

Leicester Mammas Annual Report 2021 – 2022

Introduction

2021 – 2022 was an excellent year for Mammas. Having been awarded the Department of Health and Social Care’s Health and Well-being grant in partnership with CFF, we were able to start to implement our planned programme, offering a pathway of services and activities covering the First 1001 Critical Days, from pregnancy to two years. Mammas has always had a deep understanding of how vital this period is to the development of babies, and therefore to the fabric of our society generally. It has been rewarding to see how awareness of the impact of the First 1001 Critical Days has grown within Public Health and funders, particularly following the publication by the government of its document setting out its vision and plans.

[The best start for life a vision for the 1001 critical days.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/103111/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days.pdf)

Leicester Mammas has been recognised as having expertise and a strong track record in this field, along with a strong commitment to co-production, and we have been invited to contribute to a number of consultations and events on this basis. Whether the momentum is able to be maintained in the current political climate, with the threat of a new era of cuts to essential services, remains to be seen. What is without doubt is the positive impact this has had on Mammas as an organisation, enabling us to grow in confidence and in developing our team.



Leicester Mammas – How we help families to navigate the First 1001 Days

Starting Well Leicester

Mammas Starting Well programme covers the following strands –

- **Antenatal courses**, including a hypnobirthing course and a free rolling programme with a specific focus on breastfeeding initiation. Over 250 parents attended in 2021 – 22.
- **Infant mental health**, including baby massage and baby yoga; and postnatal course Connect Love Learn for increasing parental confidence and bonding
- **Maternal mental health**, including our online Emotional Health & Wellbeing programme and our Telling our Tales journaling course
- **Mammas Baby & Me offer**, which supports mothers' journey through the first two years, including Coping with Crying and Colic, Sleep, Oral Health, Starting Solids, Returning to Work/Study, Breastfeeding Older Babies. It also offers guidance with specialist support on managing finances
- **Healthy Eating**, including family cooking on a budget, and Big Cook Little Cook, supported by Leicester Nutrition and Dietetics Service
- **School Readiness** through a targeted Stay and Play 10-week programme, and Saturday Wriggly Readers story and singing sessions online
- **Specialist support for the most vulnerable** mothers and families through our Wesley Hall Baby Project
- **Healthy Goals** 12 week programme to reduce incidence of diabetes, delivered by tutors from University of Leicester and UHL

Mammas achieved the demanding targets we set ourselves - despite the impact of Covid on access to children's centres and restrictions on numbers attending groups, and on parental confidence on going out - with 1267 registrations for activities and programmes in the first year of delivery.

External evaluation of the programme is an important part of the Starting Well agreement. Focus groups, and interviews have been carried out with parents and staff. Initial feedback indicates that -

- 80% of women surveyed felt that the SWL programme was providing them with more support, information and guidance than was currently offered by the statutory services. One new mum explained: "I cannot recommend this programme enough - I had more support from them than my health visitor and midwives".
- Furthermore, 81% of participants also stated that SWL was more sensitive to their personal need than current services being provided
- The programme has impacted on self-esteem and parenting confidence, with 80% saying that the programme assisted in their self-esteem and in making them feel more confident in caring for their baby and/or child.
- The greatest impact was on reducing social isolation and mental health, particularly important for these families who became parents during the pandemic and lockdown

It's such a great programme- the support provided during covid-19 lockdown when I've not had any contact with other mums, babies and family has really helped me. I've been too nervous to leave the house with the baby because of Covid, but the access to online chat and support has really helped me mentally.

It's been really good for my mental health, to meet and speak to other mums like me. I have suffered with anxiety and low mood since having my little girl... but the opportunity to talk to other mums like me ...especially on Zoom has really helped me to be more confident – even to just leave the house. I don't know where I'd be now without the sessions.

Infant Mental Health

Mammas also secured grant awards to improve Infant Health, from Comic Relief and Children in Need.

We were able to increase staff training and skills, accessing the well-regarded Solihull programme training. We developed three new courses – Nurturing Growth, and Connect Love Learn aimed at parents with babies under 6 months, and Sparklers, aimed at parents of 14 months to two years. Nurturing Growth was designed to particularly support mothers from outside the UK who had their babies during Covid.

A great way to meet other mums and share experiences. I felt more confident weaning and dealing with crying, and doing the course has made me more relaxed about getting out and about with my twins and breastfeeding in public.

Baby Massage and Baby Yoga are highly sought and valued by parents and support infant mental health and communication and language development.

I have learned about ways I can connect with my baby through baby massage. I have also benefitted from the weekly discussions around baby care. The social aspect about the class was enjoyable and I found myself looking forward to Tuesdays. The instructor, Charly was also amazing with her lesson delivery.

Maternal Mental Health Day

50 parents attended our MMH Day on 24th February 2022. A fitness session along with pampering sessions were greatly appreciated.

