

Home-Start peer support volunteers who are offering help and advice to new mums wanting to breastfeed

There is much in the media and indeed amongst health professionals about how 'breast is best' and many new mums indeed want to give it a go. But, as lots of mums will agree, it's not always that easy and can often become one more thing for new mums to worry about.

But there is help out there. Home-Start has over 30 peer support volunteers who, alongside paid staff, are working out in the local community to provide breastfeeding support.

We first visit new mums on the hospital's labour and postnatal wards and then we contact every mum after they are discharged to offer a home visit, continuing to visit families for as long as they need help.

One mum, Amanda, supported by Home-Start's breastfeeding peer support workers said: "You think breastfeeding is going to be a breeze but that's not always the case. When my daughter Ava was born I was struggling with breastfeeding in hospital, but the Home-Start lady visited me on the ward and was able to make helpful suggestions and gave me her card in case I need more support. A day or two later she called me at home just when I needed it. My emotions were all over the place and I broke down in tears – she was there within the hour and really helped me. She continued to call me and be there for me whenever I needed her support.

Home-Start were just so helpful and always seemed to know just the right times to call, like those key times when your new baby is going through a growth spurt and is constantly feeding and you're wondering what you're doing wrong.

They made the world of difference and helped me massively. They helped me to learn feeding positions and also reassured me that I wasn't doing anything wrong and that what I was experiencing was completely normal. I think I would have given up without their support."

Amanda was so impressed with the difference the support made that she has since volunteered herself to become a peer supporter. After going through training and shadowing others she is now ready to start working with mums one to one.

"I know what a difference it can make and I would love to be able to help another new mother in the same way that I was helped. I really want to give something back. As well as being the best thing for your baby, breastfeeding is an amazing experience and gives you an incredible bond."

To find out more about becoming a breastfeeding peer support volunteer, please call 0161 344 0669

To find out more about the work of Home-Start across Greater Manchester, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk

Home-Start in Greater Manchester