

Breastfeeding

Introduction

Breastfeeding has been shown to have a myriad of health benefits for both child and mother. The child will see a reduced risk in everything from childhood leukaemia to sudden infant death syndrome, and even cardiovascular disease in adult life, and the mother will reduce her risk of condition including osteoporosis and breast cancer. With this in mind, Hartlepool's breastfeeding at initiation figures are particularly concerning.

Main Issues

The 2020/21 Hartlepool's rate of a baby's first feed being breastmilk was the highest in the north east and the 3rd highest in England. Hartlepool's rate of 97.1% of babies being given breastmilk as their first feed is the first figure for this under a new methodology.

Baby's first feed breastmilk

Proportion - %

Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	-	269,625	71.7	71.6	71.8
North East region	-	11,055	63.9	63.2	64.6
Hartlepool	-	850	97.1	95.8	98.1
Stockton-on-Tees	-	1,660	92.5	91.1	93.5
Darlington	-	40	80.0	68.1	89.2
Northumberland	-	1,380	66.0	63.9	67.9
County Durham	-	755	65.7	62.9	68.4
Newcastle upon Tyne	-	1,265	63.7	61.4	65.7
North Tyneside	-	980	62.8	60.3	65.1
Gateshead	-	945	60.4	57.9	62.8
Middlesbrough	-	830	54.1	51.7	56.6
Redcar and Cleveland	-	575	53.0	50.3	56.2
South Tyneside	-	625	50.4	47.5	53.0
Sunderland	-	1,150	48.6	46.6	50.6

Source: Maternity Services Dataset (MSDS v2.0)

This contrasts with the results for the previous methodology, where Hartlepool was at 63.5% in 2018/19 and was not in the top 85 local authorities in England. The 2018/19 rate was comparable with the 64.2% in 2017/18

However, when breastfeeding is reviewed at 6-8 weeks, Hartlepool does not have a similarly high rate.

Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth - current method

Proportion - %

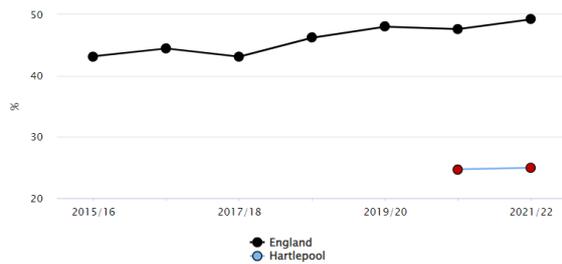
Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	↑	283,523	49.2*	49.1	49.3
North East region	↑	8,797	35.7	35.2	36.4
Hartlepool	—	226	24.9	22.2	27.9
Sunderland	→	690	27.6	25.9	29.4
South Tyneside	→	416	28.2	25.9	30.5
County Durham	→	1,389	30.5	29.1	31.8
Redcar and Cleveland	↑	407	31.5	29.0	34.1
Middlesbrough	↑	570	33.9	31.7	36.2
Darlington	→	357	35.1	32.2	38.1
Gateshead	↑	755	40.7	38.5	43.0
Northumberland	↑	1,011	42.0	40.0	44.0
North Tyneside	↑	903	44.4	42.3	46.6
Newcastle upon Tyne	→	1,440	48.1	46.3	49.9
Stockton-on-Tees	—	633	-	-	-

Source: OHID's (formerly PHE) interim reporting of health visiting metrics

Hartlepool's 2021/22 breastfeeding rate at 6-8 weeks is the lowest in both the north east region and England as whole. Hartlepool's rate of 24.9% is less than half of the England average of 49.2%. The two years worth of data for breastfeeding levels at 6-8 weeks in Hartlepool show that whilst stable the Hartlepool rate has been significantly below the England average in both years.

Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth - current method

Proportion - %



Recent trend: Could not be calculated

Period	Hartlepool				North East	England
	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI		
2015/16	166	*	-	-	31.4%*	43.2%*
2016/17	175	*	-	-	31.4%	44.4%*
2017/18	232	*	-	-	32.1%*	43.1%*
2018/19	260	*	-	-	33.6%	46.2%*
2019/20	211	*	-	-	34.4%*	48.0%*
2020/21	219	24.7%	22.0%	27.7%	35.4%	47.6%*
2021/22	226	24.9%	22.2%	27.9%	35.7%	49.2%*

Source: OHID's (formerly PHE) interim reporting of health visiting metrics

Current Services

Local maternity hospitals have received the Baby Friendly Award. The Baby Friendly Initiative is a worldwide programme of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF. It encourages maternity hospitals to implement best practice standards and Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding based on solid evidence on what works to increase and support breastfeeding.

Our Health Visitors have previously been trained to support women with the practical side of breastfeeding and give information which will help them to sustain breastfeeding. This support is offered to all mothers and infant feeding choices are discussed with parents in the ante-natal period and the health benefits of breastfeeding

explained. Daily Healthy Baby Clinics are ran throughout the town where parents can check their babies health and any feeding concerns with a Health Visitor and home visits are offered to support parents who may be having any feeding issues. Breastfeeding support groups run alongside the clinics some offer peer to peer support and some clinical support. As part of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme Outcomes Breastfeeding status is recorded and reported on at six weeks. A breastfeeding lead Health Visitor attends regional and national networks to update the service on local and national good practice.

Future Intentions

- Develop a written breastfeeding strategy , in line with PHiPM approach, that is routinely communicated to all Early Help Staff
- Incorporate breastfeeding strategy into Healthy Weight strategy
- Train all the Early Help staff, including managers, in Breastfeeding and relationship building based on UNICEF standards
- Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding family
- Assess service against baby friendly standards
- Work towards achieving the Baby Friendly Award
- Work towards achieving UNICEF Accreditation
- Develop a Specialist Breastfeeding Support Service
- Commission an accredited Breastfeeding Peer Support Service
- Work in collaboration with peer led groups and parent advisors e.g. Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) re best practice advice and guidance in breastfeeding.