Healthy Together – 0-19 Healthy Child Programme

Mammas has been contracted since 2017 by Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland NHS Trust to deliver breastfeeding peer support to families living in Leicester, with a focus on reducing health inequalities and to those living in areas of deprivation and vulnerable women.

This includes one to one and group support, via our two telephone helplines (one offering support for Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi speakers).

In 2021 – 2022, we again received more referrals than in the previous year, an increase of 10%
We received **916 referrals**, via our two helplines, directly at groups or to our staff, and via our WhatsApp groups. This compares to **833 in 2020-2021, and 646 in 2019 – 2020**

- Almost half were for babies 0 – 6 weeks

- 55% are breastfeeding; 16% mixed feeding, and 4% formula feeding. Others may be pregnant parents or those with older toddlers who continue to seek our support with issues including speech and language, managing behaviour, and wondering when to seek medical advice for their child.
- Two-thirds self-referred or were referred by friends/family or via WhatsApp/Facebook
- 25% were via our antenatal classes, following birth
- 11% were referred by a health visitor
- Only 10 (1%) were referred by a midwife
- Other referrals came from other professionals/community groups

Starting Well Leicester Champions were HCPPs nominated by Colin Cross as a link between Mamas/CFF and health teams. This has been helpful in raising awareness of our services.

Breast Pump Loan Scheme

Mamas loan electric Ardo breastpumps to families who for whatever reason are not able to establish breastfeeding or who need to increase their milk supply. Loan of the pump is free of charge; families purchase pump sets from us at cost price. Payment is waived for families we consider to be struggling financially – no evidence is required for this. Families receive ongoing support to achieve their goals. Length of loan varies between a month and over a year in some cases, for example for mothers who are not able to breastfeed directly but wish to provide their milk for their baby but are unable to purchase a quality pump.

In 2021 – 22, we loaned pumps to 65 families. This compares to 29 in each of 2020 – 21, and 2019 – 20.

We acknowledge the support of Ardo Medical who have provided two Carum hospital grade pumps for us to lend families. We also have 15 Ardo Calypso pumps we have purchased and maintain.

Mamas WhatsApp groups

Mamas has a number of WhatsApp groups used by mothers for connecting with one another and finding out about our activities. These are very active. Mamma volunteers and facilitators monitor the groups to ensure that information is safe and appropriate, and to signpost on if helpful, both to other health services and to one-to-one support from Mamas. We have a dedicated group for mothers of twins and triplets, and two groups for mums with toddlers.

Over 1000 mothers are part of our network of WhatsApp groups. Members are added by invitation, and from Nov 2021 new group members have been required to complete an online registration form.

From the registration forms, we know that –

- 48% are of Indian ethnicity
- 16% White British
- 10% Black African/Caribbean
- 9% Pakistani
- 6% White European
- **Apart from English**, 33 languages are spoken in the home.
- Gujarati is spoken most commonly, followed by Urdu and Somali
- 10% of those registering are under 25 years old

Social media and Website

- During this period we had 7,000 unique users on our website. 6,900 of these were new users. This is an increase of 324% on the same period last year
Our most viewed pages are Breastfeeding Support; Antenatal courses; Breastfeeding and Ramadan; Baby & Me. Our Breastfeeding and Ramadan page saw an increase of almost 3250% over the previous year!
- Our social media did well, with all platforms seeing significant increases
- Facebook – 11,626 followers
- Instagram – 1772 followers
- Twitter – 138 followers

Additional funding for South Leicester

In February Leicester Mammias was awarded £30,000 by Leicester NHS Trust to cover 2022 – 2025; to deliver programmes to help reduce health inequalities in the First 1001 Days, in South Leicester – Eyres Monsell, Saffron, and Aylestone. These areas have some of the lowest rates of breastfeeding initiation, prevalence and duration in the city.

This covers our weekly Baby Café at Eyres Monsell Children’s Centre, which we restarted in July 2021, and from April 2022 will offer Baby Massage, Healthy Eating courses, Antenatal Feeding your New Baby workshops, and Solihull Postnatal Parenting courses.



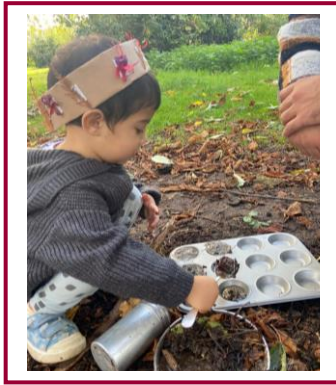
Improving breastfeeding take up in key areas

Following a presentation to the Integrated Care Board Mammias has been awarded £30,000 for work to help increase breastfeeding rates in areas in the city with lowest take up. This will include weekly Baby Cafés, Baby Massage, and Antenatal workshops, and starts in April 2022.

