



Minister for Public Health and Women's Health
Jenni Minto MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND SPORT
COMMITTEE
HSCS.Committee@parliament.scot

18 November 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW BREASTFEEDING STRETCH AIM TO 2031 AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CURRENT BREASTFEEDING STRETCH AIM TO 2025

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to let the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee know that following the publication of the 2024/25 Infant feeding Statistics by Public Health Scotland on the 11 November, I can confirm that the current breastfeeding stretch aim to reduce drop-off in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks by 10% by 2025 has been achieved and exceeded.

The rate of drop off has reduced from 34.5% in 2017/18, when the stretch aim was announced, to 25.3% in 2024/25, a reduction of 9.2 percentage points. This shows a 27% reduction, thereby exceeding the anticipated 10% by some margin.

Much of the improvement over the last seven years has been driven by a combined approach within and between Health Boards, including further embedding of the Unicef UK Baby Friendly standards. From 2025/26 the Scottish Government is permanently transferring over £0.8 million annual additional investment into the baseline budgets of NHS Boards to provide a sustainable basis for funding for interventions to support breastfeeding. This builds on additional investment of over £11 million since 2018. This funding will continue to be used to support evidence-based interventions and to target those who need it most.

As part of our achievements for the highest rates of breastfeeding ever, at 69% initiation and 61% at First Visit, we now have more than half of all babies being breastfed at 6-8 weeks. The

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

<https://www.nhsinform.scot>



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020



statistics from 11 November mark the first time since these statistics began in Scotland in 2002/03 that more babies are being breastfed than formula fed at that time point. It is also clear from the most recent Infant Feeding Statistics, that action on breastfeeding inequalities is making a difference, with the most marked differences for those who live in the most deprived areas and younger mothers.

We want all babies to have the best start in life, including the best nutritional start. Supporting, protecting and promoting breastfeeding remains one of the most important actions we can take to improve the health of both the mother and baby, in both the short and long term. We also recognise that not every new parent can or wants to breastfeed, and we will continue to fully support all parents to make informed choices on infant feeding.

This work has been driven through our health services and partners, and in particular the role of Infant Feeding Leads and their teams across maternity, neonatal and community-based services. We will continue to work collaboratively with local leaders to ensure that all mothers across Scotland can be fully supported to achieve their breastfeeding goals.

This achievement demonstrates a clear commitment to support, protect and promote breastfeeding across Scotland and to further our ambition for a rights based approach to infant feeding, as set out in the Scottish Government [response](#) to the United Nations Concluding Observations in March 2024.

As we set out in the [Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Strategic Framework](#) published earlier this year, we committed to setting out a new stretch aim before the end of 2025. Following engagement with Health Boards and key stakeholders, I can now confirm that this will be 'to reduce drop-off in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks by 10% by 2031'.

I hope the Committee will find this update helpful as we continue to take forward action to give every baby the best start in life and to improve early child development.

Yours sincerely



Jenni Minto MSP

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

<https://www.nhsinform.scot>



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020

