

Health Intelligence briefing

Breastfeeding in Northern Ireland, May 2024

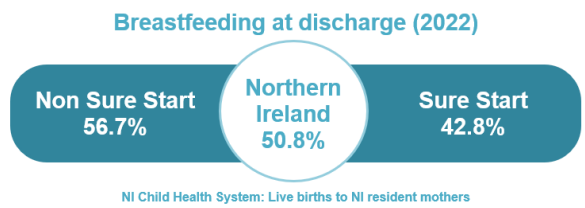
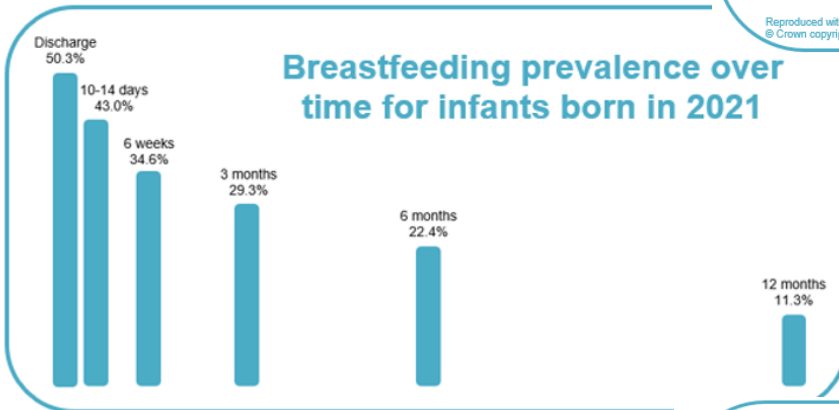
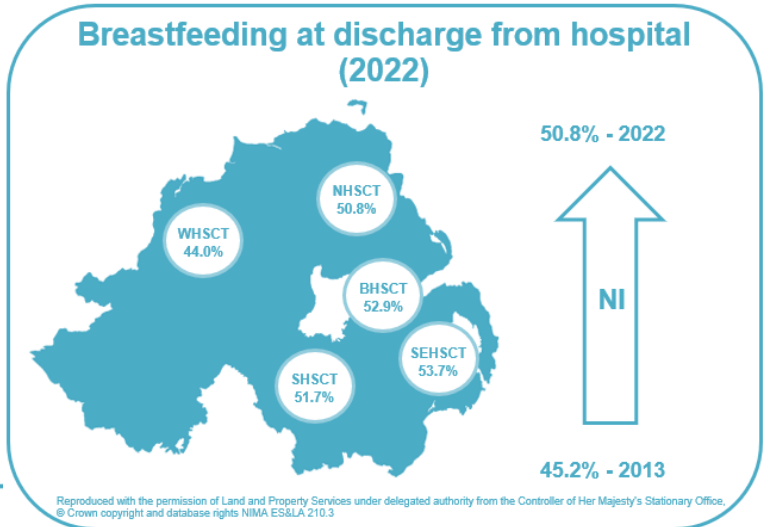
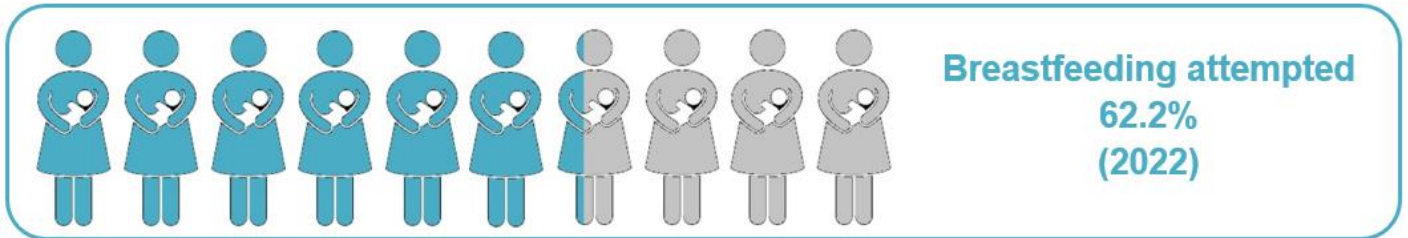
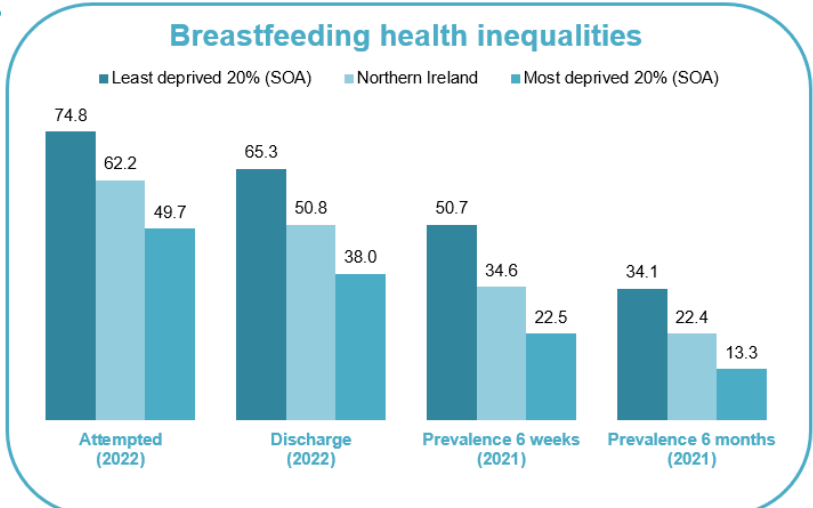


Illustration of a woman holding a baby with a vertical double-headed arrow indicating maternal age, with '30 years' written next to it.

Maternal age	Attempted (2022)	Discharge (2022)	6 weeks (2021)	6 months (2021)
↑ (Older)	67.1%	56.2%	40.6%	27.3%
↓ (Younger)	53.8%	41.7%	24.8%	14.5%



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Northern Ireland context and policy on breastfeeding

'*Breastfeeding – A Great Start. A strategy for Northern Ireland 2013-2023*' aims to improve the health and well-being of mothers and babies through breastfeeding and outlines the strategic direction to protect, promote, support and normalize breastfeeding in Northern Ireland.¹

In October 2022, the Health Minister agreed a one year extension of the Strategy term until June 2024. A process to provide a final review of the strategy is currently underway which will allow for an assessment of progress made against the strategy's targets and objectives and make recommendations that will form an evidence-base to determine whether a successor strategy or plan is required.

The Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016–21 aims to improve wellbeing for all – by tackling disadvantage, and driving economic growth. The framework includes 14 outcomes and those particularly relevant to breastfeeding are 'Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives' and 'Outcome 14: We give our children and young people the best start in life'.²

The *Making Life Better* strategy aims to "Achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health."³ The strategic framework is structured around six key themes and the following three themes relate to breastfeeding:

- Theme 1: Giving every child the best start recognises that what happens to children in their earliest years is key to outcomes in adult life. Under Outcome 2, Healthy and confident children and young people, the strategy commits to implementation of the breastfeeding strategy including support programmes for those least likely to breastfeed.
- Theme 3: Empowering Healthy Living, Outcome 7 Improved health and reduction in harm highlights the need to develop and implement strategies, action plans and targeted programmes to increase breastfeeding rates.
- Theme 6: Developing Collaboration focuses on the need for integration of public health principles across all parts of society and under Outcome 17, A Strategic Approach to Public Health identifies the requirement to consider and implement legislative change to support public health including promotion and support of breastfeeding.

Other strategies in Northern Ireland that relate to breastfeeding include:

- Health and Wellbeing 2026 – Delivering Together⁴
- A Fitter Future for All-Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2012-2022⁵
- A Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012-2018⁶
- A Healthier Future: A Twenty Year Vision for Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2005-2025⁷
- The Child Poverty Strategy⁸
- Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030⁹
- 'Supporting the best start in life' Infant Mental Health Framework and Action Plan 2015-2018¹⁰
- Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031¹¹

In line with Department of Health (DoH) priorities, including the Making Life Better public health framework, the Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016–21 and local government-led community planning, the Public Health Agency Corporate plan sets out the strategic direction and priorities for 2017-21.¹² Under the outcome "All children and young people have the best start in life" it includes the "*Proportion of mothers breastfeeding on discharge and differential between the average and most deprived breastfeeding*" as a key indicator to monitor breastfeeding.¹³

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF recommend that every infant should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding for up to two years or longer.^{14,15} The WHO Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, revised in 2018, are reflected in the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards.^{16,17}

In 2012, the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative was further expanded to encompass neonatal units, early year's community settings, and universities providing education for midwives and health visitors. These new standards aim to improve the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies – whether or not they are breastfeeding. The standards are based on the evidence of the importance of early care practices on the future wellbeing of children. They go beyond the Ten Steps and include a greater emphasis on early brain development and emotional attachment – an approach informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative programme is based on a set of interlinking evidence-based standards for maternity, health visiting, neonatal and children's centres services. These are designed to provide parents with the best possible care to build close and loving relationships with their baby and to feed their baby in ways which will support optimum health and development. The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative enables public services to better support families with feeding and developing close and loving relationships so that all babies get the best possible start in life.

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative also runs a programme for universities to ensure that their courses equip newly qualified midwives and health visitors to implement the Baby Friendly standards. Universities implement the standards in stages and the course is accredited as Baby Friendly.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance recommends that healthcare providers, including hospitals and community settings use the Baby Friendly Initiative as a minimum standard.¹⁸

In 2016, the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative launched the Achieving Sustainability standards which are designed to support longer term implementation of best practice standards.¹⁹ A service is considered to be Achieving Sustainability when they have implemented and maintained the core Baby Friendly standards for at least two years as confirmed by a full re-assessment. In addition, they should have adequate leadership structures in place to support continued maintenance of the standards. Those who have achieved the Achieving Sustainability 'Gold' award must also demonstrate that they cultivate a positive and enabling culture for Baby Friendly, with consideration given to the specific cultural and societal challenges in the UK.

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland breastfeeding strategy outlines the need to ensure that 'Health and Social Care has the necessary knowledge, skills and leadership to protect, promote, support and normalise breastfeeding'. One of the strategic actions included is that all maternity and community health care services should achieve and maintain UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation and that universities in Northern Ireland should be supported to achieve UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation for midwifery and health visiting training courses.

Introduced in Northern Ireland in 1994, the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative is currently supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and implemented across all five HSC Trust areas.

All maternity units in Northern Ireland have achieved full accreditation. Health Visiting services across all five HSC Trust areas have achieved full accreditation.

Sure Starts in Northern Ireland are encouraged to implement the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly standards for Children's Centres and, where possible, to work towards accreditation jointly with a group of other Sure Start projects. Recent progress has meant more Sure Start projects in Northern Ireland are now actively working with the Baby Friendly Professional Officer for Northern Ireland to achieve and maintain accreditation.

A full list of NI Sure Start awards can be accessed at <https://unicefbfi.secure.force.com/Events/Awards>

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative neonatal standards were developed in response to the need to improve breastfeeding outcomes for the most vulnerable babies and mothers. The standards focus on specific ways to transform care for families within the neonatal unit as follows;

1. Enabling staff to support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.
2. Enabling babies to receive breastmilk and to be breastfed when possible.
3. Valuing parents as partners in care.

The Northern HSCT became the first neonatal unit in Northern Ireland to achieve full Baby Friendly accreditation in 2021.

In 2022 Queens University Belfast achieved re-accreditation for their BSc (Hons) Midwifery Sciences (3 years) and BSc (Hons) Midwifery Studies (18 months) courses.

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Gold Award is presented to services in recognition of their long-standing commitment to best practice and implementation of the Achieving Sustainability standards. In Northern Ireland a total of nine services have now achieved the Gold award. They include; Antrim Hospital; Causeway Hospital, NHSCT Health Visiting Services; SEHSCT Health Visiting Services, South West Acute Hospital Maternity service and WHSCT (Southern Sector) Health Visiting Services. In November 2020 Northern Ireland's first Gold Children's Centre award was achieved jointly by Glenbrook, Smile and Shankill Sure Starts.

Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS) and Northern Ireland Child Health System (CHS)

This briefing includes analysis of data sourced from the Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS) and Northern Ireland Child Health System (CHS).

The Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS) contains a range of demographic and clinical information on mothers and infants. It captures data relating to the current maternity process, but also contains details about the mother's past medical and obstetric history. It is a key source for data on birth numbers, interventions, maternal risk factors, birth weights, maternal smoking, BMI and breastfeeding at discharge. In June 2016 a number of changes were implemented on NIMATS to expand the data collected in relation to infant feeding and to inform practice (for further information see [Appendix: Data Sources](#)). On the basis that this has involved changes to the NIMATS system and recording practice, information relating to these fields has been included as **experimental data**.

As NIMATS is a live system and subject to ongoing update, there may be some minor variation when comparing data to previous Health Intelligence Breastfeeding briefings.

The Northern Ireland Child Health System (CHS) acts as a call and recall system for a variety of immunisations, vaccinations and screening tests. In addition, a wide range of health data is recorded at birth, throughout infancy and while the child is at school. Historically, data was provided by the four legacy health board areas and collated to provide a regional dataset, however since 2021/22 it has been possible to download regional CHS data from the Data Warehouse.

The Child Health System currently collates information on the feeding status of infants at discharge from hospital, first visit (10-14 days), 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months in line with Healthy Child, Healthy Future. This data provides an indication of the prevalence of breastfeeding at these time points.

Data limitations: There is a time lag in reporting data on breastfeeding prevalence for example, 12 month data for an infant born in December 2019 will not be due for collection until December 2020. It is important to note that feeding status was not fully recorded for all time points as illustrated by the high proportions of unknowns at 6 and 12 months.

Both NIMATS and CHS capture information on breastfeeding at discharge and this brief includes data from both sources. However, it is important to note that there will be some variation in the total births included as the systems collect information differently for example, NIMATS will record births in Northern Ireland hospitals while CHS will include infants not born in NI hospitals. This may result in minor variation in the breastfeeding rates calculated from each system for the same time period.

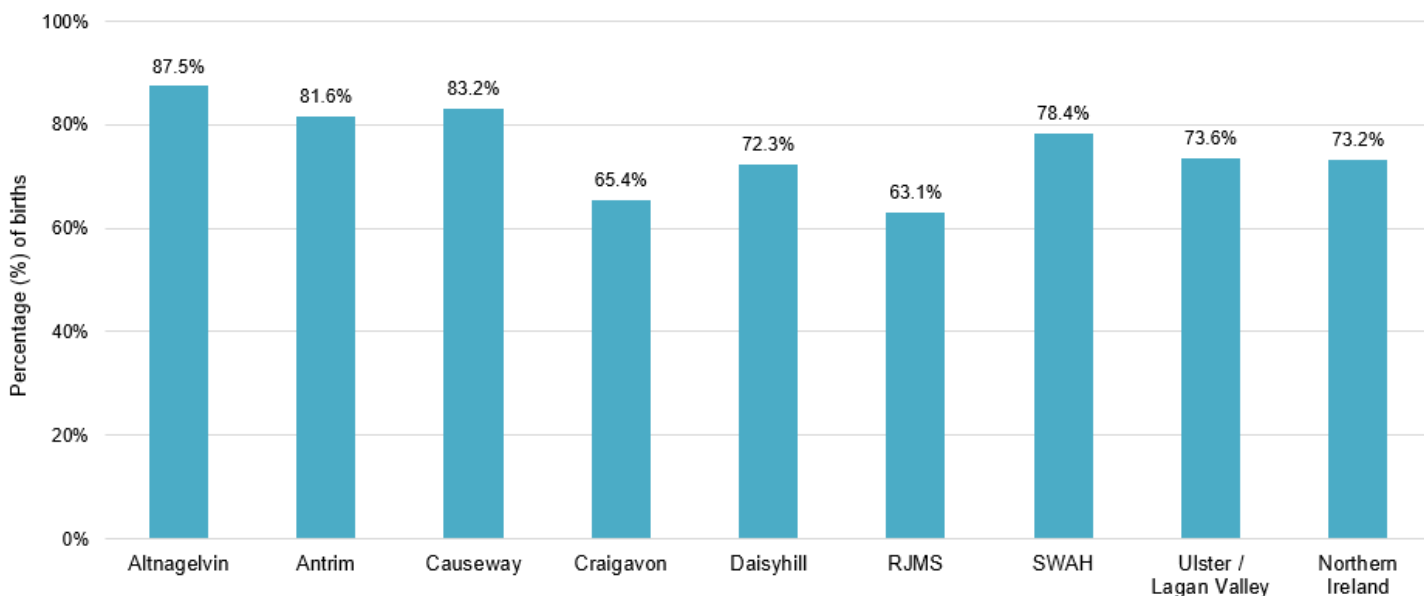
This brief includes information by hospital of birth. However, it should be noted that the number of births in some hospitals, such as Lagan Valley are small, which may impact on the ability to interpret trends. Disclosure controls may also be applied to tables due to small numbers.

It should also be noted that there have been a number of changes to maternity services in recent years, including those as a result of the pandemic. These changes include: closure of the Downe hospital shortly before the pandemic in March 2020; relocation of deliveries from the Mater to the Royal Jubilee Maternity (RJMS) in March 2020; closure of Lagan Valley to deliveries in March 2022; and, closure of the Causeway delivery suite during the pandemic between April and August 2020 with permanent relocation of births in July 2023.

Feeding at birth

All mothers should be offered the opportunity to give a first breast feed at birth; data for 2022 indicates that overall, 73.2% of infants (73.6% of mothers) were offered the opportunity of a first breastfeed (Figure 1, [Appendix Table A](#)). Figure 1 illustrates the variation in breastfeeding offered by hospital.

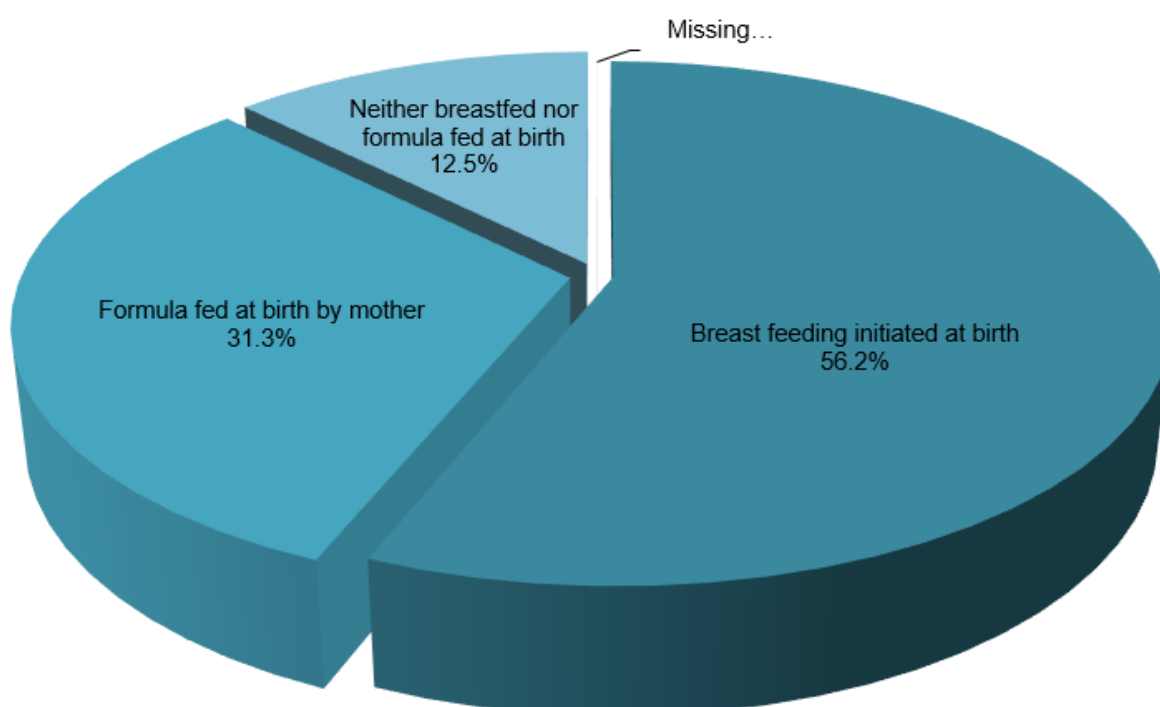
Figure 1: Breastfeeding offered (%) at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS experimental data



Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI residents; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital.
Note: Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Data also shows that at birth, 56.2% of infants were breastfed, 31.3% were formula fed while a further 12.5% did not receive a feed at this time (Figure 2, [Appendix Table B](#)).

