Parents' guide to the North Somerset policy on infant feeding

We recognise the importance of supporting all parents to build strong and loving parent-infant relationships, and these relationships are crucial for future good health and wellbeing. We support the right of all parents to make informed choices about infant feeding and all healthcare staff will support you in your decisions. We believe that breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby and we recognise the important physical and emotional benefits which breastfeeding provides for both you and your child. We therefore encourage you to breastfeed your baby.

Ways in which we will support you with feeding and caring for your baby:

- All midwifery, health visiting and children’s centre staff have been specially trained to support you to feed your baby.
- During your pregnancy, you will be able to discuss feeding and caring for your baby individually with a midwife or health visitor who will answer any questions you may have.
- We recommend that you hold your new baby in uninterrupted skin contact as soon as possible after birth, at least until after the first feed and for as long as you want. The staff will not interfere or hurry you but will be there to support you and to help you with your first feed.
- A Midwife or a trained maternity support worker will be available to help you become confident with breastfeeding your baby and recognising that your baby is feeding effectively. A member of the Health Visiting team will provide support later on.
- If you choose to feed your baby with formula milk, we will provide you with information and guidance on techniques for holding your baby to bottle feed and on making up feeds so that you can do this as safely as possible.
- We will show you how to express your breast milk and we will give you written information about this.
- We recommend that you keep your baby near you whenever you can so that you can get to know each other. We will give you information and advice about bedsharing and infant safety. If any medical procedures are necessary in hospital, you will always be invited to accompany your baby.
- We will encourage you to respond to your baby’s needs for food, comfort and closeness.
- We recommend that you avoid using bottles, dummies and nipple shields while your baby is learning to breastfeed. This is because they can make it more difficult for your baby to learn to breastfeed successfully and for you to establish a good milk supply.
- Most babies do not need to be given anything other than breast milk until they are around 6 months old. If for some reason your baby needs some other food or drink before this, the reason will be fully explained to you by the staff.
- We will help you to recognise when your baby is ready for other foods (normally at around 6 months) and explain how these can be introduced.
- We welcome breastfeeding in all areas of our premises. If you would prefer somewhere private, please ask a member of staff.
- We will give you a list of people who you can contact for extra help and support with feeding and caring for your baby, or who can help if you have a problem.

This is your guide to breastfeeding policy in North Somerset. Please ask a member of staff if you wish to see a full policy. For more information visit: www.n-somersetcsd.org.uk/breastfeeding