

# Welcome to the Birmingham Forward Steps Newsletter August 2020

*This month's newsletter highlights some of the amazing work staff have been doing using technology to reach people to ensure children and parents remain physically and mentally safe.*

## Using Social Media to Reach People

Facebook and social media is being used as an effective tool to engage with children and families. For example, a single post about oral health (called 'Sparkle, The Tooth Fairy') has reached over 5000 people. This is great, not only for families, but also for staff to know their hard work can be viewed by such large numbers.

Each district has a weekly timetable of events including; early years activities, virtual cooking, home safety advice, creative activities, rhyme time, story time, virtual parents forums, multi-language information and employment & training advice.

Links to district specific Facebook pages can be found [here](#).

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## World Breastfeeding Week 2020

Birmingham Forward Steps celebrated World Breastfeeding Week 2020 on 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August. The Infant Feeding Team joined the Birmingham and Solihull United Maternity and New-born Partnership (BUMP) to facilitate and answer questions in a live virtual 'Ask the Midwife - Infant Feeding' session.

The team also made sure breastfeeding services within Birmingham remain COVID secure, looking at ways to continue to support training and development for BFS staff and Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers over the coming months, while also ensuring access to support for families remains timely and effective.

World Breastfeeding Week has also been celebrated across Birmingham via the virtual breastfeeding support groups, antenatal education sessions and during individual contact with families. Safe distance 'door drops' of useful materials and goodies were made to local families. (see pictures below)



## Virtual Breastfeeding Lounges

Antenatal Infant Feeding Workers are establishing a timetable of virtual Breastfeeding Lounges to expand and offer more choice and flexibility for Birmingham families to access the benefits of group support.

The first virtual breastfeeding lounge started on 20<sup>th</sup> May; each participant get information on a range of topics including breastfeeding, colic, weaning, emotional wellbeing, expressing, aversion and using nipple shields. Below is some feedback from service users:

*"It was great; it's good to hear and it's nice everyone gets the chance to discuss their worries. I'll be back on once he's [baby] here. Thank you x"*

*"Thanks for inviting me, it was good to see so many people being on the same path, even on different stages. I believe the session will be helpful and it is always nice to hear a bit more from experienced people, as being a first time mom is not straight forward."*

*"Was nice to have a chat, look forward to the next one! Nice to take time to chat to others in this mad time."*

*"It's nice to be in contact with other moms and not feel alone."*

## COVID-19 Story: Mary Lynch, Health Visitor

Submitted via COVID Smart Survey, Health Visitor Mary Lynch (Hall Green) details good joint working from BFS.

As a newly qualified Health Visitor currently shielding, I felt worried that working virtually would mean I could not reach out to families and engage with them as I am very much a people person. I have been working with a family for a couple of months now and have been able to use video calling to make the contact more personal.

I have liaised with my colleagues at the local children's centre and opened up a hub of support for a parent who was lost following a diagnosis of autism for her son. This includes, 'Be Empowerment Virtual Group', 'Toddler Talk', kids group, antenatal classes, 'Solihull Approach', COVID resilience fund and family support. This came out of the first contact! An application for childcare plus was granted this week and gave me great job satisfaction to make a real difference to families during lock-down. I have received some lovely feedback from this mother into our team at Hall Green:

*"Mary was quick to pick up my mental health was not the best, something I didn't realise was being effected... Being heavily pregnant, and not having any access to antenatal services, Mary referred me to a brilliant team who offered weekly online classes. Again a service I cannot recommend enough... I really felt like for once I was being heard."*

## Resources Library & Activity Pack Weekly Deliveries

Not every family has the resources or inclination to participate in online activities.

'Resources Library & Activity Packs' is an 8 week programme for parents and carers who attended the Edgbaston Stay & Play groups. They opted to receive weekly information packs together with a Focus activity as they did not want to participate on the Facebook page or be part of any of virtual groups. These packs and resources are delivered to their homes every Thursday.