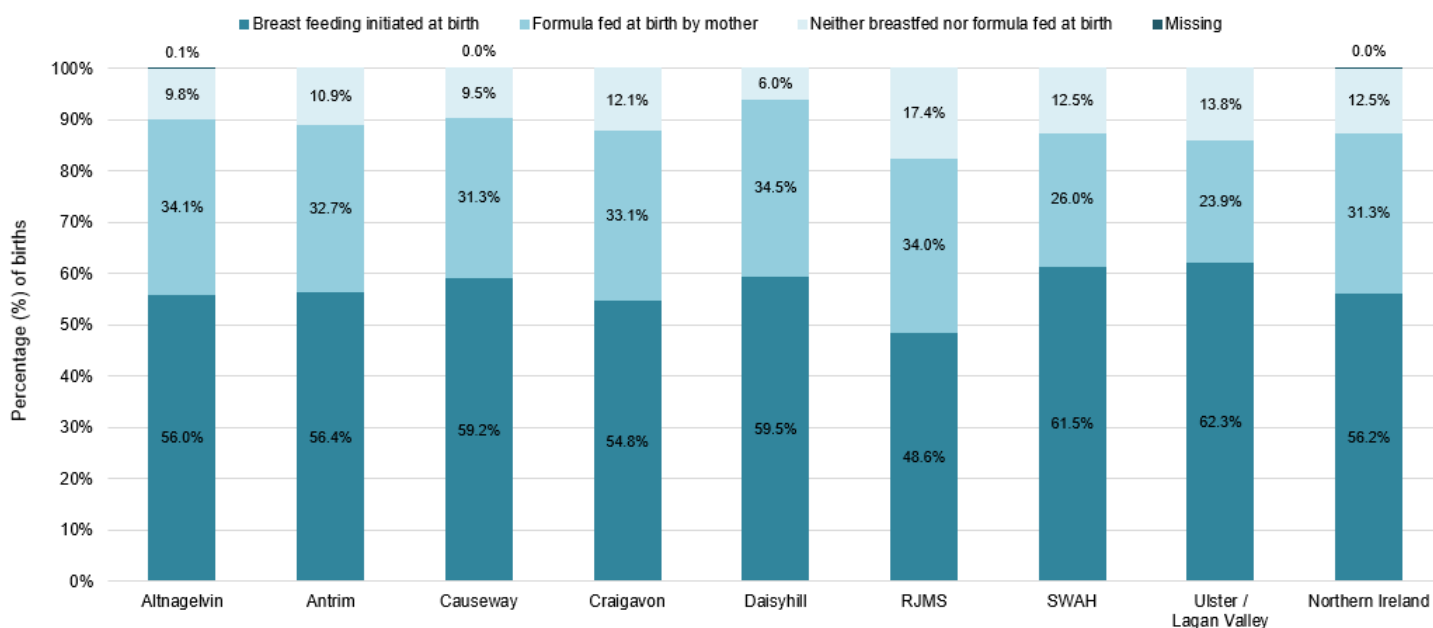
Figure 2: Feeding status at birth, 2022 NIMATS experimental data



Base N=20,298: Breastfeeding initiated (n=11,401), Formula fed at birth (n=6,351), neither (n=2,544), missing/unknown (n=2).
Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital.

Figure 3 ([Appendix Table B](#)) illustrates the variation in infant feeding at birth by hospital. The highest rates of breastfeeding initiation at birth were recorded for the Ulster / Lagan Valley (62.3%) with the lowest rates recorded for the Royal Jubilee Maternity (RJMS, 48.6%).

Figure 3: Infant feeding at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS experimental data



Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI residents; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital.
 Note: Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

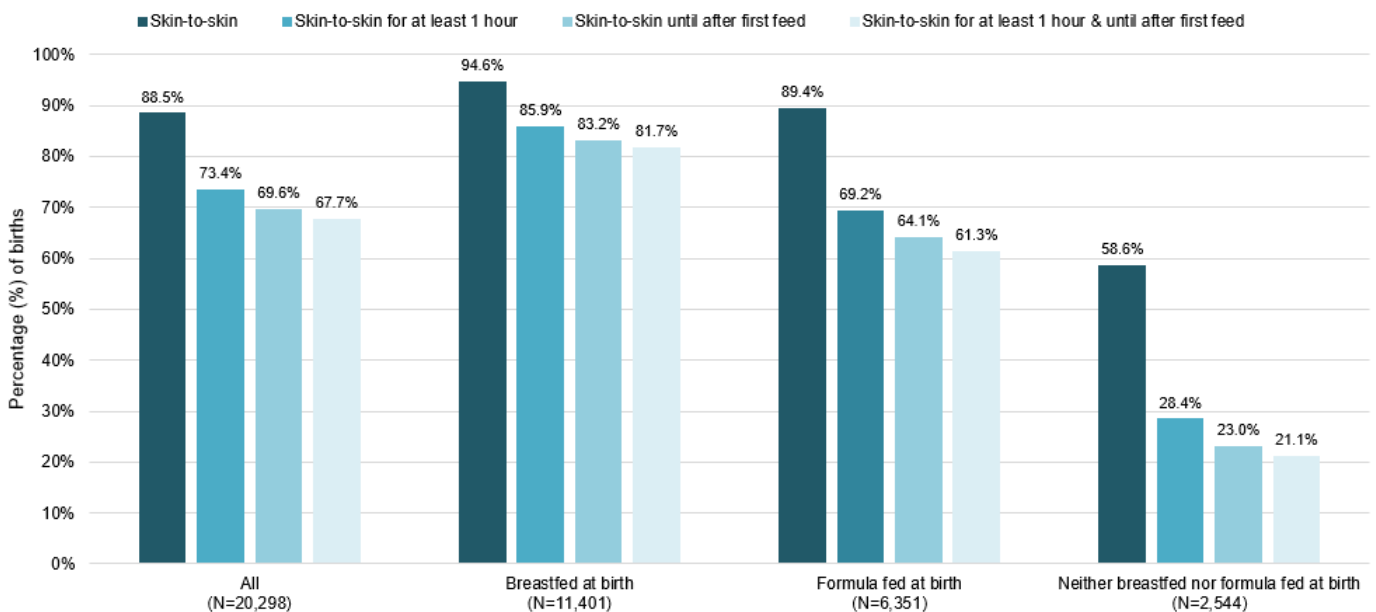
Step 8 of the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) outlines that mothers should be supported to recognise and respond to their infants' cues for feeding, regardless of feeding type²⁰. Overall, NIMATS data shows that responsiveness was discussed with 96.9% of mothers at birth (ranging from 94.7% to 100% by hospital).

Skin-to-skin contact at birth

Skin-to-skin contact has a number of benefits for mothers and babies. There is evidence that skin-to-skin contact at birth can support mothers to establish and maintain breastfeeding.^{21,22}

NIMATS data for 2022 shows that 88.5% of infants (17,954/20,298) received skin-to-skin contact at birth; 73.4% (14,907/20,298) received skin-to-skin contact for at least one hour with 69.6% (14,137/20,298) having skin-to-skin contact until after the first feed (Figure 4, [Appendix Table C](#)). Skin-to-skin contact at birth was more common among infants who were breastfed at birth (94.6%; 10,785/11,401) compared to those who were formula fed at birth (89.4%; 5,679/6,351).

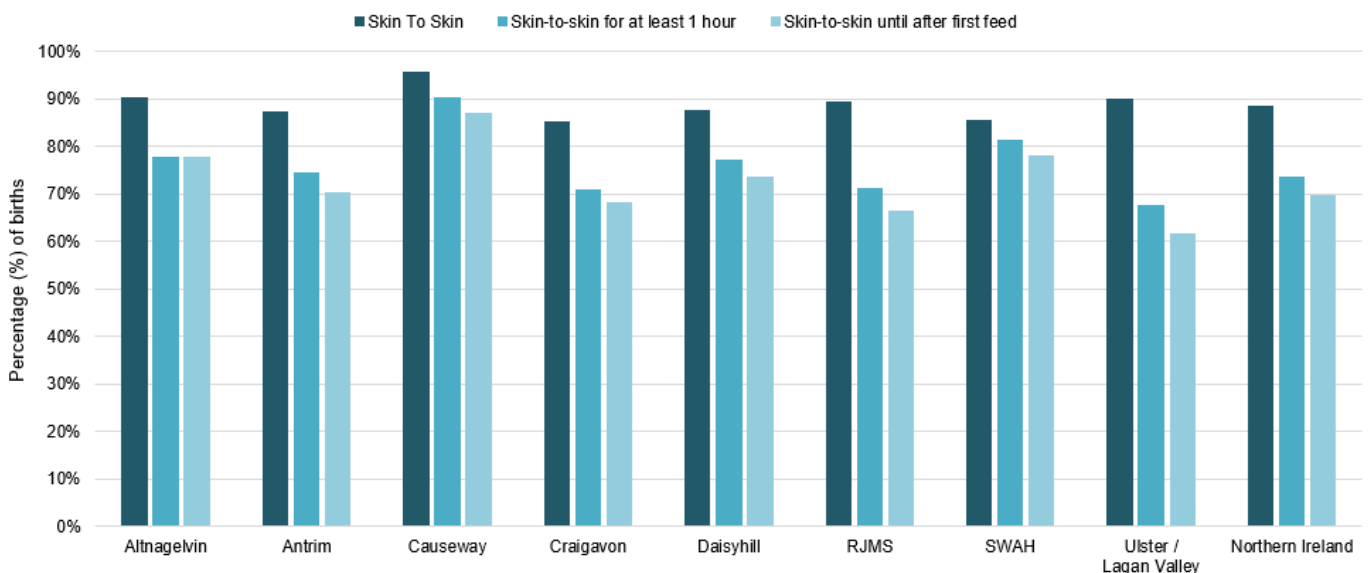
Figure 4: Skin-to-skin contact at birth by feeding type at birth, 2022 NIMATS experimental data



Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital.
Note: All includes 2 infants for whom feeding status at birth was not recorded.

It is recommended that skin-to-skin contact begins immediately, regardless of method of delivery, and should be uninterrupted for at least one hour. Figure 5 shows overall rates of skin-to-skin contact which range from 85.1% to 100% depending on hospital ([Appendix Table D](#)).

Figure 5: Skin-to-skin contact at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS experimental data (all feeding types)



Source: NIMATS; Live births, NI resident mothers Excludes infants who died in delivery suite, home births and infants born before arrival.

As previously shown, rates of skin to skin contact are higher among infants breastfed at birth and Table 1 provides the breakdown of rates by hospital.

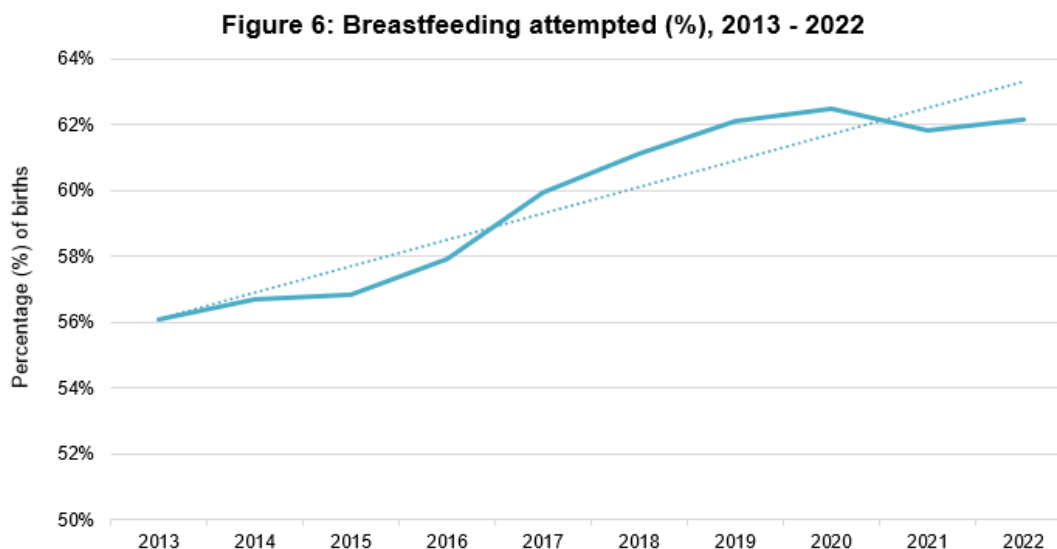
Table 1: Skin-to-skin contact at birth for infants breastfed at birth by hospital, 2022

	Births	Skin-to-skin		Skin-to-skin for at least 1 hour		Skin-to-skin until after first feed	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%
Altnagelvin	1,233	1,157	93.8	1,054	85.5	1,077	87.3
Antrim	1,603	1,506	93.9	1,410	88.0	1,363	85.0
Causeway	505	498	98.6	482	95.4	467	92.5
Craigavon	1,632	1,521	93.2	1,396	85.5	1,354	83.0
Daisyhill	1,155	1,061	91.9	1,000	86.6	981	84.9
RJMS	2,211	2,137	96.7	1,924	87.0	1,851	83.7
SWAH	672	620	92.3	604	89.9	604	89.9
Ulster / Lagan Valley	2,390	2,285	95.6	1,919	80.3	1,783	74.6
Infants breastfed at birth	11,401	10,785	94.6	9,789	85.9	9,480	83.2

Source: NIMATS; Live births, NI resident mothers Excludes infants who died in delivery suite, home births and infants born before arrival. Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Breastfeeding attempted

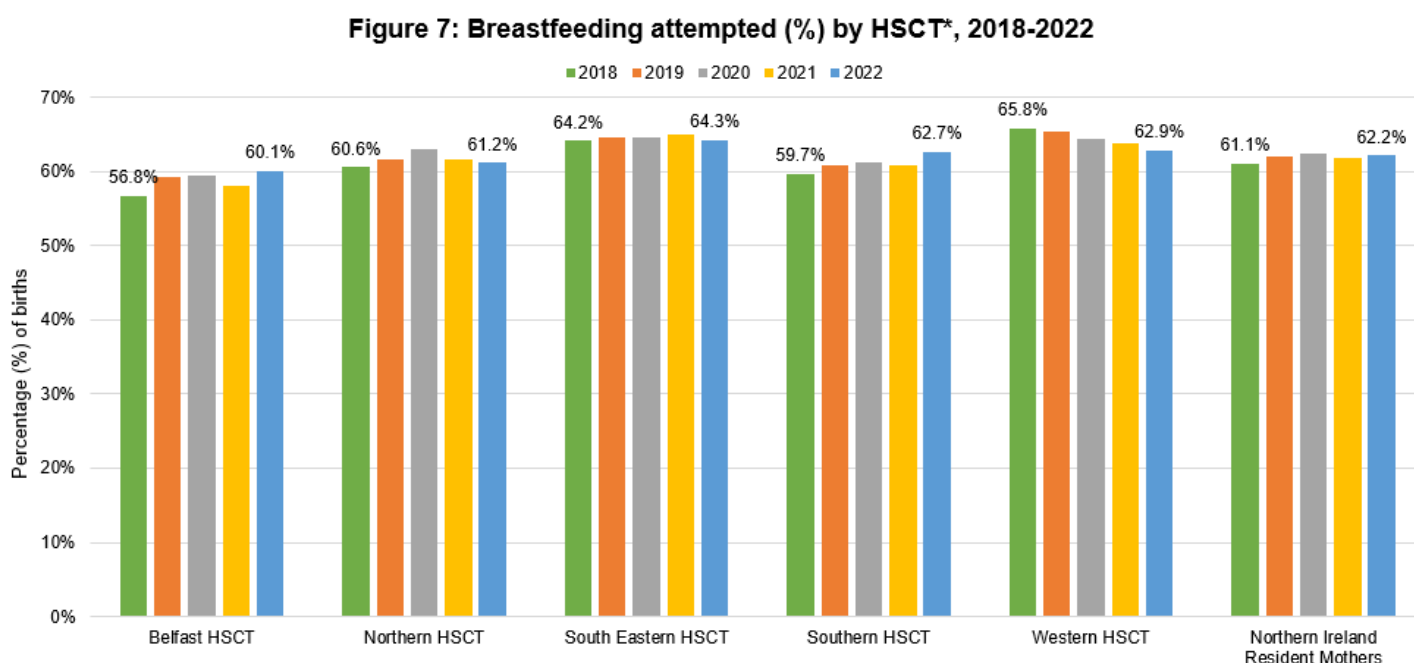
Breastfeeding is considered to have been attempted if the baby has been put to the breast or received mother's breast milk while in hospital. In 2022, data shows that breastfeeding was attempted^ð for around 6 out of ten births (62.2%) in Northern Ireland (Figure 6, [Appendix Table E](#)). Despite a minor decrease in the overall rate of attempted breastfeeding in 2021 (61.8%) there has been an increasing trend in rates of attempted breastfeeding from 56.1% in 2013 to 62.2% in 2022.



Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite. Note: New fields relating to infant feeding introduced on the NIMATS system in July 2016 allow the identification of missing data. Note: Non-zero y-axis

Health and Social Care Trust

In 2022, breastfeeding was attempted during the postnatal stay for 64.3% of infants from the South Eastern HSCT* area compared to 62.9% from the Western HSCT, 62.7% in the Southern HSCT, 61.2% in the Northern HSCT and 60.1% of those in the Belfast HSCT (Figure 7, [Appendix Table E](#)).



Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite. * Based on maternal residence.

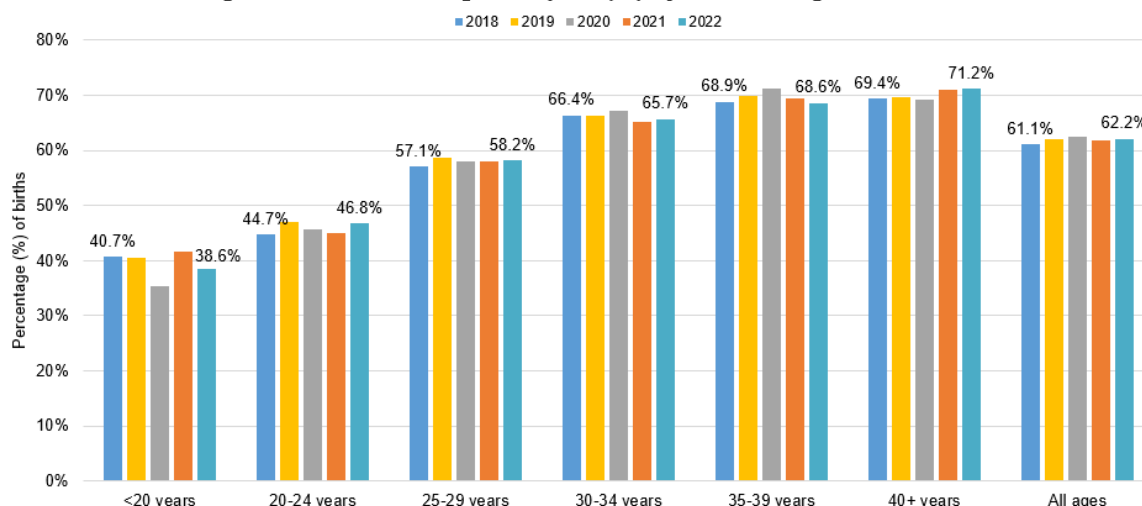
^ð Note: In 2016 changes to NIMATS involved the creation of a new screen to record all the feeding and relationship questions.

Maternal age

NIMATS data shows that the rate of breastfeeding varies according to mother's age, with older mothers generally more likely to attempt breastfeeding (Figure 8, [Appendix Table F](#)). For example, in 2022 46.8% of mothers aged 20-24 years attempted to breastfeed compared to 68.6% of mothers aged 35-39 years.

While the overall rate of attempted breastfeeding in Northern Ireland showed a minor increase in 2022 (62.2%) compared to 2021 (61.8%), there was some variation among the younger age groups with decreasing rates among mothers aged <20 years and increasing rates among those 20-24 years in 2022 compared to 2021. Rates for other age groups remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2022. Note: there are relatively low numbers of births to mothers aged <20 years compared with other age groups.

