

# RESEARCH TITLE

To explore how a Breastfeeding Closed Facebook group administered by volunteers with additional breastfeeding training influences women's experiences, particularly for those women for whom breastfeeding is not their cultural norm.

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## Why Breastfeeding is Important

Breastfeeding is an investment in health not just a lifestyle decision.

Infants are most likely to grow and develop to their full potential when fed human milk due to the dynamic and interactional nature of breastfeeding and the unique living properties of breastmilk (Bode et al 2020).

Breastfeeding promotes healthy brain development, reduces infectious diseases, risk of obesity and chronic diseases in later life. For the woman breastfeeding protects against ovarian and breast cancers, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Victoria 2016).

Advice that breastfeeding is best for their babies' health is of no use if women are not supported (Smith J 2023).

## Research Background

This research stemmed from the development of an online Breastfeeding Closed Facebook group which was set up as part of a strategy to support breastfeeding women in a specific geographical area. Lack of breastfeeding support is often cited by mothers as one of the main reasons for giving up breastfeeding. In the UK poorer mothers are far less likely to breastfeed than richer mothers, which increases health and social inequality (McAndrew 2012) A study conducted by (Peregrino 2018) suggested that neighbourhood deprivation was independently and inversely associated with breastfeeding initiation. Compared with the least deprived areas, the likelihood of initiating breastfeeding was 40% lower in the most deprived neighbourhoods. Anecdotally the group appeared to be valued by group members. This research aims to discover the ways in which the group is helpful or unhelpful, how and when women utilise the group, particularly for those women for whom breastfeeding is not their cultural norm.

## Methodology

Phase one; an online survey collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Commenced March 2022. Group membership was approximately 900 at the time of the survey. 184 (20.4%) women completed the survey.

Phase two; semi-structured interviews of a purposive sample of women drawn from the survey, commenced August 2022. To date 14 interviews have been carried out.

Next Steps; It is planned that the data will be analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach.

Progress so far; transcription of interviews and familiarisation of the data.

## Quotes From The Survey

*"Local support that has been a vital resource"*

*"The only breastfeeding support I've been able to have.(relates to lockdown during pandemic)"*

*"Even just hearing other people's stories helps me feel connected to other breastfeeding mum's and less alone in the journey"*



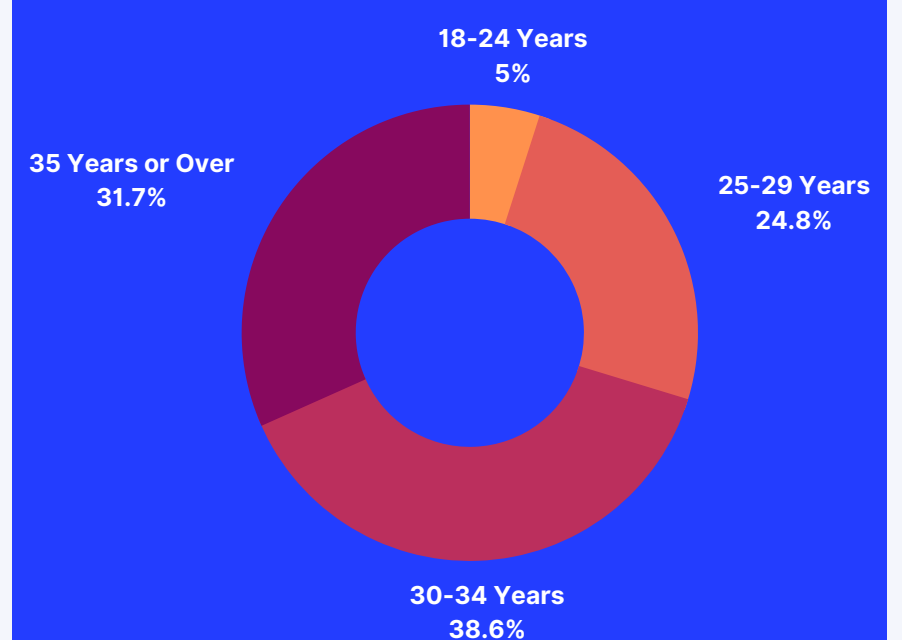
## Quotes From The Interviews

*"You know they don't understand it, it's a case of for God's sake Sal are you gonna get your tits out again? And I'm like, and I laugh it off, and at first it really upset me, but the group became a place where I could post with the anonymity that my family didn't see, but others understood me"*

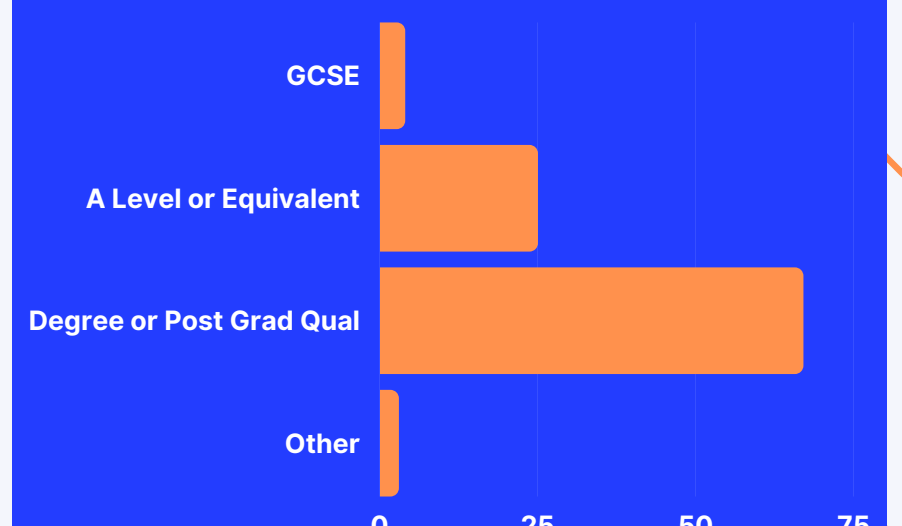
*"and I had to wake her up during the night to feed every three hours. And, and that was struggling to get her to stay awake because she was wanted to sleep. So like tips on how I could like get her awake to feed, just a little bit of advice, like, mainly during the night when you know other people will be up"*

Talks about the importance of getting a timely response from the Breastfeeding Closed Facebook group

## Age of Survey Participants



## Highest Educational Qualification of Survey Participants



### References:

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- Peregrino,A. Watt,R.Heilmann,A. Jivraj,S. (2018) Breastfeeding practices in the United Kingdom. Is the neighbourhood context important. Maternal and Child Nutrition Issue 14 Vol 4.
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