Hospital Peer Support

It has long been recognised that peer support in our hospitals would help complete the ‘Warm Chain’ of effective breastfeeding support in Leicester. Following a £5000 award from the ICB, Leicester Mammias developed a pilot project with Infant Feeding team and Volunteer Service at UHL. Expressions of interest in the training were high, and 25 mothers with breastfeeding experience started the 10 week programme in March. Once training and induction is completed, they will be volunteering on the wards at Leicester General Hospital.

Innovation Fund – Mammias Forest School



Families we support can feel anxious about getting out and about. Exploring the outdoors and the natural environment can be challenging, particularly for parents whose children were born during lockdown, yet the benefits of allowing children opportunities to play, run, climb and take risks outside are hugely important for a healthy body and mind. With funding from LCC's Innovation Fund, Mammias was able to set up a Forest School to help families in Highfields and South Leicester enjoy their local outdoor environment in a supported and social manner. Emma Grundy, part of our staff team, undertook the Forest School training and set up Wild Ones. Adventures were planned in Evington Park, following support from Tony McGovern and Leicester Park services.

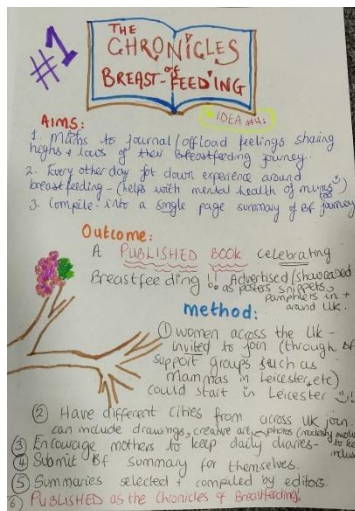
Breastfeeding and Islam

Leicester Mammias is a source of information for those wishing to know more about breastfeeding in Islam. We give support to mums with regards to breastfeeding while fasting, when to stop breastfeeding and other topics related to Islam.. Following on from last year's Q and A session for Tommy's charity, our Director Faranaaz Jaulim was invited to present at the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers 2021 Conference on Breastfeeding and Islam, and her presentation was the most viewed in the recordings.

Our resource on Ramadan and Breastfeeding is one of the most viewed and downloaded resources on our website.

We delivered two workshops to families at the start of Ramadan to help inform on maintaining their health for those who are pregnant of breastfeeding, attended by 37 mothers.

Breastfeeding Chronicles



We concluded our second Ambassadors training in April 2021, with 11 mothers from our groups taking part. One of the challenges we gave them was to think of innovative ways to raise awareness of breastfeeding. Iffat Sultana came up with the idea of producing The Chronicles of Breastfeeding.

Most ideas don't get off the page, especially when babies are around! However, Iffat and two other new Ambassadors, Katrina Meirnik and Pia Parmar, pushed through and motivated many mothers in our groups to produce personal and moving journals of their breastfeeding journeys.

The resulting collection was published and printed, and we were able to showcase it across the city. The full story and Chronicles can be seen here - [The Chronicles of Breastfeeding \(mammias.org.uk\)](http://mammias.org.uk)

Strategic and policy development

Mammas has contributed to work on the following citywide work -

- Leicester's Speech Language & Communication Strategy
- Early Help Partnership Boards
- Healthy Babies Strategy Group
- LLR Infant Feeding Strategy Board
- Leicester's Anti-poverty strategy
- Leicester's Oral Health Improvement work
- LLR Healthy Start Group
- LLR Childhood Immunisation survey
- LLR Launch of the First 1001 Critical Days event
- Equity and Equality engagement work
- Maternity Voices Partnership

National work

- Members of the Baby Feeding Law Group
- Members of the APPG on Infant Feeding and Inequalities
- Attended the 22nd Durham Infancy and Sleep Centre Conference (DISC)
- Invited to present a poster at the DISC Conference on how Mammas uses Basis Sleep Information
- Presented at the Maternity Consortium Starting Well Day on Co-Production in our work

Financial Report

See attached report

Mammas Directors

Mammas Directors are –

Aayesha Bhattay – Treasurer and Peer Supporter Trainer

Robina Hussain – Secretary and Child Development Lead

Anisa Rashid – Maternal Mental Health Coordinator

Faranaaz Jaulim – Telephone Helpline Coordinator and Peer Supporter Trainer

Dr Lyndsay Poore – Starting Well Coordinator and Grants Lead

Natasha Shepherd – Healthy Eating Lead

Rahat Ahmed – Hospital Peer Supporter Lead and Maternity Support Coordinator

Sally Etheridge IBCLC – Mammas Programme Lead

Mammas Staff Team

Charly Clarke – Infant Mental Health and IAIM Infant Massage Instructor

Nadia Gaffar – Mammas Baby Project Support Worker

Sara Chohan - Mammas Baby Project Support Worker

Aatiqah Sheikh-Blackburn – Child Development Support

Emma Grundy – Child Development and Language Programmes, Forest School Lead

Aja Sowe – Admin Support

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We extend a huge thank you to all our supporters, volunteers, and the families who make it all worthwhile.