Figure 8: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by maternal age, 2018-2022

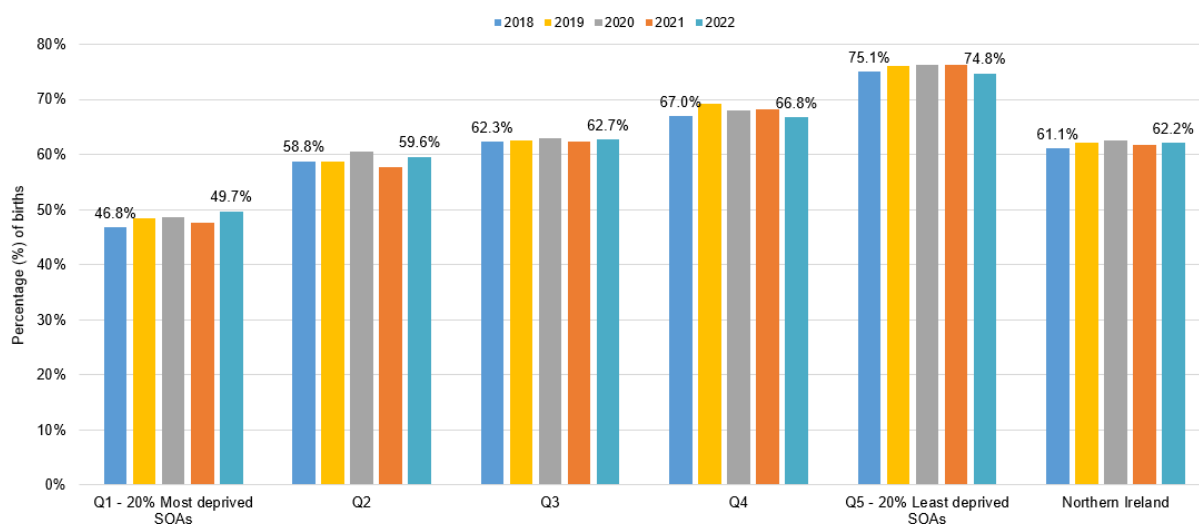


Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite.

Deprivation

There is an association between breastfeeding and deprivation, with those living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland less likely to attempt breastfeeding. In 2022, breastfeeding was reported as having been attempted for 49.7% of births to mothers living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Northern Ireland compared to 74.8% of births to mothers living in the 20% least deprived SOAs (Figure 9, [Appendix Table G](#)). Between 2018 and 2022, while the rates of attempted breastfeeding have remained stable for those living in the least deprived areas, there has been a small increase of 2.9 percentage points in the rate of attempted breastfeeding among those living in the most deprived areas.

Figure 9: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by deprivation (SOA)*, 2018-2022

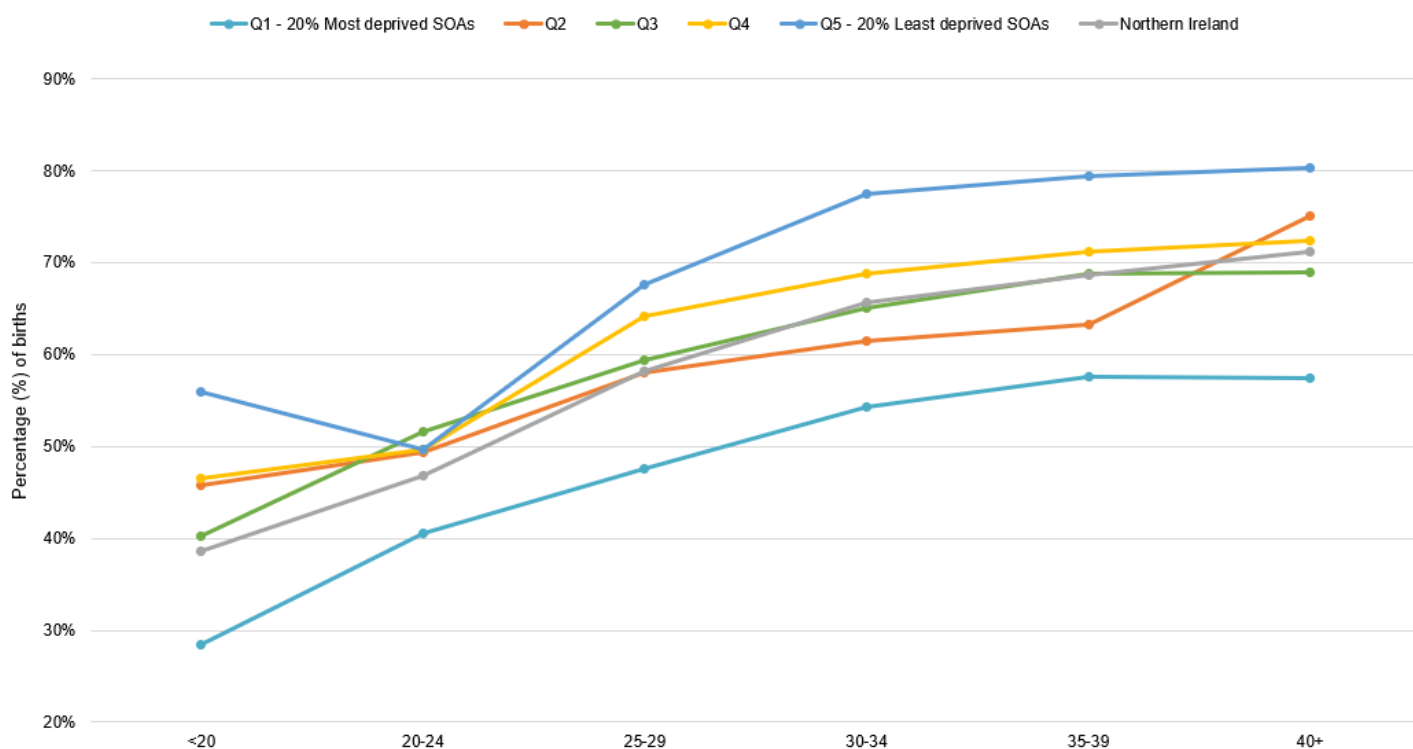


Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite.
Note: Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA); * Based on maternal residence.

Maternal age and deprivation

Figure 10 shows the combined picture of maternal age and deprivation status on breastfeeding attempted ([Appendix Table H](#)). In general, an increasing trend in the rates of attempted breastfeeding with age is seen across all areas. The highest rates are reported for mothers aged 40+ years living in the 20% least deprived SOAs (Q5), where breastfeeding was attempted for 80.3% of births. Contrastingly, the lowest rates of attempted breastfeeding were reported for mothers aged <20 years (28.4%) living in the 20% most deprived SOAs. Note: there are relatively low numbers of births to mothers aged <20 years compared with other age groups.

Figure 10: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by maternal age and deprivation quintile (SOA), 2022

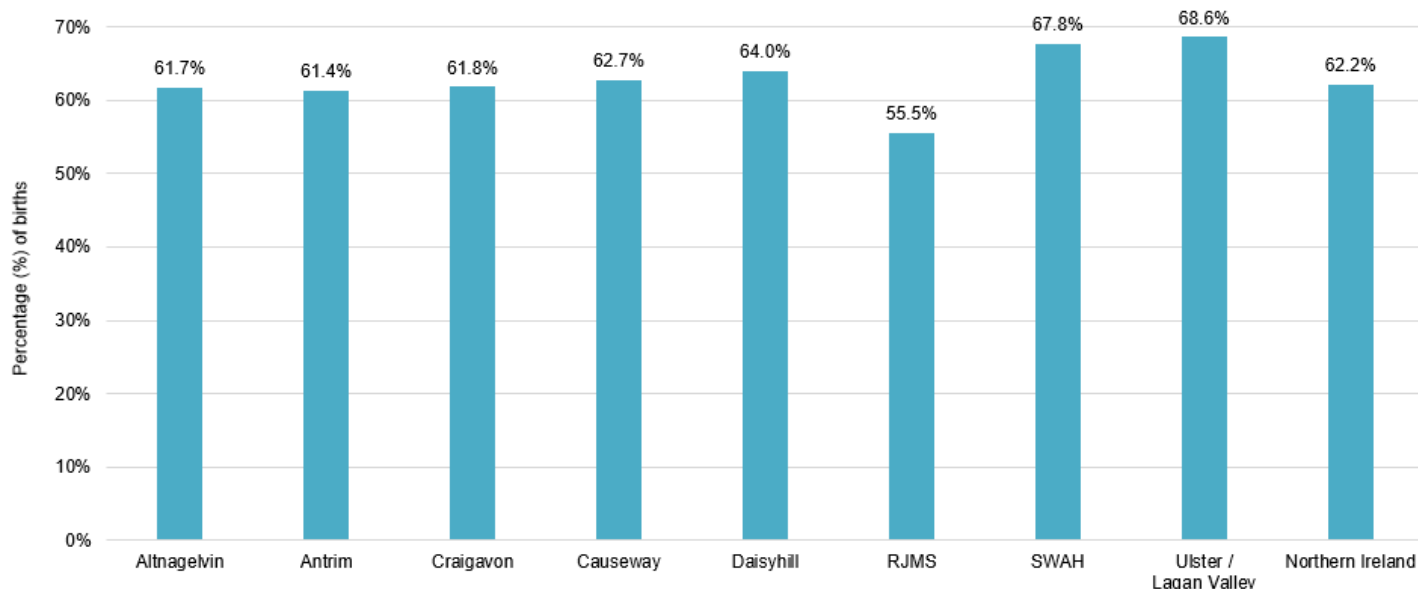


Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite. Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA); * Based on maternal residence.
Note: Non-zero y-axis

Place of birth

There is variation in the rates of attempted breastfeeding by hospital (Figure 11, [Appendix Table I](#)). Data for 2022 show that the highest rates of attempted breastfeeding were recorded for the Ulster / Lagan Valley (68.6%) and South West Acute (67.8%) with the lowest rates for Royal Jubilee Maternity (RJMS) (55.5%) and Antrim (61.4%).

Figure 11: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by hospital, 2022



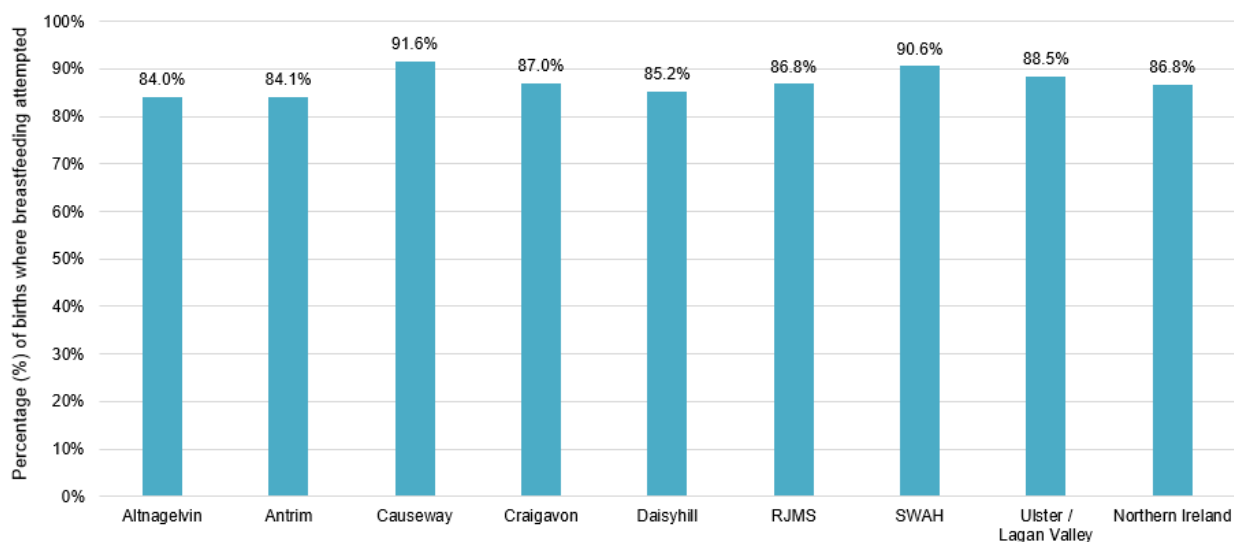
Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite. Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Feeding during the postnatal stay

In addition to information on breastfeeding having been attempted, NIMATS captures data on whether the infant has had at least one effective breastfeed during the postnatal stay.

Overall, where breastfeeding was attempted, 86.8% (11,044/12,726) of infants had at least one effective breastfeed during the postnatal stay. Figure 12 shows that there was some variation by hospital ([Appendix Table J](#)).

Figure 12: At least one effective breastfeed during postnatal stay by hospital, 2022
NIMATS experimental data (Base = 12,726 breastfeeding attempted)

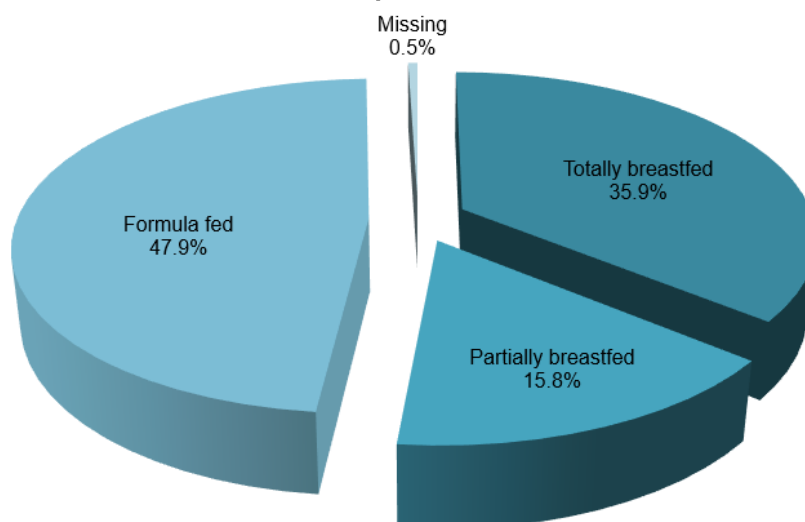


Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS); live births to NI resident mothers; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital. Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Feeding at discharge - NIMATS

NIMATS figures for 2022 indicate that 51.6% of infants were receiving breastmilk at discharge (35.9% totally breastfed and 15.8% partially breastfed) with 47.9% formula fed at discharge (Figure 13). As previously stated, there will be some variation between total births recorded on the NIMATS and CHS as the systems collate information differently, for example NIMATS will record births in Northern Ireland hospitals while CHS will include infants not born in NI hospitals.

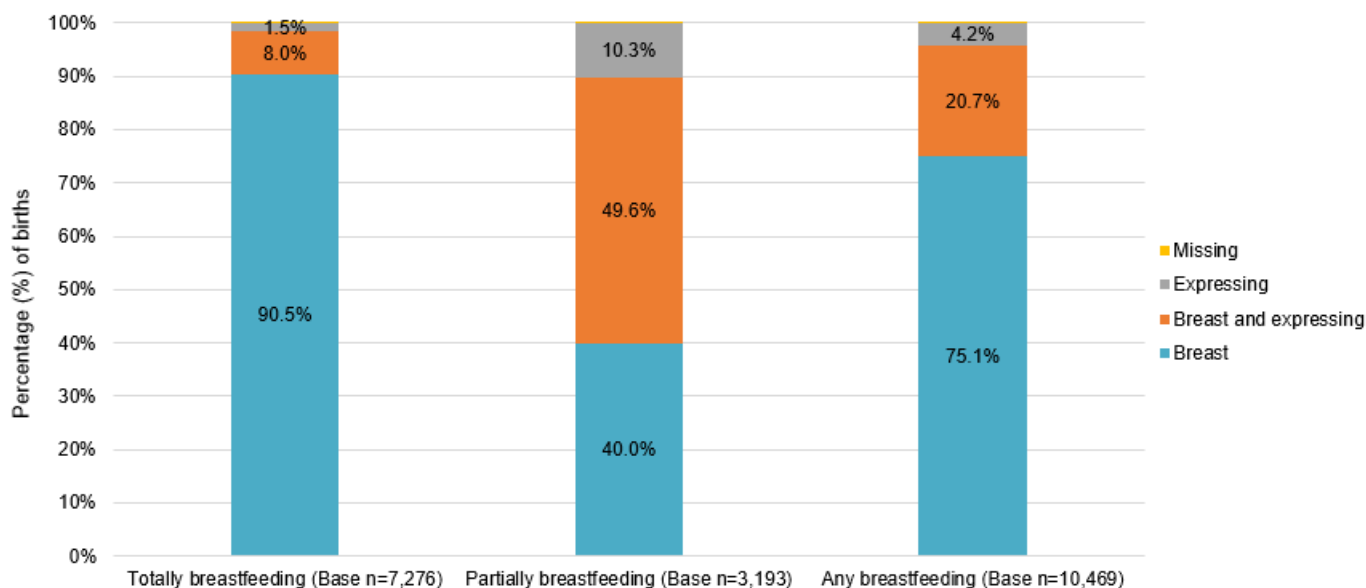
Figure 13: Feeding status at discharge, 2022
NIMATS experimental data



Base N=20,272: Totally breastfed (n=7,276), Partially breastfed (n=3,193), Formula fed (n=9,701), missing (n=102)
Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

For those who were totally or partially breastfed at discharge, the method of feeding was recorded as either breast, expressed or both. Figure 14 ([Appendix Table K](#)) shows that the majority (90.5%) of those recorded as totally breastfeeding at discharge were feeding by breast compared to 40.0% of those discharged partially breastfeeding.

Figure 14: Breastfeeding at discharge by feeding method, 2022
NIMATS experimental data

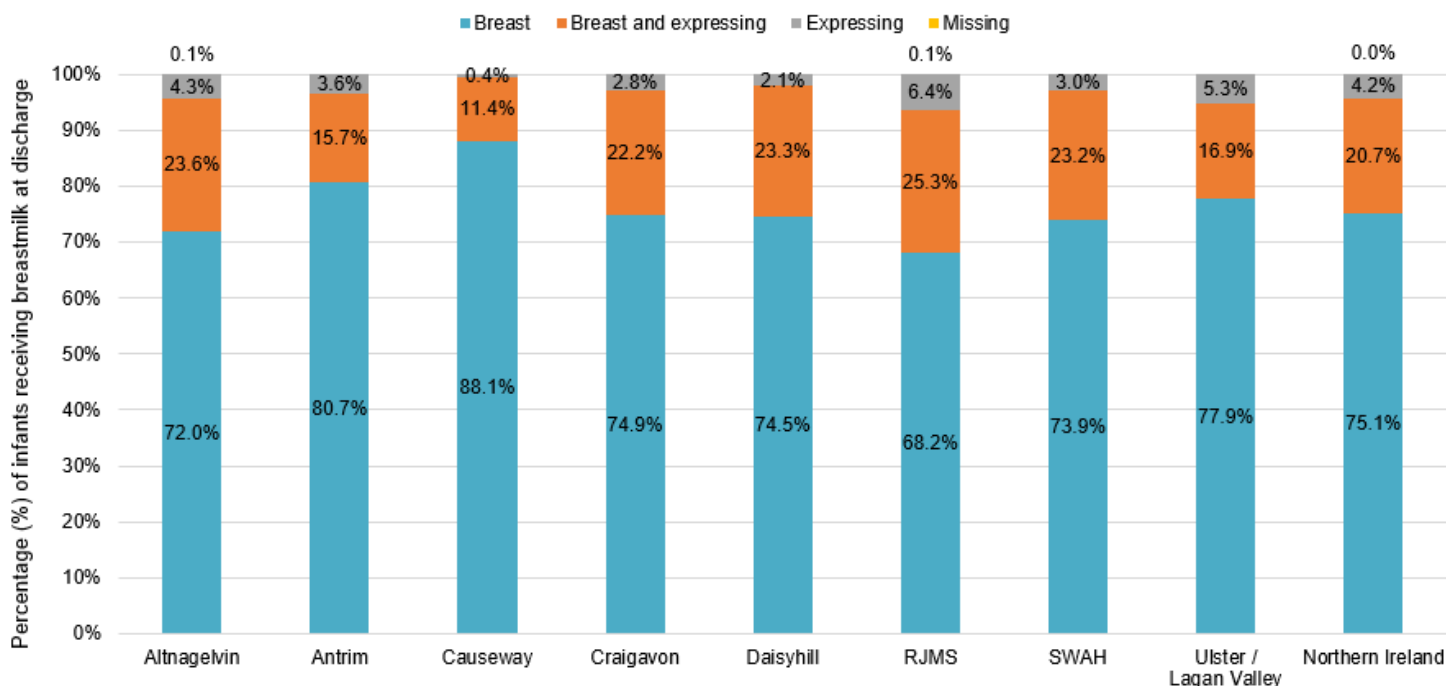


Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Figure 15 ([Appendix Table K](#)) shows the variation in feeding method at discharge from hospital for infants receiving any breast milk. The highest rates of feeding at the breast were recorded for Causeway (88.1%) followed by Antrim (80.7%) and Ulster / Lagan Valley (77.9%).

