

HIPS/21/49 – Delivering A Planning Card To Reduce Drop-Off In Breastfeeding: A Feasibility Study.

Breastfeeding at six to eight weeks after birth is associated with improved health outcomes for both mothers and babies. Yet many women report that they stopped breastfeeding sooner than they had intended. In 2018, the Scottish Government launched its Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan, which states a commitment to reduce drop-off in breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks by 10% by 2025.

We have recently published peer-reviewed research in the *British Journal of Midwifery* that looks to make a contribution towards this goal. In our study we delivered a breastfeeding planning card to women who were at least 36 weeks pregnant. The planning card reduced drop-off from breastfeeding four-fold. In a quasi-randomised trial, women who received the card were also found to engage in exclusive breastfeeding at significantly higher rates than the control group.

Our pilot study suggests that if midwives in Scotland were to deliver this planning card then rates of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks would increase and health outcomes would improve. This funding application seeks to test whether it is feasible to deliver the card as part of standard antenatal care. This study will form a co-production, action-research approach drawing on the expertise of key stakeholders: midwives, infant feeding practitioners, expectant mothers, breastfeeding mothers and the wider research team. If it finds that delivery of the card is feasible, we will develop this study into a large-scale randomized controlled trial for which we will seek funding from National Institute for Health Research