



National Health Service in Scotland  
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

**LOCAL BREASTFEEDING TARGETS**

**Summary**

1. This MEL asks General Managers to review information about breastfeeding rates in their own area and to consider the setting of local breastfeeding targets, with particular attention to marked variances in rates throughout their area.
2. The MEL also draws attention to the endorsement by the Chief Executive of the SNAP Report on Breastfeeding in Scotland and asks General Managers to take account of the report in examining arrangements for the promotion and support of breastfeeding.

**Other information**

3. The Secretary of State announced a national target for improving the rates of breastfeeding on 7 November:  
more than 50% of women to be still breastfeeding their babies at 6 weeks of life by 2005.
4. The breastfeeding rate at 6 weeks can be monitored through the OPCS Infant Feeding Survey. There has also been renewed activity in the promotion of breastfeeding through the work of the Scottish Joint Breastfeeding Initiative at national and local levels; and the current audit of breast feeding will give baseline data to assist future monitoring both nationally and locally. The final results of the audit will be available in 1995 when the project is complete. Interim results are now available and Ms Jenny Warren, Co-ordinator of the Scottish Joint Breastfeeding Initiative (0698 429 429) can provide a contact name in each area.
5. Against this background, and in the light of recent research demonstrating both the health benefits to mother and child and cost benefits to the NHS of breastfeeding, we would like to encourage boards to set local breast feeding targets (and milestones) according to their own circumstances; and to address any marked variances in breastfeeding rates throughout their area.

22 November 1994

**Addresses**

For action:  
General Managers,  
Health Boards

For information:  
Chief Executives, NHS  
Trusts  
General Manager,  
Health Education Board  
for Scotland

CANOs  
Health Boards

Royal College of  
Midwives

Royal College of  
Nursing

Scottish Health  
Visitors Association

To be copied to Unit  
General Managers for  
information

**Enquiries to:**

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6. The Scottish Needs Assessment Programme has produced a report on Breastfeeding in Scotland. It presents the epidemiology of breastfeeding and reviews the evidence of its benefits; identifies proven strategies for its promotion; and recommends a way forward, including evidence for the Baby Friendly Initiative. This report has been considered and endorsed by the Joint Working Group on Purchasing and the Chief Executive and is commended to purchasers for action.

**Action**

7. General Managers are asked to review information about breast feeding rates in their area and to examine arrangements for the promotion and support of breast feeding, taking account of the SNAP report; and to advise Patricia Russell by 31 January 1995 of proposals for local breast feeding targets and milestones in line with local circumstances, including variations in rates.

8. This letter should be copied to Unit General Managers for information.

Yours sincerely

*Patricia Russell*

PATRICIA RUSSELL  
Health Gain Division