Figure 15: Breastfeeding at discharge feeding method by hospital, 2022
NIMATS experimental data

(of infants receiving breastmilk at discharge n=10,469)



Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Supplementation

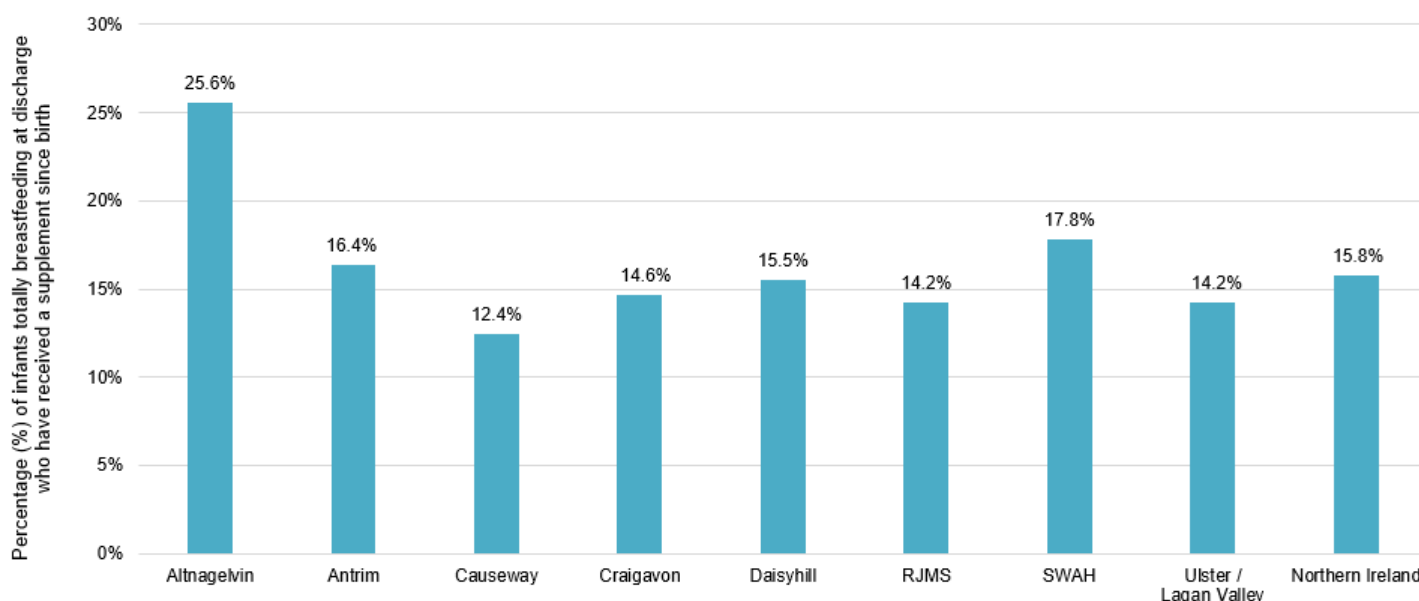
Evidence suggests that providing new born babies with foods or fluids other than breast milk in the first few days after birth has a negative impact on the successful establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding.^{23,24} Supplementation with artificial milk has also been found to significantly alter the intestinal microflora.²⁵

Current WHO guidance recommends that 'Mothers should be discouraged from giving any food or fluids other than breast milk, unless medically indicated'.²⁶ One of the key findings from a 2016 review of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative stated that 'Avoiding in-hospital supplementation appears to be a key step for breastfeeding success, perhaps reflecting adequate implementation of the rest of Ten Steps.'²⁷

For infants who are recorded as being totally breastfed at discharge, NIMATS also records if the infant has received any formula supplements. The system does not record the reason for supplementation i.e. clinical indication, fully informed choice or other.

In 2022, 15.8% (n=1,148) of infants who were totally breastfed at discharge had also received a formula supplement since birth (Figure 16, [Appendix Table L](#)), a slight increase from 13.8% in 2021. The rates of supplementation vary between hospitals, ranging from 0% in Lagan Valley to 25.6% in Altnagelvin.

Figure 16: Supplementation by hospital, 2022
NIMATS experimental data
(of 7,276 infants totally breastfed at discharge)



Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

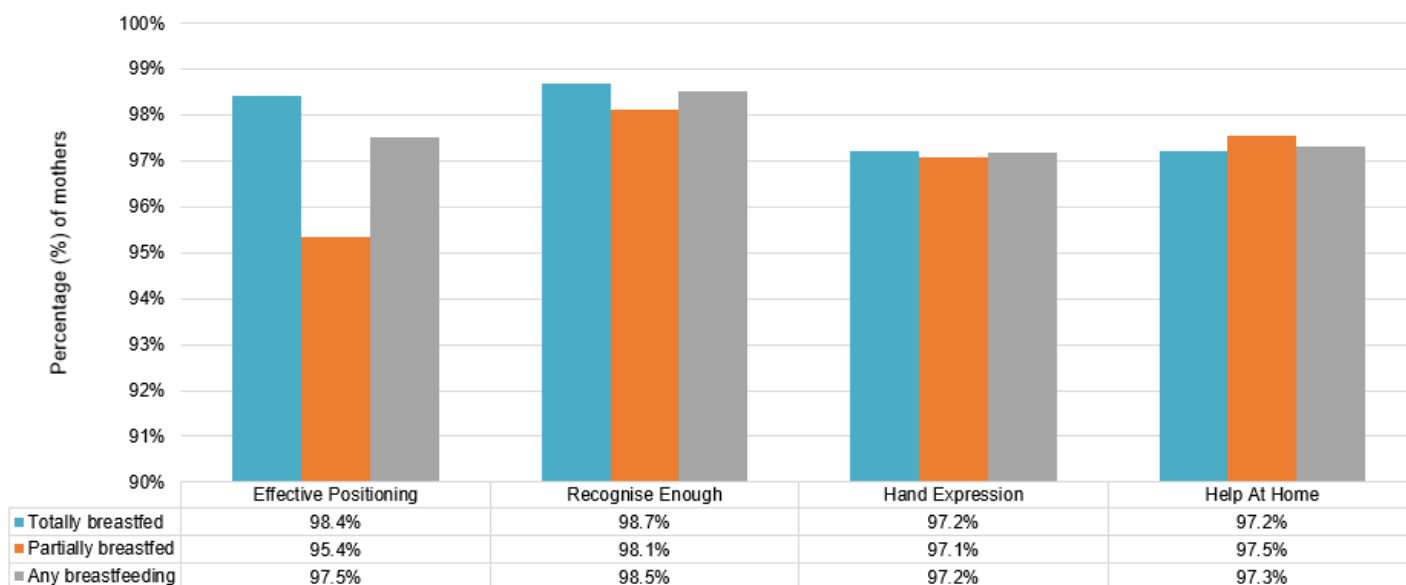
As previously highlighted, skin-to-skin contact at birth can support mothers to establish and maintain breastfeeding. As such, it is of interest to note that of those infants who were totally breastfed at discharge (n=7,276), 15.0% (1,018/6,783) of those who had any skin-to-skin contact at birth had received a supplement compared to 26.4% (130/493) of those who did not have any skin-to-skin contact at birth.

Support with feeding

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards for maternity services require staff to enable mothers to get breastfeeding off to a good start and to support mothers to make informed decisions regarding the introduction of food or fluids other than breastmilk. Mothers should be supported to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common difficulties. This includes coaching mothers on how to express breastmilk including hand expression, understanding good positioning and attachment and milk supply.

NIMATS data for 2022 shows that over nine out of ten mothers who were totally or partially breastfeeding at discharge had received information on effective positioning and attachment, recognising enough milk, hand expression and accessing help at home on discharge from hospital (Figure 17). Some variation is observed by hospital ([Appendix Table M](#)).

Figure 17: Breastfeeding support at discharge, 2022
NIMATS experimental data



Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

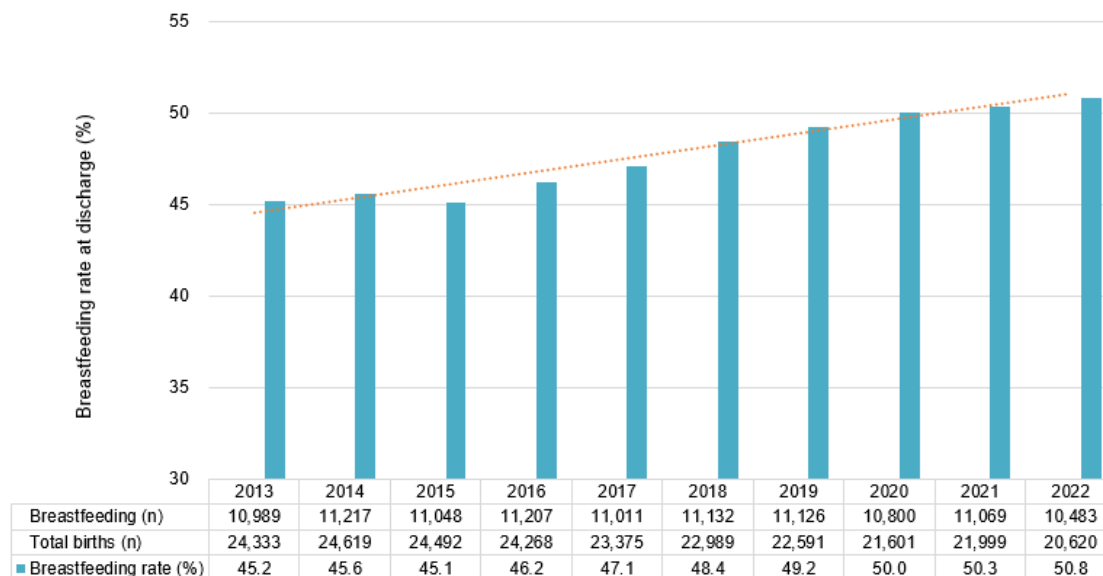
Note: Non-zero y-axis

BFI standards relating to support with bottle-feeding highlight that mothers who are formula feeding or mixed feeding should be taught about safe preparation and storage of formula. NIMATS data for 2022 shows that the majority of mothers formula feeding at discharge are offered information/support to sterilise equipment with some minor variation by hospital of birth (98.3%, range 97.2%-100%), make up feeds (98.3%, range 97.4%-100%) and discuss first milks (96.5%, range 87.1%-100%) ([Appendix Table N](#)).

Feeding at discharge - CHS

Figure 18 shows the number of infants receiving **any*** breast milk at discharge from hospitals† in Northern Ireland from 2013-2022. Between 2013 and 2015 the rate of breastfeeding remained relatively stable. Since 2015 rates have increased steadily with 50.8% of infants receiving any breastmilk at discharge from hospital in 2022 (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Northern Ireland breastfeeding at discharge (%), 2013 - 2022

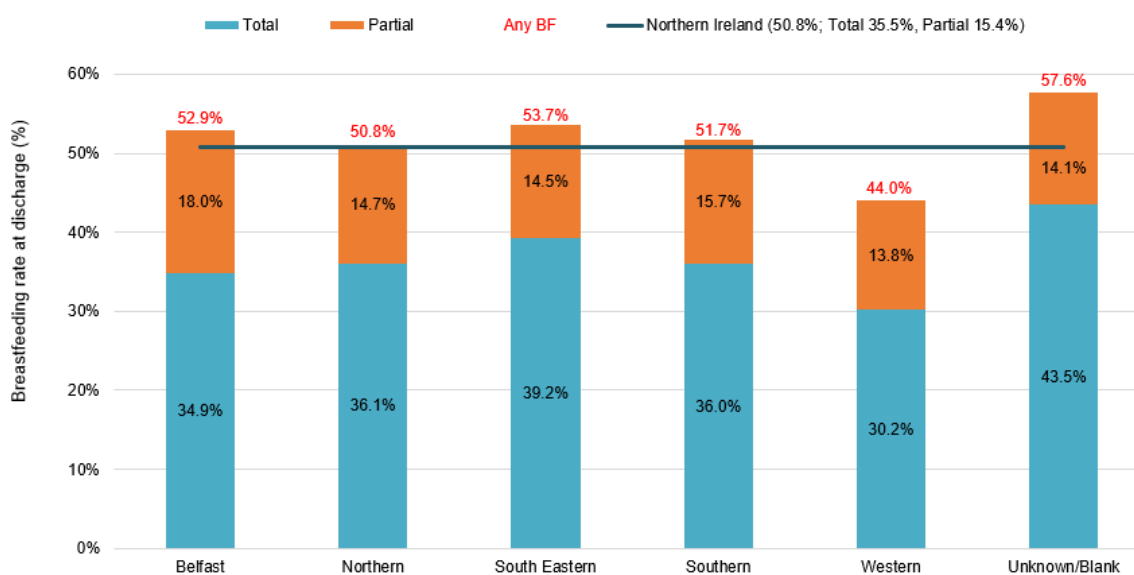


Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births.

Health and Social Care Trust

CHS data for 2022 shows that the South Eastern HSCT/LCG^ has the highest breastfeeding rates at discharge (53.7%) followed by the Belfast HSCT (52.9%), Southern HSCT (51.7%), Northern HSCT (50.8%) and Western (44.0%) (Figure 19, [Appendix Table O](#)). For definitions of 'Total' and 'Partial' breastfeeding refer to Page 40.

Figure 19: Breastfeeding rate at discharge (%) by HSCT / LCG^, 2022



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; live births.

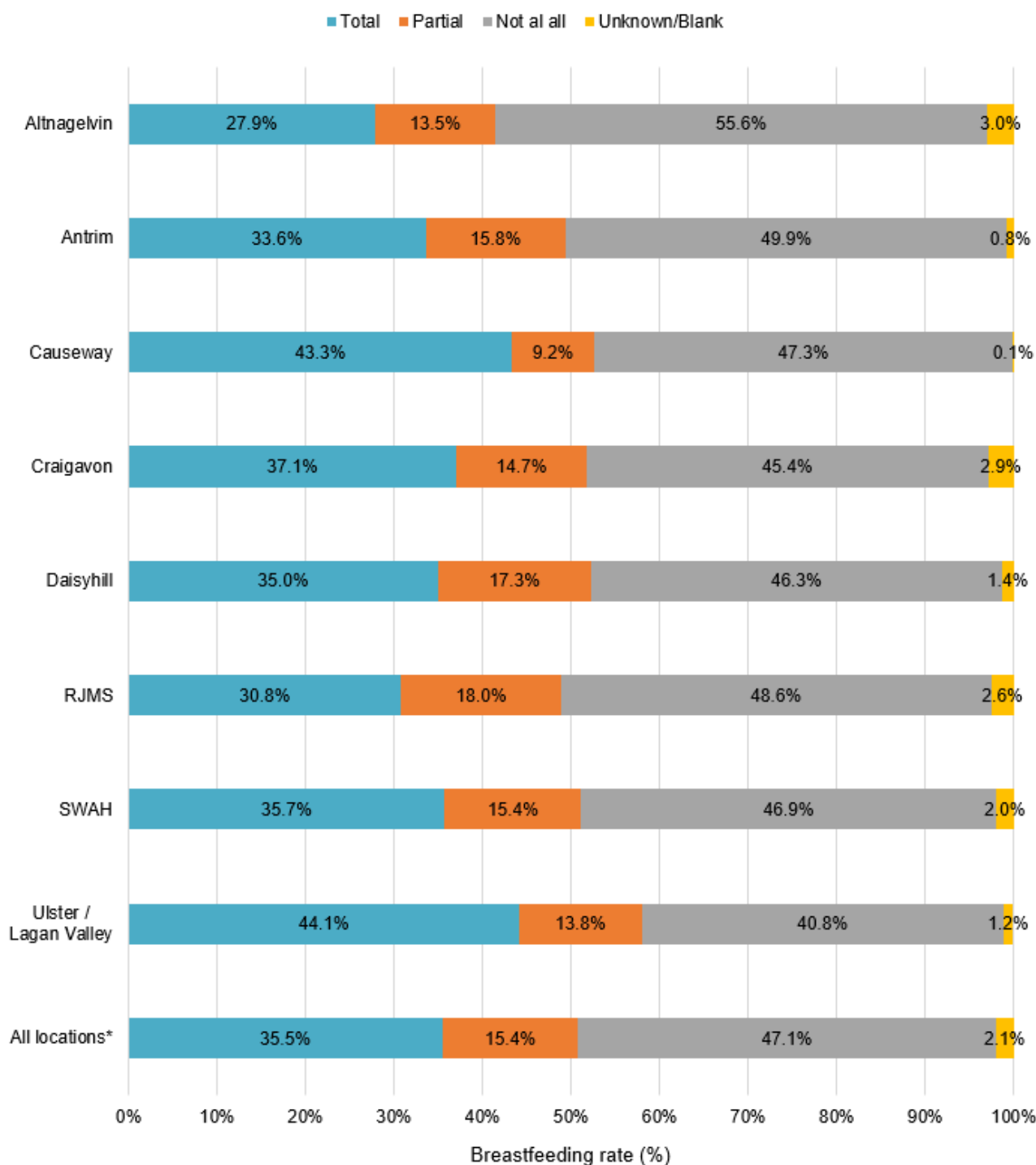
* Data includes infants receiving only breast milk and those receiving both breast milk and formula.

† Includes 44 births: At home (n=25), ROI Hospital (n=17), Overseas Hospital (n=1), Location other than hospital (n=1).

Place of birth

In 2022 the highest rates of any breastfeeding at discharge from hospital were for Ulster / Lagan Valley (57.9%), Causeway (52.6%) and Daisyhill (52.3%) (Figure 20, [Appendix Table P](#)).

Figure 20: Breastfeeding rate at discharge (%) by hospital, 2022



Source: CHS; live births to NI resident mothers. All locations* - Includes 44 births: At home (n=25), ROI Hospital (n=17), Overseas Hospital (n=1), Location other than hospital (n=1).

Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Further data on breastfeeding rates at discharge (%) by maternal age group and deprivation quintile (SOA) are available in [Appendix Table Q](#) and [Appendix Table R](#) respectively.