Focus activities have included making birds from lollipop sticks and using them as props for a nursery rhyme, using food picture print outs to promote good oral health, book-start and family literacy to make your own concertina books and home gardening & safety activities including a nature scavenger hunt. Parent Feedback has been enthusiastic:

*"Mom said the activity packs are great and are keeping the children busy. She said that the Oral Health information pack has helped her learn about how much sugar is in certain foods and drinks and she will be looking more closely now at what the children are having."*

*"Mom said they now look out for my car as they are excited to receive the packs and really look forward to getting them."*

## In Profile: Noshin Bano, BFS CASS Project Lead

This month we asked Noshin Bano to provide some insight into the vital role as she provides as Forward Step's Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) Project Lead:

**“My name is Noshin Bano and I have several years experience of working with vulnerable children and families. I’ve previously been in senior roles managing children’s centres in Birmingham. I have also worked in London, setting up a project to support the survivors of the Grenfell Fire. I worked very closely with the local community and Clinical Commissioning Groups setting up family support and counselling services at GP practices; a bespoke service based on social prescribing to contribute towards patient and community recovery. In February 2020 I was appointed as the BFS CASS Project Lead employed by Spurgeons. The role involves working closely with District Practice Leads and District Clinical Managers from the NHS.**



Noshin Bano,  
BFS CASS Project Lead

**Daily, I screen an average 160 referrals per month. This involves conducting lateral checks and reviewing information to ensure it’s accurate. It is also key for me to have critical discussions with wider partners within CASS about appropriateness of a referral before recommendations are set. Referral concerns include domestic abuse, mental health, self-harm, parenting support and support with access to services. If deemed appropriate, I set recommendations and send the referral to health visiting teams and children’s centres. I also provide monthly updates to CASS Partners, advising them of any issues within the BFS CASS service. The role is challenging yet stimulating as I am able to dovetail years of practice and leadership decisions within the context of safeguarding and contribute toward the prevention of harm.**

**Although I am usually based in Birmingham city centre, the COVID-19 Pandemic has meant working virtually, yet delivering the service with the same level of quality through regular communication with CASS partners, children’s centre staff and the health visiting team. For me, this has meant keeping an open dialogue and ensuring that key BFS CASS updates are communicated clearly and coherently. Alongside the day-to-day processing of referrals, I also compile reports for strategic leadership & sharing key trends with practitioners. The most enjoyable aspect of the role is working in close collaboration with a range of professionals to ensure that children are kept safe.”**

## From Birmingham with Love

*It's been a tough time with Covid-19 & lockdown. Here are some useful services and support which might make life a little bit easier...*

**1. Online [Parenting Course](#):** This is pre-paid for every parent in Birmingham to access. Just enter the access code 'COMMUNITY' at the top of the page.

**2. Mental Health Support:** Ages 11-25 can access [Kooth](#). Ages 0-25 can contact [Pause](#): 0207 841 4470  
[Forward Thinking Birmingham](#) urgent calls: 0300 300 0099  
Adults can contact [MIND](#): 0121 262 3555

**3. Financial Help:** [Local Welfare Provision](#) can make a difference if in crisis or in need of food, fuel or basic goods  
[Discretionary Housing Payments](#) to help with rent.  
There are [Food Banks](#) across Birmingham to help.

**4. Domestic Abuse:** For women and children affected by domestic abuse please see [Guidance](#) or contact [Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid](#).  
For Men, please contact [Respect](#)

**5. Problems with drugs or alcohol:** A new, discrete app called Staying Free is available on Android or Apple. Use the code "birmingham11" for pre-paid access. To speak to someone, call [Change Grow Live](#).

**6. Bereavement Support:** It's a terrible time to lose a loved one - you can get help on 0121 687 8010 or from [Cruse](#).

**7. Early Help for Families:** If anyone in your family needs more help from public services or community groups then please contact our [Voluntary Sector Local Leads](#). We have ten areas which can connect you to support across the city.

*If you are worried about a child, please call **Birmingham's Children's Advice and Support Service** on 0121 303 1888. In an emergency, including child abuse, contact the **Police** on 999. You can also [chat](#) to the Police.*

### #You've Been Missed

The #YouveBeenMissed campaign is led by a partnership in Birmingham supporting pupils, parents, carers and education professionals to aid our children and young people return to school. Established with a view to offer 'early help' to pupils at risk of Emotionally Based School Avoidance, the partnership is now offering a series of webinars and training to school staff to support pupils on themed issues e.g. anxiety, depression and self-harm. webinars are being held by the team over the coming weeks to help parents and carers. Find out more here:

<https://bwc.nhs.uk/youve-been-missed>

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