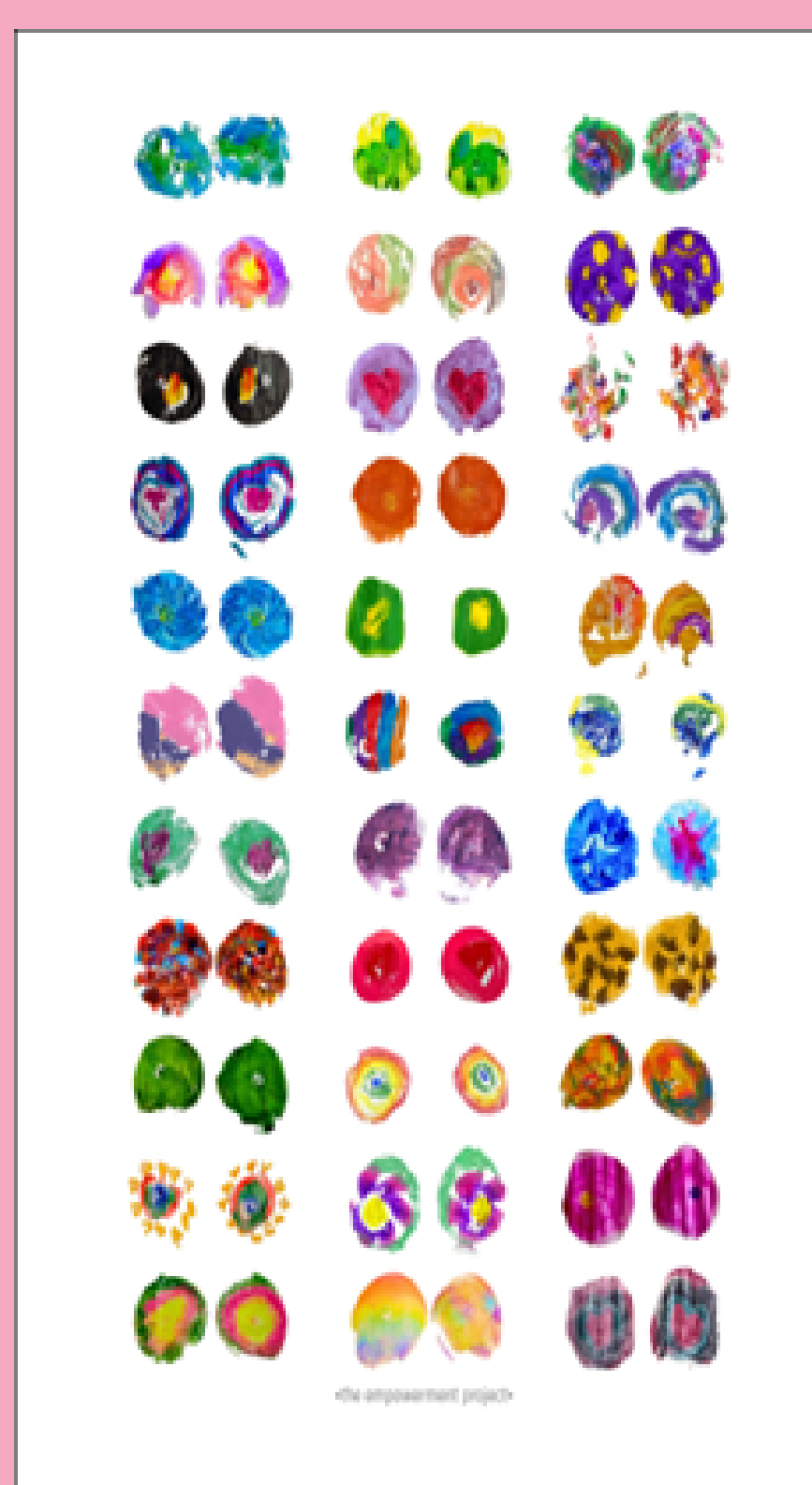
A photoshoot in Wakefield featured breastfeeding mothers and their babies to raise awareness and encourage breastfeeding throughout the district. The resulting images are now being showcased at local events and in breastfeeding-friendly venues across the area.



OUR SUCCESSES IN 2024 INCLUDE...