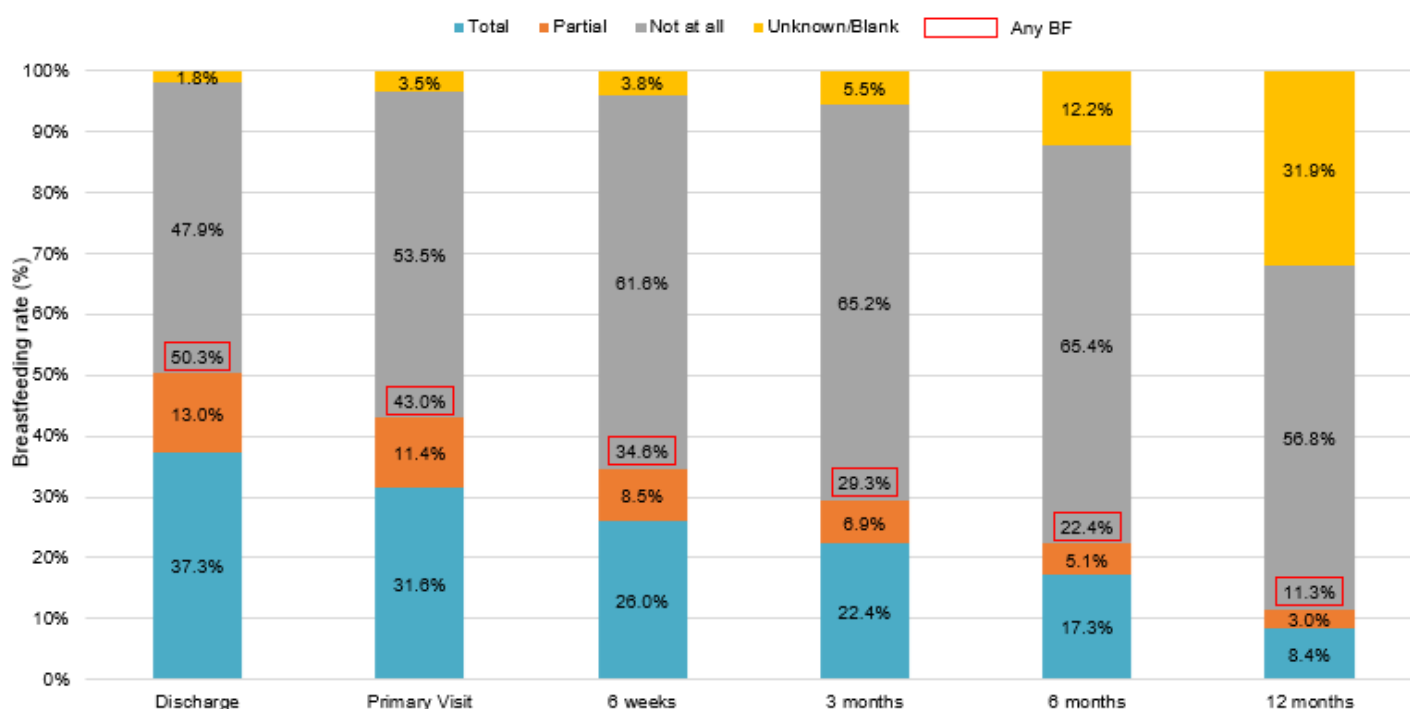
Prevalence of breastfeeding

The Child Health System currently collates information on the feeding status of infants at discharge from hospital, first visit (10-14 days), 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months in line with Healthy Child, Healthy Future. This data provides an indication of the prevalence of breastfeeding.

There is a time lag in reporting data on breastfeeding prevalence for example, 12 month data for an infant born in December 2021 will not be due for collection until December 2022.

Figure 21 ([Appendix Table S](#)) shows the prevalence of breastfeeding for births in 2021. Data shows a drop in the number of infants receiving any breast milk from 50.3% at discharge to 43.0% at the primary visit, 34.6% at 6 weeks, 29.3% at 3 months, 22.4% at 6 months and 11.3% at 12 months.

Figure 21: Prevalence of breastfeeding* (%) up to 12 months for infants born in 2021



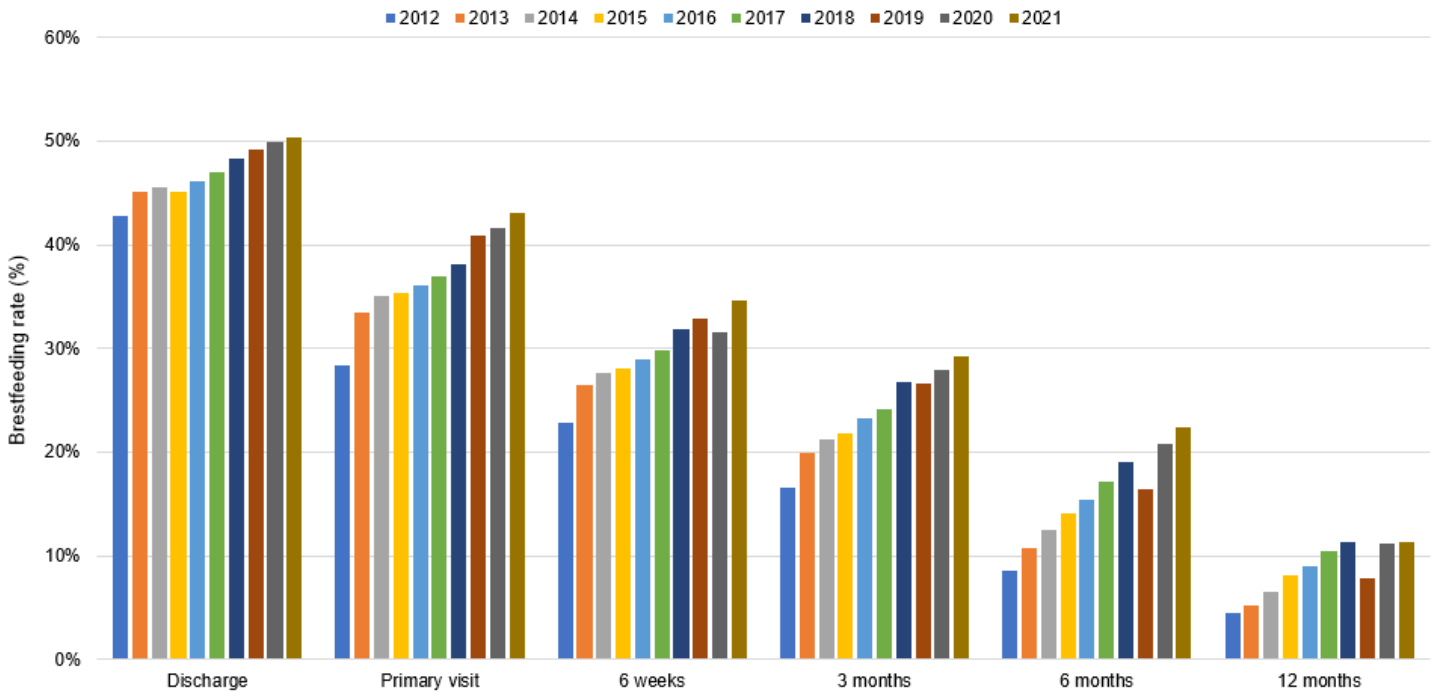
Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; live births to NI resident mothers; *Any BF - Combined Total and Partial breastfeeding

Figure 22 ([Appendix Table S](#)) shows breastfeeding prevalence for births in years 2012 to 2021. It highlights the general increasing trend in breastfeeding rates at time points up to 12 months.

It also shows decreases in breastfeeding rates for births in 2019 at 3, 6 and 9 month time points and in 2020 at 6 weeks. A reduction in visits due to the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have impacted on data quality, with higher levels of missing data particularly at 6 and 12 months visits, which may have contributed to the decreased breastfeeding rates reported for these time points.²⁸

Overall, in terms of breastfeeding data quality, there has been an improvement in the levels of completeness across the period 2012-2021, which can be seen in visits up to 6 months. However, at 12 months for around a third of infants, feeding status is either unknown or blank. While some improvement in data completeness has been seen in 2020 and 2021 following the pandemic, further ways to improve data completeness are required.

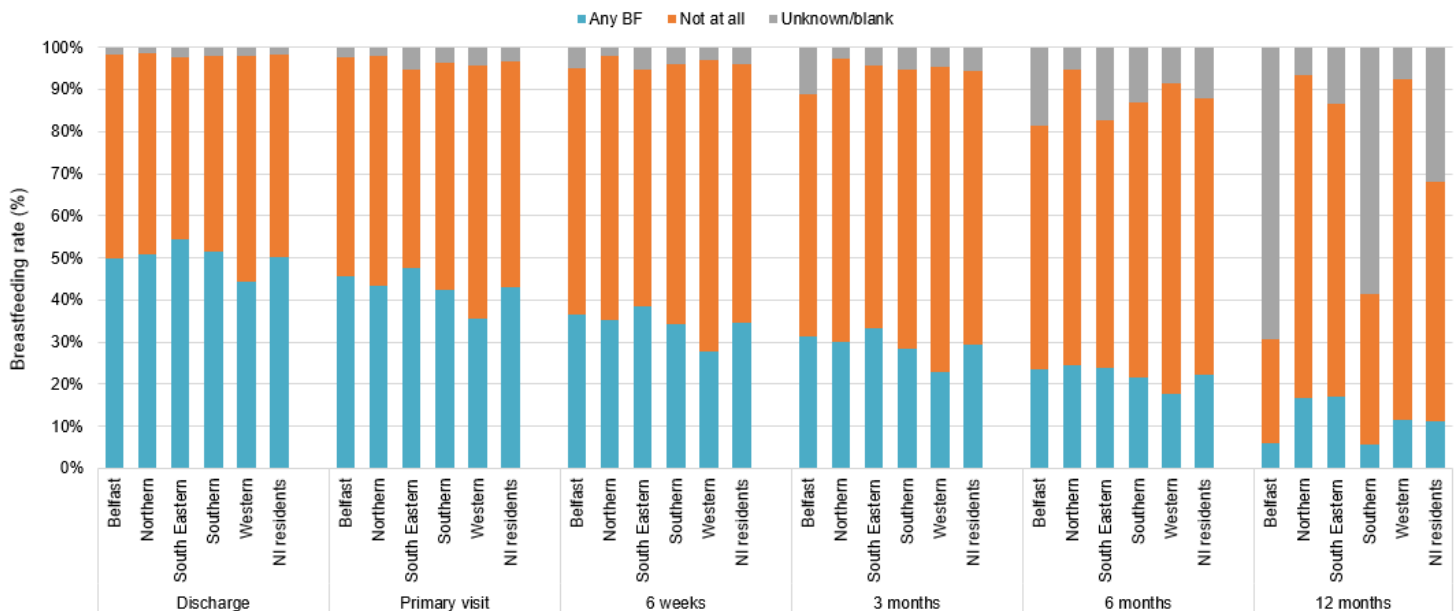
Figure 22: Prevalence of breastfeeding* (%) up to 12 months by stage and year of birth, 2012-2021



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; live births to NI resident mothers; *Any breastfeeding - Combined Total and Partial breastfeeding

Figure 23 ([Appendix Table T](#)) shows the variation in breastfeeding rates up to 12 months for births in 2021 by HSC Trust of residence. It also highlights variation in data completeness by HSCT.

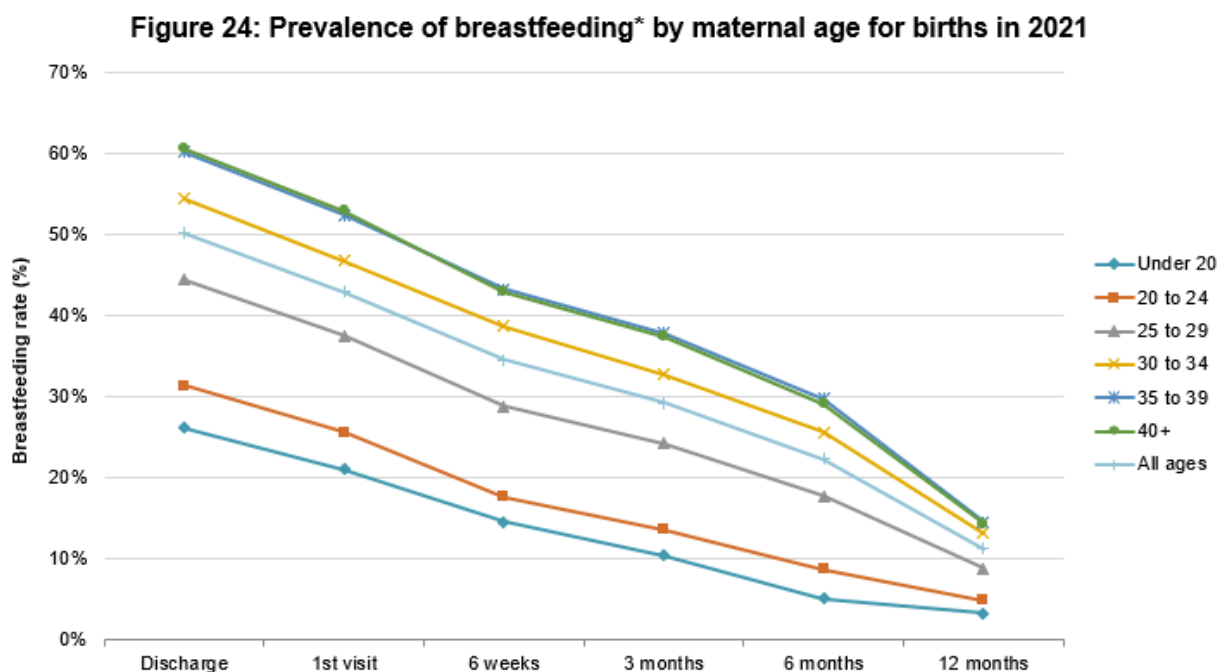
Figure 23: Prevalence of breastfeeding* (%) up to 12 months for births by stage and HSCT for births in 2021



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; live births to NI resident mothers; *Any breastfeeding - Combined Total and Partial breastfeeding

Maternal age

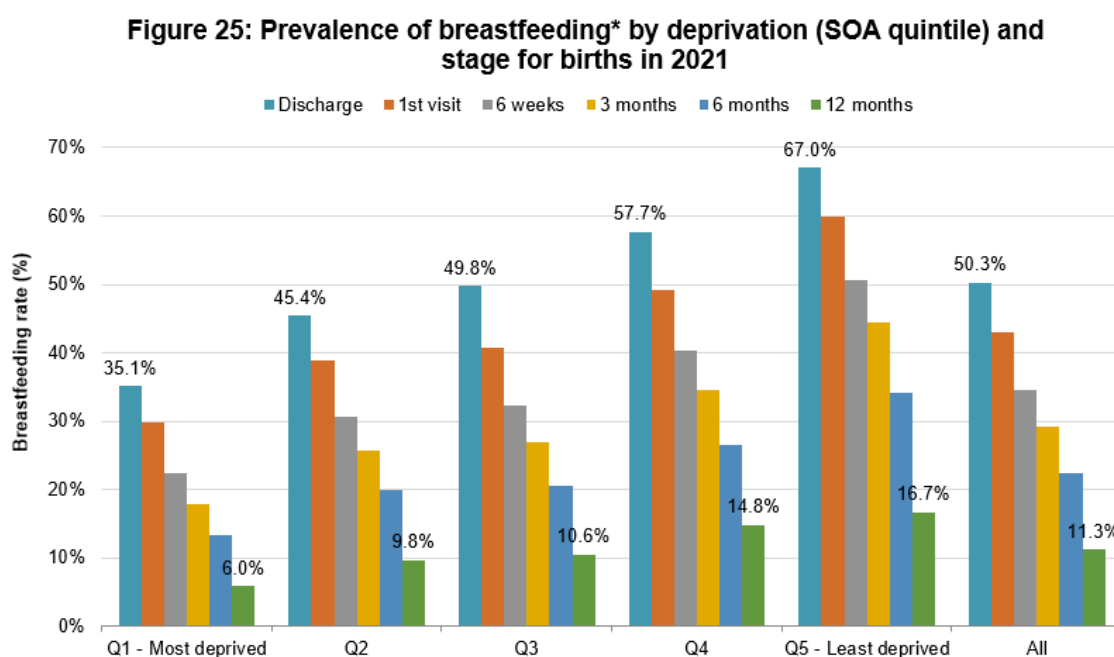
Figure 24 ([Appendix Table U](#)) shows the prevalence of breastfeeding by maternal age for infants born in 2021. Mothers aged over 30 years are more likely to be breastfeeding compared to those under 30 years at each recording time point; for example, those over 30 years are 1.9 times more likely to report any breastfeeding at 6 and 12 month time points compared with those under 30 years of age.



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. * Any breastfeeding - combined total and partial breastfeeding
All ages includes 3 births where maternal age unknown

Deprivation

Figure 25 ([Appendix Table V](#)) shows that the rate of breastfeeding is higher in the least deprived areas and this pattern is consistent at each recording time point.



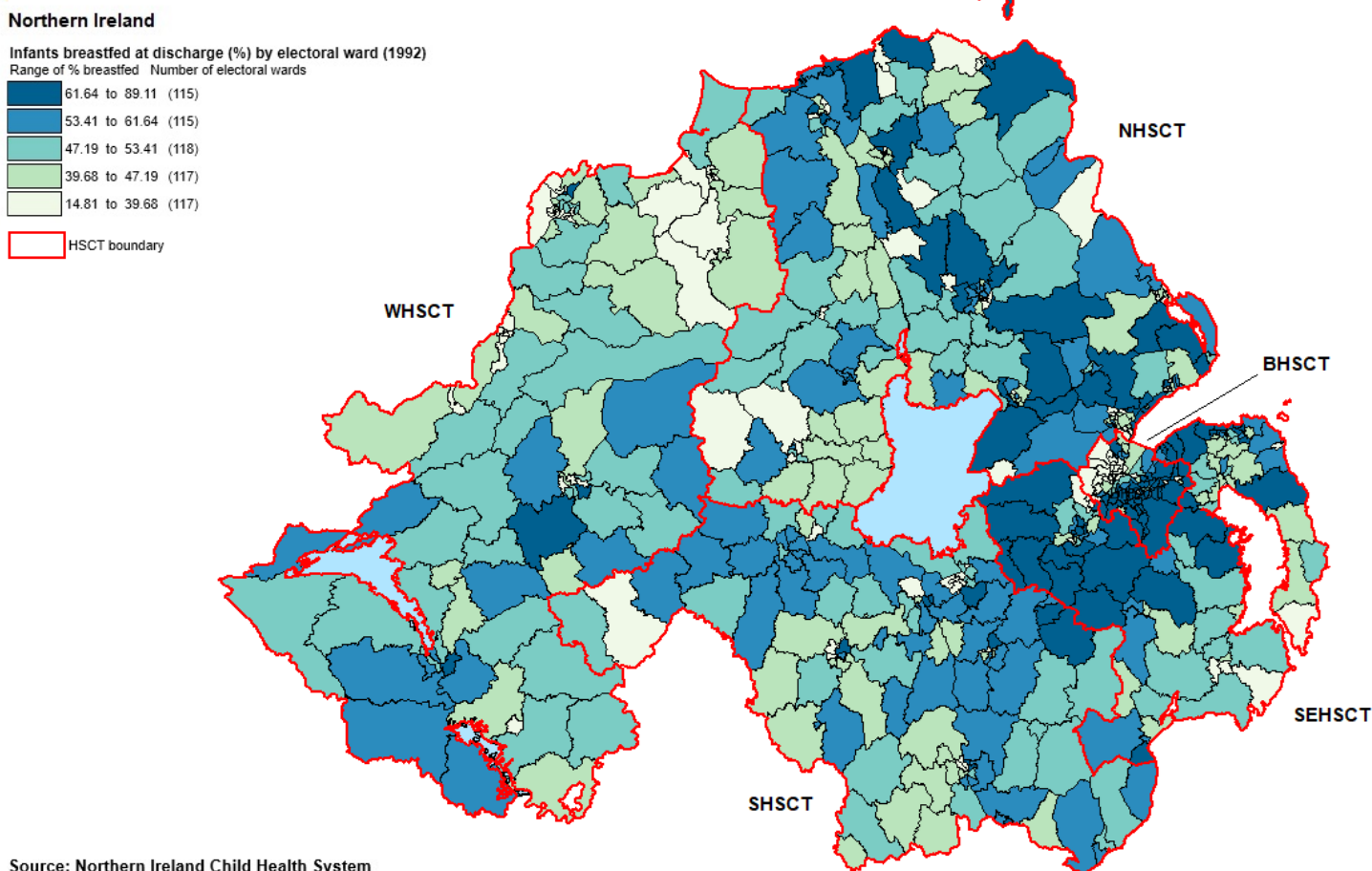
Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. * Any breastfeeding - combined total and partial breastfeeding
Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA)

Breastfeeding and inequality

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2017 provides an area based measure of relative deprivation for small areas within Northern Ireland.²⁹ Relative rankings are available at Super Output Area (SOA) [890 SOAs ranked from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890)] and Electoral ward 1992 boundaries [582 wards ranked from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890)] geographies. Electoral ward boundaries were redrawn in 2014, however as the new boundaries are not coterminous with HSC Trust, 1992 wards are used to map the variation in average breastfeeding rates at ward level by HSCT using Child Health System data 2020-2022 (Figure 26). Due to small numbers a three year period is used to provide some stability in rates.

At a Northern Ireland regional level, the lowest breastfeeding rates are found in Bushmills (14.8%, 4/27, NHSCT), Twinbrook (19.4%, SEHSCT), Ardoyne (19.9%, BHSCT), Upper Springfield (19.9%, BHSCT) and Collin Glen (20.0%, SEHSCT). The highest breastfeeding rates are observed in Malone (89.1%, BHSCT), Newtownbreda (86.3%, BHSCT), Stranmillis (86.2%, BHSCT), Cultra (86.0%, SEHSCT) and Craigavad (84.2%, SEHSCT).

Figure 26: Breastfeeding at discharge (%) by electoral ward (1992), 2020-2022



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System

Public Health Agency, Health Intelligence, April 2024

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[Table 2](#) shows presents the five wards with the highest and lowest breastfeeding rates within each HSCT.

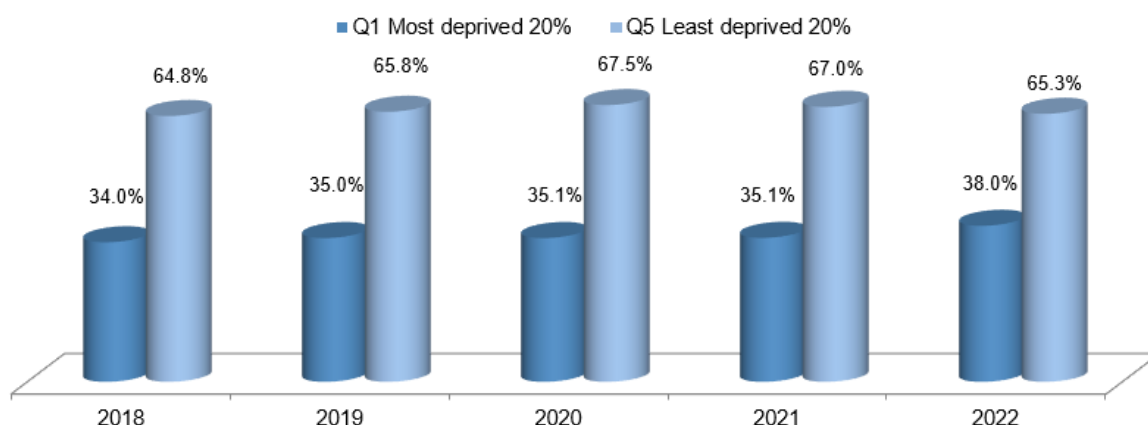
Table 2: Highest and lowest rates of breastfeeding at discharge by HSCT and electoral ward (1992), 2020-2022 (combined)

HSCT	Highest breastfeeding rates				Lowest breastfeeding rates			
	Electoral ward (1992)	Total live births	Any breastfeeding at discharge		Electoral ward (1992)	Total live births	Any breastfeeding at discharge	
			N	%			N	%
Belfast	MALONE	156	139	89.1	WOODVALE	167	44	26.3
	NEWTOWNBREDA	80	69	86.3	SHANKILL	178	43	24.2
	STRANMILLIS	181	156	86.2	CRUMLIN	208	43	20.7
	ROSETTA	199	165	82.9	UPPER SPRINGFIELD	216	43	19.9
	STORMONT	137	113	82.5	ARDOYNE	282	56	19.9
Northern	JORDANSTOWN	131	106	80.9	CLIPPERSTOWN	68	17	25.0
	KNOCKAGH	87	70	80.5	CRAIGY HILL	20	5	25.0
	ROSTULLA	101	77	76.2	CHURCHLAND	89	21	23.6
	BALLYNURE	88	66	75.0	MOAT	62	13	21.0
	GLEBE	30	22	73.3	BUSHMILLS	-	<5	14.8
South Eastern	CULTRA	43	37	86.0	PORTAFERRY	66	20	30.3
	CRAIGAVAD	57	48	84.2	OLD WARREN	91	27	29.7
	HOLYWOOD PRIORY	56	47	83.9	POLEGLASS	152	38	25.0
	HILLSBOROUGH	111	92	82.9	COLLIN GLEN	275	55	20.0
	BRYANSBURN	57	47	82.5	TWINBROOK	129	25	19.4
Southern	KILLYCOMAIN	78	52	66.7	COURT	98	36	36.7
	SEAPATRICK	52	34	65.4	BALLYBOT	69	24	34.8
	EDENDERRY	77	50	64.9	BALLYORAN	144	50	34.7
	WARINGSTOWN	183	117	63.9	TAGHNEVAN	167	56	33.5
	OBSERVATORY	117	74	63.2	DRUMNAMOE	85	27	31.8
Western	CASTLECOOLE	102	73	71.6	CREGGAN SOUTH	121	32	26.4
	BALLYNASHALLOG	77	51	66.2	SHANTALLOW WEST	398	102	25.6
	CLANABOGAN	114	71	62.3	BALLYCOLMAN	54	13	24.1
	DRUMRAGH	82	51	62.2	COOLESSAN	44	10	22.7
	BOHO CLEENISH AND LETTERBREEN	118	70	59.3	CREGGAN CENTRAL	115	25	21.7

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers

Figure 27 shows that while breastfeeding rates at discharge in 2022 are 1.7 times higher among those living in the 20% least deprived SOAs compared to those living the 20% most deprived SOAs, the gap has narrowed slightly between 2021 and 2022.

Figure 27: Breastfeeding rates at discharge (%) by deprivation quintile (Super Output Area), 2018-2022



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers; Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2017

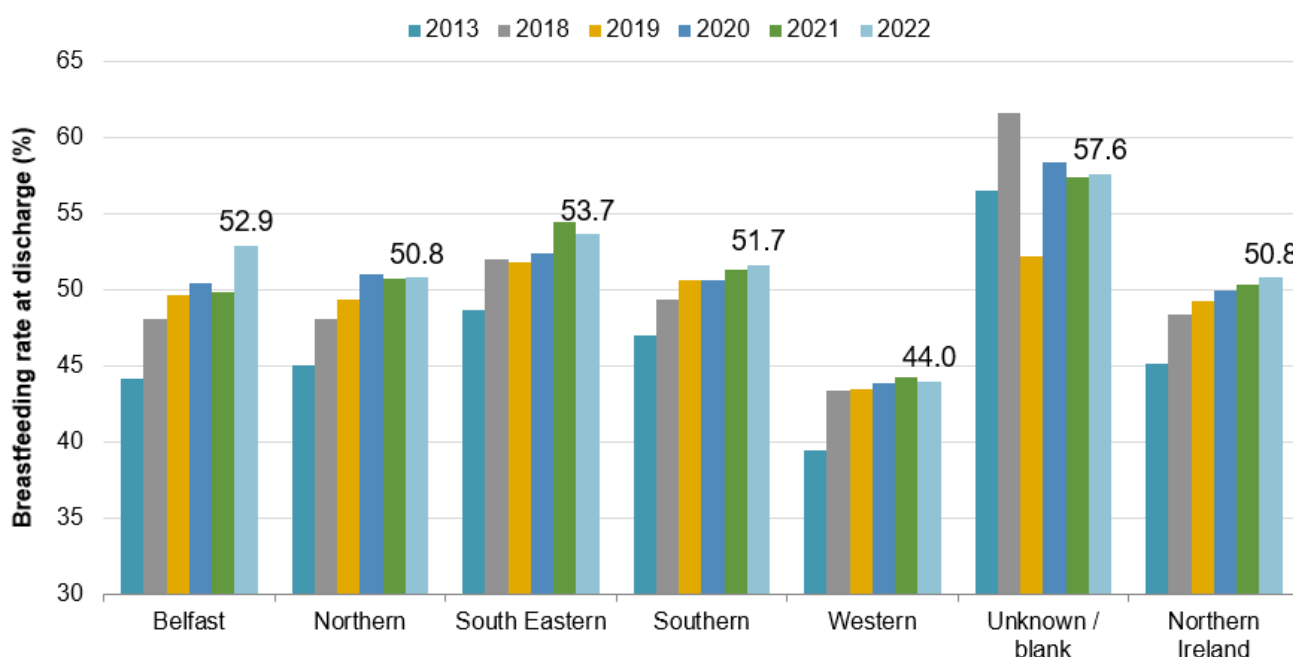
Breastfeeding rates at discharge by Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) / Local Commissioning Group (LCG)

Figure 28 shows the variation in rates of breastfeeding at hospital discharge from the Child Health System (CHS) by HSCT/ LCG based on maternal residence ([Appendix Table W](#)).

At a Northern Ireland regional level, the rate of breastfeeding at discharge has increased from 45.2% in 2013 to 50.8% in 2022 (an average yearly increase of 0.56%).

At HSCT/ LCG level, between 2013 and 2022, the Belfast HSCT showed the largest increase in breastfeeding rates at discharge, with an increase of 8.7 percentage points, compared to 5.7 for the Northern HSCT, 5.0 for the South Eastern HSCT, 4.7 for the Southern HSCT and 4.5 for the South Eastern HSCT.

Figure 28: Breastfeeding rate at discharge by Health and Social Care Trust / Local Commissioning Group, 2013 & 2018-2022

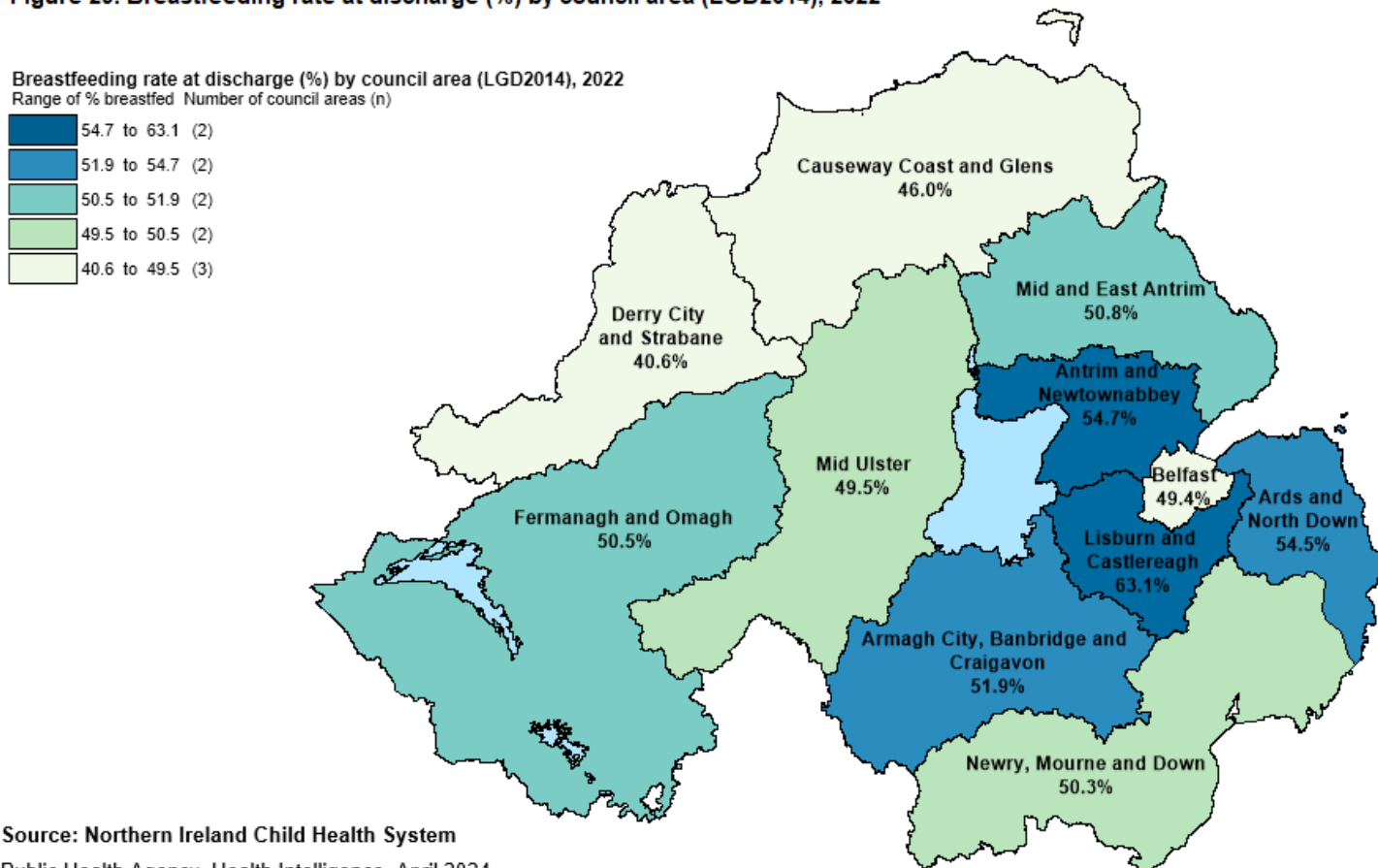


Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI residents
Note: Non-zero axis

Council (LGD2014) Areas

Data for 2022 shows the highest rates of breastfeeding at discharge among residents of Lisburn and Castlereagh (63.1%) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (54.7%) with the lowest rates among those living in Derry City and Strabane (40.6%) and Causeway Coast and Glens (46.0%) (Figure 29; [Appendix Table X](#)).

Figure 29: Breastfeeding rate at discharge (%) by council area (LGD2014), 2022



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System

Public Health Agency, Health Intelligence, April 2024

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Figures 30a and 30b ([Appendix Table Y](#)) show the rates of breastfeeding at discharge (%) by Council area (LGD2014) and District Electoral Ward (DEA2014).

Figure 30a: Breastfeeding at discharge by Council (LGD2014) and District Electoral Area (DEA2014), 2022

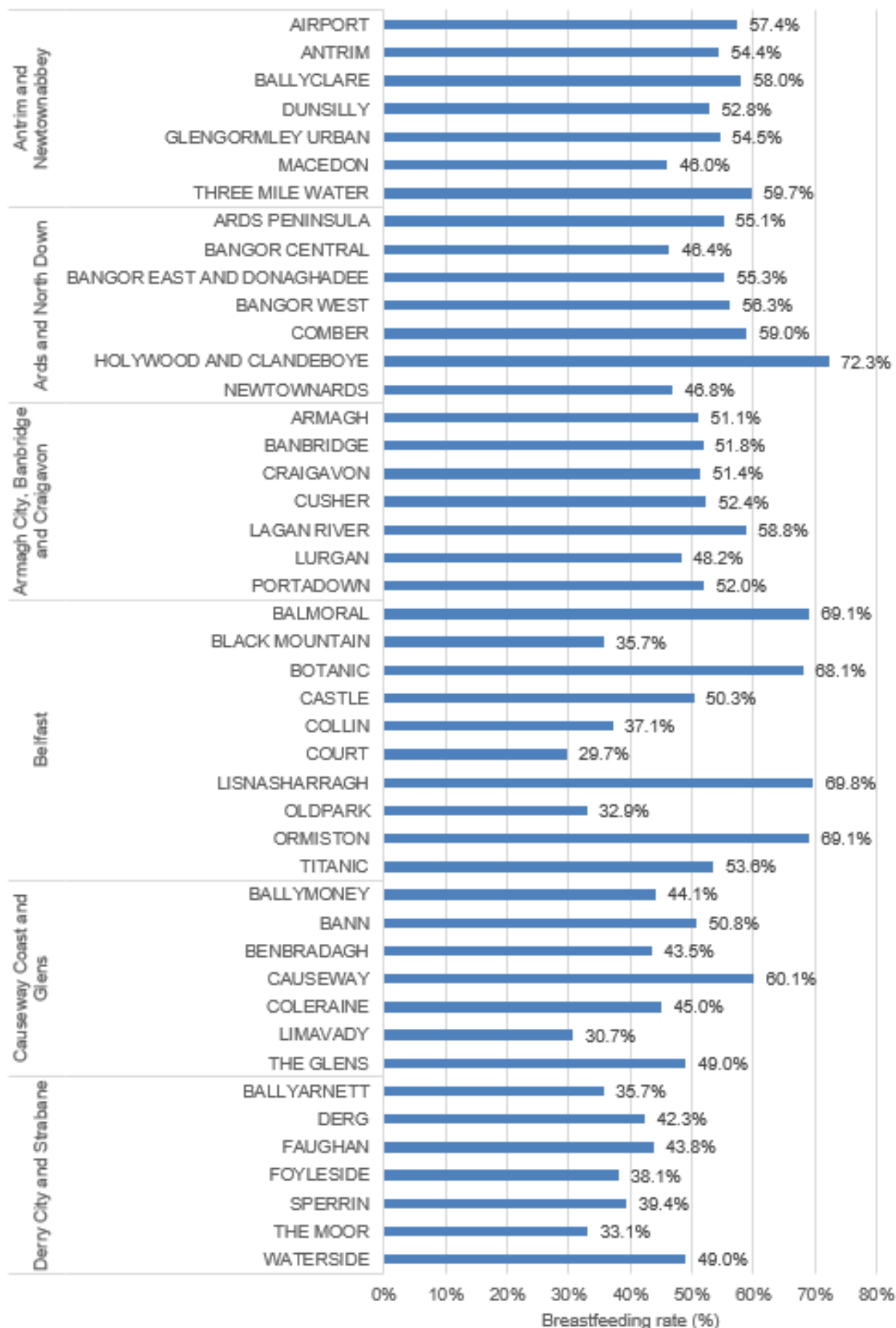


Figure 30b (Continued): Breastfeeding at discharge by Council (LGD 2014) and District Electoral Area (DEA 2014), 2022