The Empowerment Project

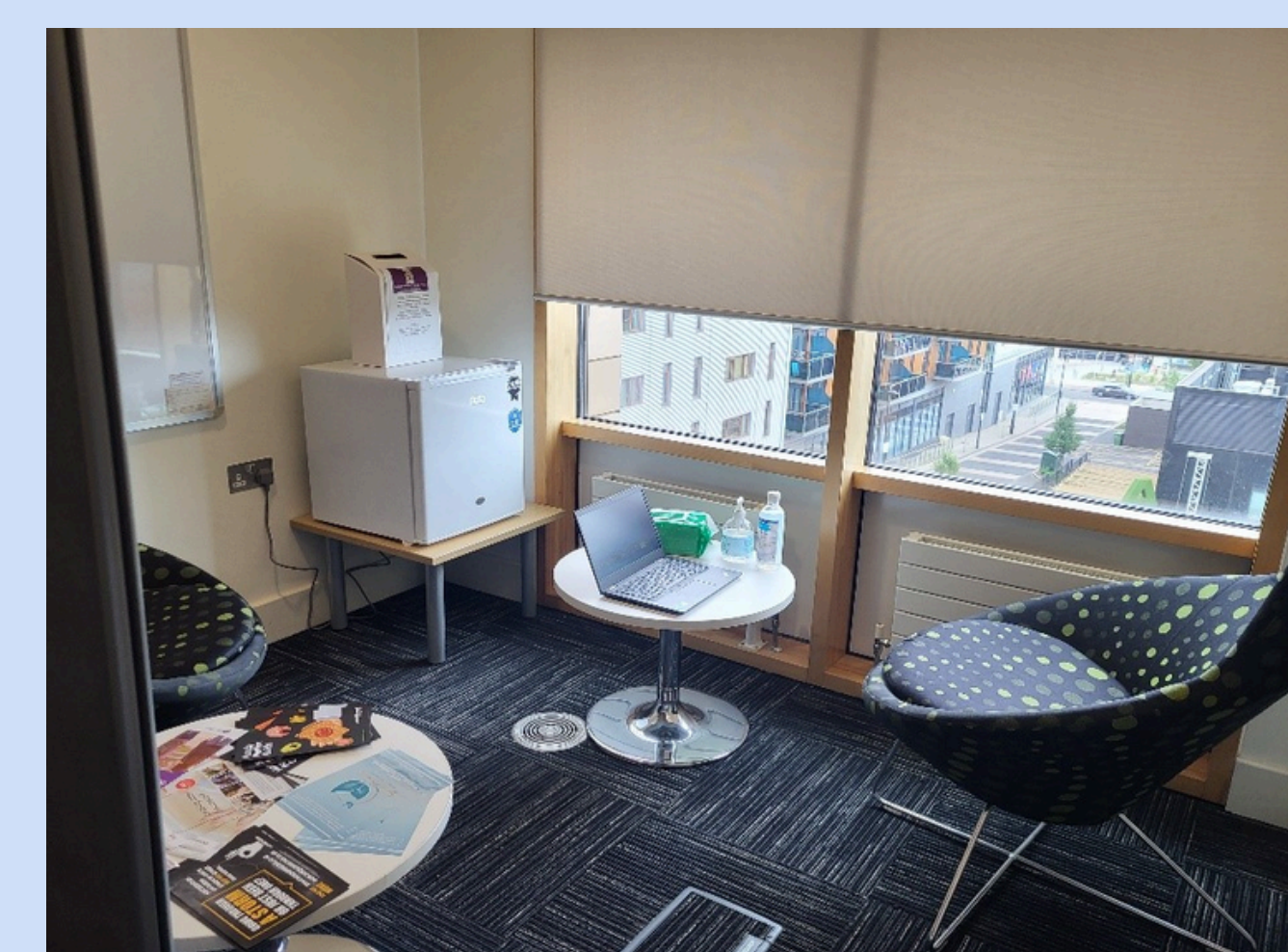
Wakefield Council aimed to empower breastfeeding women across the district through an art project with Wakefield FAB and local artist, Danielle Blyth. Women from across the district were encouraged to paint their breasts using different artist techniques, which have been collated to create a poster as a piece of art. This was initially displayed in the local area to celebrate breastfeeding friendly week in August 2024. The artwork was also shared on BBC News, and continues to be displayed across the district as an ongoing promotional resource.



Wakefield Council's commitment to women returning to work

Wakefield Council has introduced a dedicated "Expressing Room" at Wakefield One, designed to support new mothers in expressing and storing breastmilk while at work. To facilitate this, we've developed information packs for both employees and employers, recognising that breastfeeding can be a sensitive topic for discussions with managers.

At Wakefield Council, we currently have 72 expectant mothers throughout the district employed in various services. These employees can take comfort during their maternity leave, knowing they have the option to return to work while breastfeeding, allowing them to support their child's best start in life.



For more information, please contact Janet Wilson at janetwilson@wakefield.gov.uk

Public Health organised a UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) interactive, face to face awareness session aimed at senior strategic leaders; this was an opportunity for leaders to understand the Wakefield Breastfeeding context, including:

- Breastfeeding Friendly Wakefield (BFW) ambition, reflective of Family Hub deliverables and Start for Life funded plans.
- Value of the BFI Standards in improving the health and wellbeing of babies, their mothers and families
- Roles and responsibilities of management teams and the guardian/champion roles.
- Accreditation process and commitment required from Family Hub Practitioners, Families and Babies (FAB) and Growing Healthy Wakefield 0-19 Service.
- Value of creating a supportive and positive culture across services with a commitment to rolling out the Councils Breastfeeding Policy and support for our Family Hubs becoming accredited.