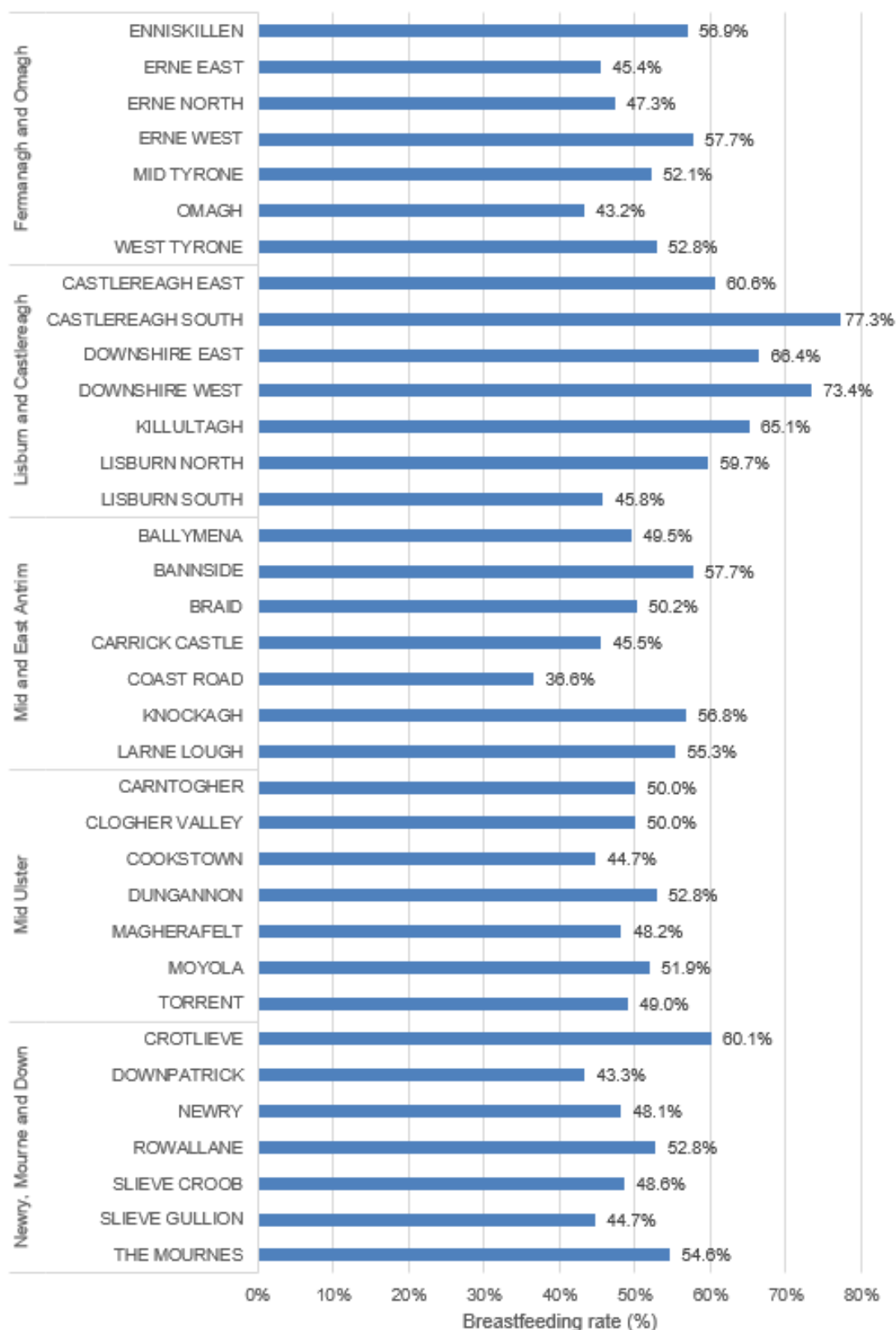
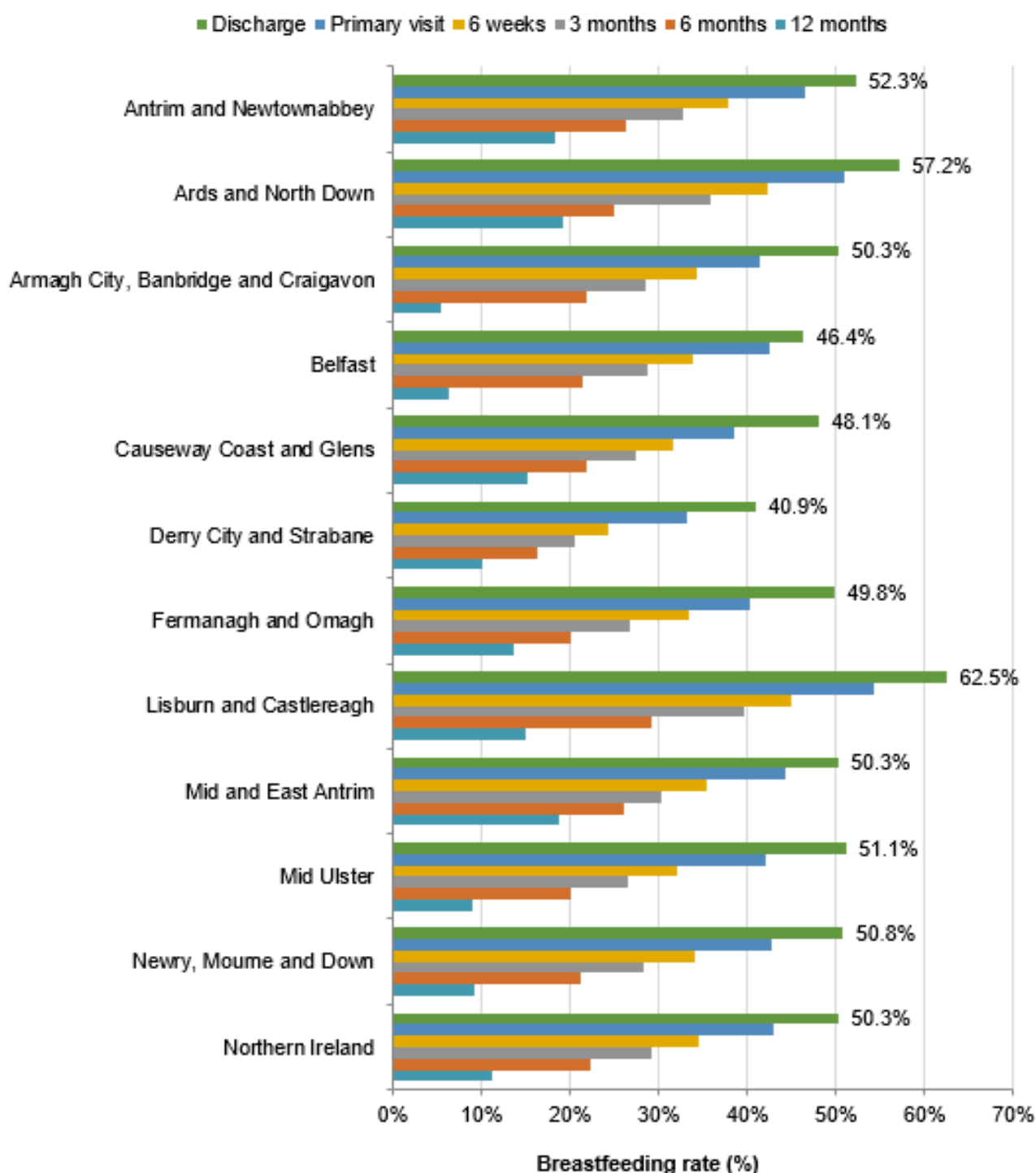


Figure 31 ([Appendix Table Z](#)) shows the variation in breastfeeding prevalence (%) by Council area (LGD2014) for 2021.

Figure 31: Breastfeeding prevalence (%) by Council area (LGD2014), 2021



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

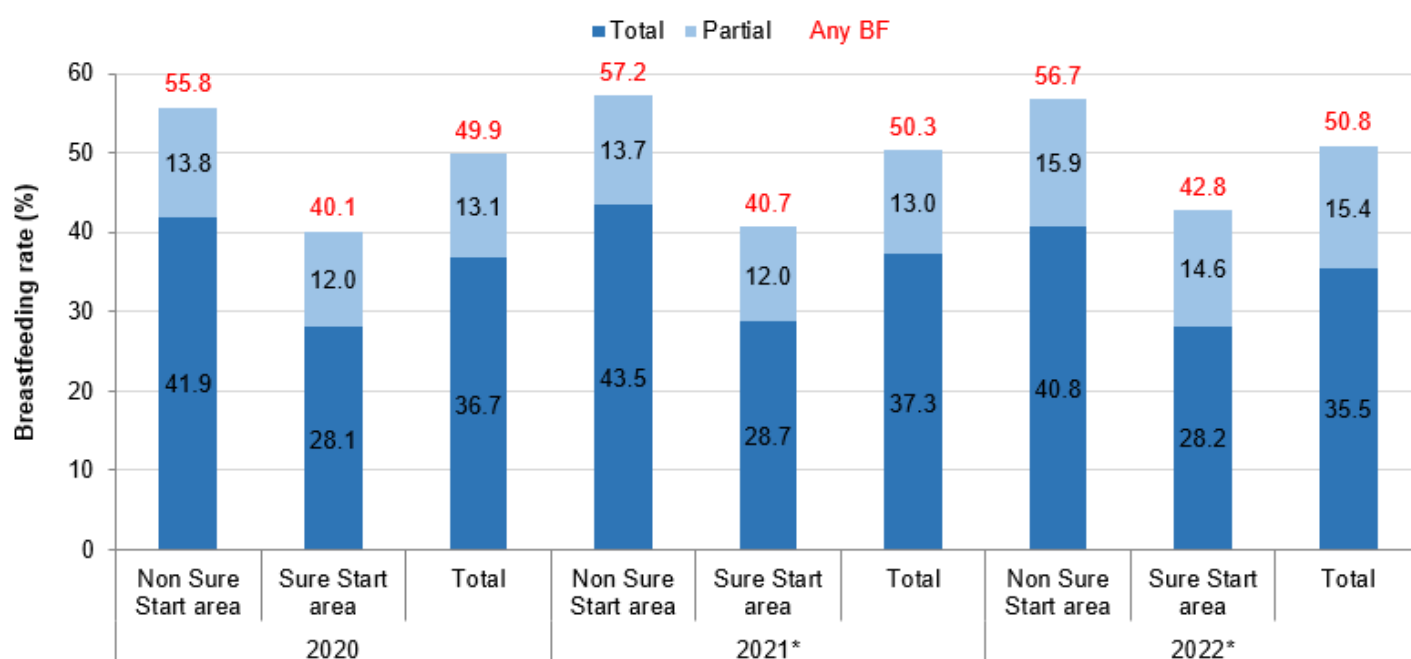
Sure Start Services

Sure Start is a government programme which provides a range of support services for parents and children under the age of four, who live in disadvantaged areas across Northern Ireland. It aims to support parents from pregnancy and to give children the best start in life. Each Sure Start project works with parents as well as statutory agencies and community-based organisations from the area, to design and deliver a range of services that best meet local need.

The NI Breastfeeding Strategy asks Sure Starts to support best practice by implementing UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Children's Centre Standards. In addition to core services, Sure Starts may also offer additional antenatal and postnatal support and advice on breastfeeding.

Figure 32 ([Appendix Table AA](#)) shows the rates of breastfeeding at discharge (%) categorised by Sure Start and Non Sure Start area for the years 2020 to 2022. Data for 2022 shows that 56.7% of mothers resident in Non Sure Start areas were breastfeeding on discharge from hospital compared to 42.8% of mothers resident in Sure Start Areas. While this trend is consistent with previous years, it should be noted that revisions to Sure Start area boundaries means that data may not be directly comparable.

Figure 32: Breastfeeding at discharge (%) by Sure Start and Non Sure Start area, 2020-2022*



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Note: *Data for 2021 and 2022 is not directly comparable with previous years due to revisions in Sure Start geographical boundaries.

[Table 3](#) shows breastfeeding rates at discharge (%) by Child Care Partnership (CCP) and Sure Start areas for 2022. It should be noted that due to revisions in some Sure Start boundaries it is not possible to directly compare this data with previous reports. Previously a three-year average was used for analysis due to small numbers of births for some Sure Start areas and as such rates should be interpreted with caution.

Data for 2022 shows the highest rates of breastfeeding at a Northern Ireland level recorded for South Belfast (57.6%), Dungannon & Coalisland (53.9%), Clogher Valley (53.1%), Blossom (52.0%) and Mourne (51.2%) Sure Starts.

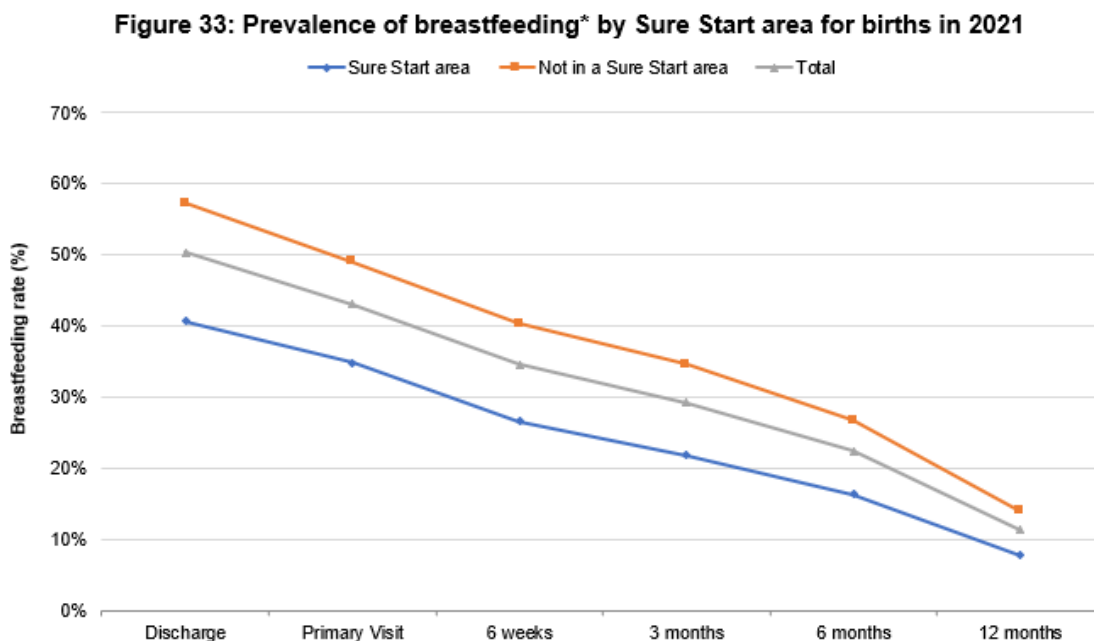
Table 3: Breastfeeding at discharge (%) by Sure Start area, 2022

Child Care Partnership Area	Sure Start Area	Total live births (n)	Any Breastfeeding at discharge	
			n	%
Belfast CCP	Beechmount	77	27	35.1%
	Clan Mor	164	55	33.5%
	East Belfast	381	179	47.0%
	Glenbrook	255	85	33.3%
	Outer West Belfast	278	112	40.3%
	Saol Ur	173	48	27.7%
	Shankill	332	107	32.2%
	Smile	258	109	42.2%
	South Belfast	347	200	57.6%
	Belfast CCP total	2,265	922	40.7%
Northern CCP	Abbey	278	125	45.0%
	Ballymena & Little Steps	311	147	47.3%
	Coleraine	166	69	41.6%
	Dalriada	155	67	43.2%
	Gold	282	118	41.8%
	Horizon	127	53	41.7%
	Northern CCP total	1,319	579	43.9%
South Eastern CCP	Ards	233	110	47.2%
	Bangor	93	42	45.2%
	Colin	295	97	32.9%
	Down	259	110	42.5%
	Lisburn	99	39	39.4%
	South Eastern CCP total	979	398	40.7%
Southern CCP	ArKe	216	101	46.8%
	Blossom	179	93	52.0%
	Clogher Valley	177	94	53.1%
	Dungannon & Coalisland	330	178	53.9%
	Mourne	86	44	51.2%
	Newry City	274	136	49.6%
	South Armagh	428	187	43.7%
	Splash	324	130	40.1%
	Star	47	21	44.7%
Southern CCP total	2,061	984	47.7%	
Western CCP	Cherish	297	141	47.5%
	Dungiven	221	82	37.1%
	Edenballymore	178	54	30.3%
	Last	249	117	47.0%
	Little Hands	178	64	36.0%
	Rainbow	165	68	41.2%
	Shantallow	261	83	31.8%
	Strabane	262	105	40.1%
	Waterside	243	114	46.9%
Western CCP total	2,054	828	40.3%	
Total	Non Sure Start	11,857	6,723	56.7%
	Sure Start	8,678	3,711	42.8%
	Northern Ireland total	20,535	10,434	50.8%

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers

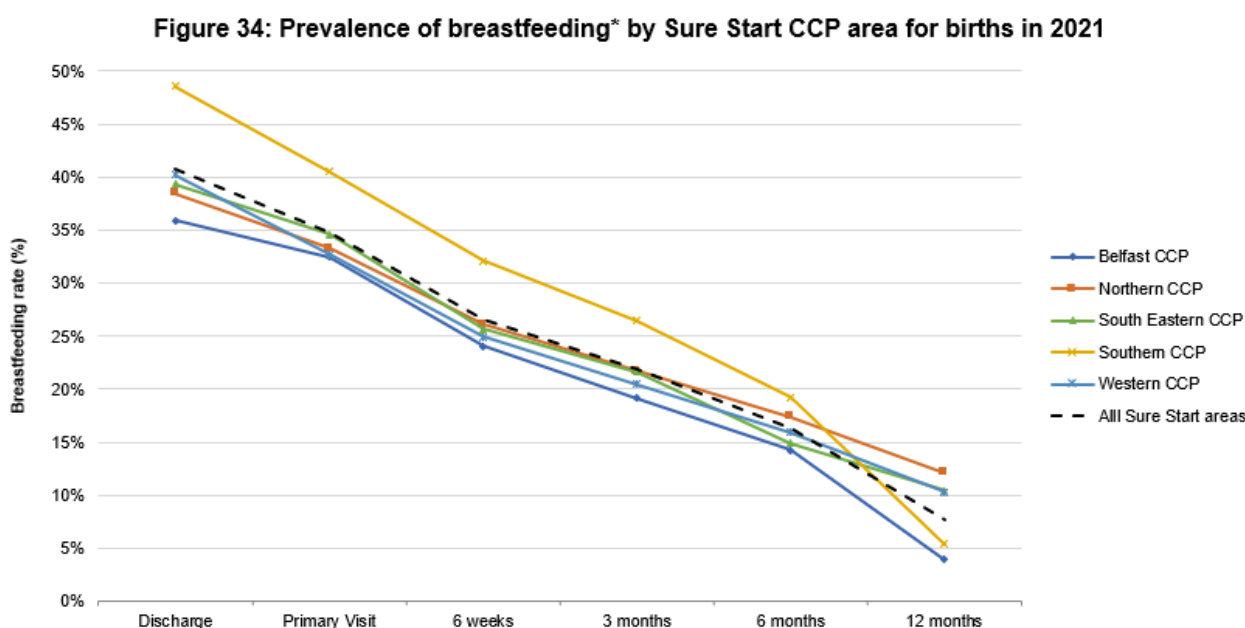
Note: In 2021/22 some Sure Start boundaries were revised and therefore it will not be possible to compare 2022 data in the above table to previously published reports.

Figure 33 ([Appendix Table AB](#)) shows the prevalence of breastfeeding (%) up to 12 months for births in Sure Start (SS) areas compared to Non Sure Start areas, highlighting that the rate of breastfeeding at discharge in Non Sure Start areas is 1.4 times compared with Sure Start areas (57.2% compared to 40.7%). Overall, from discharge breastfeeding decreases at 12 months by 76% for births in Non Sure Start areas compared to 81% for births in Sure Start areas, with this difference mainly due to a greater drop off between primary visit and 6 week visit (20% decline in SS areas compared to 15% in Non SS areas).



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. * Any breastfeeding - combined total and partial breastfeeding

Due to the change in Sure Start boundaries and limitations for analysis with relatively small numbers of births, it is not possible to present the prevalence of breastfeeding (%) up to 12 months by individual sure starts at this time. However, Figure 34 ([Appendix Table AC](#)) shows the prevalence of breastfeeding (%) up to 12 months by Child Care Partnership (CCP) Area. While it highlights the highest rate of breastfeeding at discharge for the Southern CCP area it also shows a steep decline in breastfeeding beyond 6 months for this area.



Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. * Any breastfeeding - combined total and partial breastfeeding

Breastfeeding in neonatal units

There is evidence that feeding breast milk to infants in neonatal units has benefits for health.^{30,31,32} Mother's own milk is associated with reduced risk of necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) and infection.^{33,34} In November 2022 the WHO published recommendations for the care of preterm and low birth weight infants.³⁵

The National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP) is a national clinical audit of NHS-funded care for babies admitted to neonatal services. The audit reports on key measures of optimal perinatal care, parent partnership, care processes and clinical outcomes. The 2023 report examines care provided to babies with a final discharge from neonatal care in England and Wales between January 2022 and December 2022.³⁶ Table 4 shows 2022 data for the three NNAP measures relating to breastmilk feeding (Table 3).

Table 4: National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP) Breastmilk feeding key measures, 2022 data

Breastmilk feeding in the first two days of life	Early Breastmilk Feeding	Breastmilk feeding at discharge
Does a baby born at less than 34 weeks gestational age receive any of their own mother's milk in the first two days of life?	Does a baby born at less than 34 weeks' gestational age receive any of their own mother's milk on day 14 of life?	Does a baby born at less than 34 weeks' gestational age receive any of their own mother's milk at discharge to home from a neonatal unit?
49.0% (6,293/12,837)	79.0% (9,081/11,496)	62.9% (7,300/11,611)

While Northern Ireland is not currently part of the NNAP, it provides a useful comparator in relation to neonatal feeding. In Northern Ireland, the BadgerNet™ neonatal system (BNNS) records information relating to all infants admitted to neonatal care in Northern Ireland.

Table 5: Neonatal Network Northern Ireland - Breastmilk feeding in the **first two days of life** (1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022).

Eligible babies	Outcome Recorded	Breastmilk (BM) in first 2 days	No BM in first 2 days	Missing Data
341	328	148 / 328 (45.1%)	180	13

Source: BadgerNet Standardised Reports 08/01/2024

Inclusion Criteria:

- Babies born at less than 34 weeks' gestational age who survive to 48 hours on a neonatal unit.
- Babies who experienced their first admission within the selected time-period.
- Babies are attributed to their hospital and network of first admission.
- Babies are classified as meeting the NNAP standard if they have received any of the following types of enteral feed on the day of birth or day after birth (up to 48 hours after birth): Suckling at breast, mother's fresh expressed breast milk, mother's frozen expressed breast milk.
- Babies can also be classified as meeting the NNAP standard if they have received any of the following types of mouth care (up to 48 hours) after birth: colostrum, breastmilk.

Table 6: Neonatal Network Northern Ireland - Mother's milk (BM) **at discharge** 2018 to 2022.

	Eligible babies	Outcome Recorded	Any BM at discharge	No BM at discharge	Missing Data
2022	321	312	168 / 312 (53.9%)	144	9
2021	316	298	170 / 298 (57.1%)	128	18
2020	313	304	163 / 304 (53.6%)	141	9
2019	353	330	172 / 330 (52.1%)	158	23
2018	371	353	177 / 353 (50.1%)	176	18

Source: BadgerNet Standardised Reports 08/01/2024

Inclusion Criteria:

- Babies born at less than 34 weeks' gestational age.
- Babies who are discharged home alive.
- Babies who experienced their final neonatal discharge within the selected time period.
- Babies are classified as meeting the NNAP standard if they have received any of the following on their final day of care: suckling at breast, mother's fresh expressed breastmilk, mother's frozen expressed breast milk.

Comparing Northern Ireland breastfeeding rates to other regions

Currently there is variation between UK countries in the time points at which breastfeeding data is recorded / reported and the definitions used and as such direct comparisons between Northern Ireland breastfeeding rates and other UK countries are not possible.

The following sections highlight the current sources of breastfeeding data for England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Breastfeeding in England

The Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) for England sets out a vision for public health in England.³⁷ The framework sets out high-level outcomes supported by a broad set of indicators to measure how well public health is being improved and protected at national and local level. Two breastfeeding indicators (C05) are included within the Health Improvement domain as follows:

- 2.02i Breastfeeding initiation
(% of all mothers who breastfeed their babies in the first 48hrs after delivery)
- 2.02ii Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth
(% of all infants due a 6-8 week check that are totally or partially breastfed)

Breastfeeding initiation (Experimental statistics)

Data relating to breastfeeding status immediately after birth is captured and reported by NHS Digital via the Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS). The MSDS records whether a baby's first feed was maternal breast milk, donor breast milk or not breast milk.

In January 2024, 66.0% of babies received maternal or donor breast milk, 26% were recorded as not breast milk and 8% were categorised as missing/outside reporting parameters.³⁸ [Annual figures published for England for 01 Apr 2022 to 31 Mar 2023 report that 72.9% of babies with a recorded feeding type received breast milk for their first milk, however this excludes missing values.³⁹ Adjusting this for all 493,055 babies; 68.2% received breast milk, 25.3% did not receive breast milk with 6.4% where first feed was unknown/missing].

Breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks after birth (Experimental statistics)⁴⁰

- The aggregate breastfeeding rate for England for 2022/23 is 49.2% (with confidence intervals of 49.1% to 49.3%).[‡] This is based on 141 reporting local authorities who provided sufficient quarterly data for annual figures to be calculated.
This compares to 49.3% in 2021/22, 47.6% in 2020/21, 48% in 2019/20, 46.2% in 2018/19, 43.1% in 2017/18, 44.4% in 2016/17, 43.2% in 2015/16, and 43.8% for 2014/15. 2014/15 data was collected by NHS England.

[‡] **Note:** An issue was identified with the local authority data used to produce the annual 2021 to 2022 breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks figures. These figures were updated in February 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/breastfeeding-at-6-to-8-weeks-after-birth-annual-data-2021-to-2022>

Breastfeeding in Wales

The annual Maternity and Birth Statistics publication provides statistics on maternity and births in Wales.⁴¹ Breastfeeding statistics for Wales are published in a separate annual release.⁴² Data is sourced from the Maternity Indicators dataset (MI ds) for mothers' intention to breastfeed and from the National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD) for breastfeeding at all other ages.

Table 7 presents breastfeeding statistics by age of child for 2022.⁴³

- The Maternity Indicators dataset records the mother's intention to breastfeed prior to birth. Data refers to the 27,163 mothers who delivered in 2022, rather than children born in 2022.
- Data on breastfeeding at birth and on babies turning 10 days, 6 weeks and 6 months recorded in the NCCHD refers to **any** breastfeeding, including babies fed with solely breastmilk, and those who were combination fed.
- For breastfeeding at birth, data presented refers to the 28,388 live births in 2022. For breastfeeding at the other age points, **data refers to the babies turning that age in 2022**: 28,281 babies turned 10 days, 28,499 turned 6 weeks and 29,009 turned 6 months. Only records with a known breastfeeding status are recorded in the rate calculations.

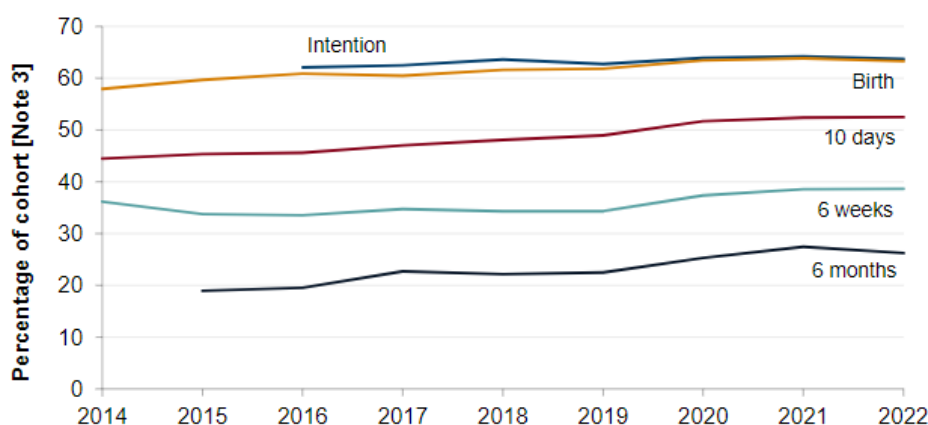
Table 7: Intention to breastfeed and breastfeeding at birth, 10 days, 6 weeks, 6 months, 2022

	Maternity Indicator dataset	National Community Child Health Database Breastfeeding at:			
	Intention to breastfeed	Birth	10 days	6 weeks	6 months
Total births	27,163	28,388	28,281	28,499	29,009
Total records with valid data (n)	26,575	26,378	25,684	21,781	20,482
Any breastfeeding (n)	16,930	16,692	13,482	8,422	5,376
Any breastfeeding (%)	63.7%	63.3%	52.5%	38.7%	26.2%
Missing records (n)	588	2,010	2,597	6,718	8,527
Valid data (%)	97.8%	92.9%	90.8%	76.4%	70.6%

* The percentages are of the total records less records with no stated breastfeeding status: 588 records for intention to breastfeed, 2,010 records at birth, 2,597 records at 10 days, 6,718 records at 6 weeks, 8,527 records at 6 months. Note that breastfeeding data at all points in time is subject to data quality issues as not all records are complete.

Breastfeeding rates at all points of data collection show an upward trend over the short and longer term, and annual breastfeeding rates are the highest on record in 2022 (Figure 46).

Figure 35: Intention to breastfeed and breastfeeding at birth, 10 days, 6 weeks, 6 months, 2014-2022



[Note 1] Percentages are of the total records less records with no stated breastfeeding status: In 2022 there were no data for breastfeeding for 588 records at intention; 2,010 records at birth; 2,597 records at 10 days; 6,718 records at 6 weeks; and 8,527 records at 6 months. [Note 2] Breastfeeding rates at birth are available from 2002 on StatsWales. Data for all other age points is available from 2014 or later only. [Note 3] The denominator for percentage calculations at each point are: the number of women due to give birth for 'Intention to breastfeed'; all live births for 'birth'; and of babies turning the reference age for all other age points.

Breastfeeding in Scotland

NHS Scotland provides a universal health promotion programme to all children and their families known as the Child Health Programme.⁴⁴ Breastfeeding rates in Scotland are monitored and published annually. The information is collected at Health Visitor reviews of children at around 10-14 days (First Visit), 6-8 weeks, and 13-15 months of age.

At each review, the Health Visitor asks the caregiver:

- Whether the baby has ever been breastfed[§];
- Whether the baby has always been exclusively breastfed^{**}; and
- The type of milk feeding the baby is currently receiving (i.e. over the 24 hours leading up to the review)^{††}

The most recent results are for babies becoming eligible for the relevant child health reviews in the financial year April 2022 to March 2023:⁴⁵

- Two thirds (66%) of babies eligible for review in Scotland in 2022/23 were “ever breastfed” i.e. breastfed for at least some time after their birth. This has remained almost constant over the last four years.
- At the health visitor first visit at around 10-14 days of age:
 - 57% of babies eligible for review in 2022/23 were receiving any breastfeeding.
 - 37% were being exclusively breastfed (receiving breast milk only) and a further 19% were mixed feeding (receiving both breast and formula milk).
 - The proportion of babies receiving any breastfeeding at this stage has increased from 44% in 2002/03, mainly due to more babies receiving mixed feeding, up from 5% in 2002/03 to 19% in 2021/22. The proportion of babies being exclusively breastfed has been static at around 37% for the past four years.
- At the time of the 6-8 week review:
 - 47% of babies eligible for review in 2022/23 were receiving any breastfeeding.
 - 32% were being exclusively breastfed and a further 15% were mixed breast and formula feeding.
 - 28% of babies eligible for review in 2022/23 were reported as always exclusively breastfed from birth to the time of the 6-8 week review. This is slightly lower than the 32% that were reported as exclusively breastfed over the 24 hours leading up to the review.
 - The proportion of babies receiving any breastfeeding at this stage has increased from 36% in 2002/03. This is due to increases in both the proportion of babies receiving exclusive breastfeeding (5 percentage points) and mixed breastfeeding (6 percentage points) over this period. Increases have been seen particularly since around 2016/17.
- At the time of the 13-15 month review:
 - 21% of babies eligible for review in 2022/23 were receiving any breastfeeding.
 - 9% were being exclusively breastfed for their milk feeds, 12% were receiving mixed breast and formula/cow’s milk feeding, 44% of babies were being fed cow’s milk, with 23% of babies recorded as being fed ‘other’ milk.

[§] ‘Breastfeeding’ includes being fed at the breast and being fed expressed breast milk. Being ‘always exclusively’ breastfed means that the baby has only ever been breastfed from birth up to the time of their review, and has never received fluids or food (except medicines) apart from breast milk. Current milk feeding method is recorded as breast only, formula only, mixed (i.e. both breast and formula milk), or other (i.e. the very small number of children on specialist non-milk feeding for medical reasons). There is also the option to record cow’s milk at the 13-15 month review.

^{**} This question is not asked at the 13-15 Month review.

^{††} Public Health Scotland. Child health systems programme – pre-school documentation. <https://beta.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/child-health-systems-programme-pre-school-documentation/> Also <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/child-health-pre-school-review-coverage/child-health-pre-school-review-coverage-2021-to-2022/>

Breastfeeding in the Republic of Ireland

The Perinatal Statistics Report 2021 presents national statistics on perinatal events in Ireland. This report is based on data collected from Part 3 of the Birth Notification Form (BNF01) for the National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS) and provides information on 59,762 mothers giving birth and 60,804 babies born in 2021.⁴⁶

Breastfeeding at discharge

Breastfeeding statistics are based on live births only and exclude early neonatal deaths. Type of feeding is recorded at the time of discharge from hospital (Table 8).

Table 8: Trends in breastfeeding at discharge, 2012-2021

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change	
											2012-2021	2020-2021
Any breastfeeding 1,2,5,6	55.4	55.9	57.0	58.0	59.9	59.8	60.4	60.9	61.4	61.8	11.6	0.7
Exclusive breastfeeding 1,2,5	46.9	46.6	46.6	48.0	49.8	48.6	47.3	45.9	44.5	46.3	-1.3	4.0

Notes: Percentages are subject to rounding. 1 Based on live births. 2 Based on maternities. 5 Excludes early neonatal deaths. 6 Any breastfeeding includes type of feeding recorded as either breast or combined.

Key findings in relation to breastfeeding at discharge from hospital are as follows:

- 61.8% of babies recorded any breastfeeding in 2021, compared to 55.4% in 2012;
- 46.3% of babies were exclusively breastfed in 2021;
- Breastfeeding rates increased with mothers' age up to the 35-39 year age group, after which the rate declined. Mothers in the 35-39 year age group reported the highest exclusive breastfeeding rate at 52.7%; 16.6% of infants born to mothers aged under 20 years were exclusively breastfed.
- Exclusive breastfeeding was more common:
 - for singleton births compared to multiple births (46.6% vs 28.7%);
 - among mothers in the 'higher professional' (63.2%) socio-economic group; exclusive breastfeeding was least common among 'unemployed' mothers (28.7%).

Breastfeeding at First and 3 month Public Health Nurse (PHN) visits

The Health Service Executive's National Service Plan 2020 includes the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to breastfeeding. The following highlights the position as outlined in the quarterly performance report for June 2023 (activity YTD):^{47,48}

- % babies breastfed (exclusively & not exclusively) at first PHN Visit – **61.1%** (PC135, Target 64%)
- % babies breastfed exclusively at first PHN visit – **40.3%** (PC143, Target 50%)
- % babies breastfed (exclusively & not exclusively) at 3 month PHN visit – **42.1%** (PC136, Target 46%)
- % babies breastfed exclusively at 3 month PHN visit – **31.6%** (PC144, Target 36%)^{##}

Quarterly performance reports are available.⁴⁹

^{##} The denominator for KPI calculations is the total number of babies seen by PHN.

Appendix 1: Data sources

Information on infant feeding in Northern Ireland is currently available from the following sources:

1. Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS)

The Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS) is a hospital based system which collects data on a range of maternal and infant characteristics.

The Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS) contains a range of demographic and clinical information on mothers and infants. It captures data relating to the current maternity process, but also contains details about the mother's past medical and obstetric history. It is a key source for data on birth numbers, interventions, maternal risk factors, birth weights, maternal smoking, BMI and breastfeeding at discharge. NIMATS is available in all five Trust areas and is now available through the data warehouse. As a result of ongoing work, recording of data on NIMATS has improved in recent years.

New NIMATS fields

In June 2016 a number of changes were implemented on NIMATS to expand the data collected in relation to infant feeding and inform practice. A new screen was added to the Infant exam and birth details section to capture information on skin-to-skin contact and feeding at birth.

HSC Business Services Organisation
Information Technology Services

Main Menu> Delivery Menu> Infant Exam & Birth Details> 3 of 3

Back Save

Casenote No [] DoB [] Gender [] HCN []
Previous Patient Address [] Email and Phone [] Allergies []

Infant Feeding

Skin to skin:
Did Mother have Skin to Skin Contact at Birth

How Long did Skin to Skin Contact Last:
Until After First Feed
At Least One Hour

At Birth:
Was First Breastfeed Offered at Birth
Breastfeeding Initiated at Birth
Formula Fed at Birth by Mum
Responsiveness for Mother/Baby Wellbeing and Feeding Discussed

Previous

Skin to skin contact should be offered to all mothers regardless of feeding type.
Record: 1/1 -<OSC>

A new postnatal screen added to NIMATS records information on infant feeding during the postnatal stay and the feeding status at discharge. It also provides the opportunity to complete outstanding information from the infant exam and birth details fields.

HSC Business Services Organisation
Information Technology Services

Main Menu> Postnatal Inpatients Menu> Record Postnatal For Infant> 4 of 4

Back Save

Infants
Casenote No [] DoB [] Gender Male [] HCN []
Address [] Email and Phone [] Allergies []

Skin to skin:
Did Mother have Skin to Skin Contact at Birth

How Long did Skin to Skin Contact Last:
Until After First Feed
At Least One Hour

At Birth:
Was First Breastfeed Offered at Birth
Breastfeeding Initiated at Birth
Formula Fed at Birth by Mum
Responsiveness for Mother/Baby Wellbeing and Feeding Discussed

Feeding at Discharge:
Breast milk (Total) How []
Breast milk and formula (Partial) How []
Formula (Not at all)

During the Postnatal Stay:
Has Breastfeeding Been Attempted
Has the Baby had at Least One Effective Breastfeed

Previous Next

Skin to skin contact should be offered to all mothers regardless of feeding type.
Record: 1/1 -<OSC>

2. Northern Ireland Child Health System

The Child Health System (CHS) is a patient centred community based operational system comprising seven modules: Module 1 – Child Register; Module 2 – Preschool Vaccination and Immunisation; Module 3 – Preschool Developmental Surveillance; Module 4 – School Health; Module 5 – Special Needs; Module 6 – New-born Hearing; and Module 7 - Influenza.

Historically, the Northern Ireland Child Health System recorded information on the status of infant feeding at discharge from hospital. However, in 2010 a new system was implemented to improve the reporting systems and provide a better picture of infant feeding. Information on infant feeding status is now collected at the following time points after birth; discharge from hospital, first visit by health visitor (10-14 days), 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months.

Northern Ireland Child Health System infant feeding definitions (1 November 2016):

Up to 6 months

- Total: Totally breastfed is defined as infants who have received breast milk only within the previous 24 hours (this may be expressed breast milk) - that is, they have NOT received formula milk, any other liquids or food.
- Partial: Partially breastfed is defined as infants who have received any breast milk (this may be expressed breast milk) as well as formula milk or any other liquids or food within the previous 24 hours.
- Not at all: Not at all breastfed is defined as infants who have not received any breast milk within the previous 24 hours.

From 6 months

- Total: Totally breastfed is defined as infants who have received breast milk only (this may be expressed breast milk) as the milk element of a weaning diet within the previous 24 hours - that is, they have NOT received formula milk.
- Partial: Partially breastfed is defined as infants who have received any breast milk (this may be expressed breast milk) as well as formula milk as the milk element of a weaning diet within the previous 24 hours.
- Not at all: Not at all breastfed is defined as infants who have not received any breast milk within the previous 24 hours.

Any Breastfeeding (Any BF): babies receiving breast milk only (TOTAL) **or** a combination of breastmilk and formula milk (PARTIAL)

3. Neonatal Intensive Care Outcomes Research and Evaluation (NICORE)

NICORE has been routinely collecting data on neonatal units in Northern Ireland since 1994. The data is used to monitor a number of key quality markers and to ensure consistently high standards of care so that all babies admitted to a neonatal unit in Northern Ireland will benefit. Each neonatal unit (NNU) routinely provides a range of socio-demographic, obstetric, neonatal process and outcome data relating to individual episodes of care.

4. BadgerNet™ neonatal system (BNNS)

In the BadgerNet™ neonatal system (BNNS), discharge feeding data are available from two sources i.e. summary discharge data items 'DischargeMilk' and 'DischargeFeeding' and the more detailed daily data items which can be analysed for the day of discharge 'EnteralFeeds' and 'FeedingMethod'.

Appendix 2: Data tables

Table A: Breastfeeding offered at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS Experimental Data

Year	Hospital	Yes – breastfeeding offered at birth		No, breastfeeding not offered at birth		Missing		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2022	Altnagelvin	1,926	87.5	273	12.4	2	0.1	2,201	100.0
	Antrim	2,319	81.6	524	18.4	-	0.0	2,843	100.0
	Causeway	710	83.2	143	16.8	-	0.0	853	100.0
	Craigavon	1,947	65.4	1029	34.6	-	0.0	2,976	100.0
	Daisyhill	1,405	72.3	537	27.7	-	0.0	1,942	100.0
	RJMS	2,874	63.1	1678	36.9	-	0.0	4,552	100.0
	SWAH	856	78.4	236	21.6	-	0.0	1,092	100.0
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	2,827	73.6	1,011	26.3	1	0.0	3,839	100.0
	Northern Ireland	14,864	73.2	5,431	26.8	3	0.0	20,298	100.0

Source: NIMATS; Live births to NI residents; excludes infants who died in the delivery suite, home births and babies born before arrival at hospital. Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for Ulster and Lagan Valley due to small numbers.

Table B: Infant feeding at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS Experimental data

Hospital	Breast feeding initiated at birth	Formula fed at birth by mother							
		Yes		No		Missing		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Altnagelvin	Y	0	0.0	1,233	56.0	0	0.0	1,233	56.0
	N	750	34.1	216	9.8	0	0.0	966	43.9
	Missing	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.1	2	0.1
	Total	750	34.1	1,449	65.8	2	0.1	2,201	100.0
Antrim	Y	0	0.0	1,603	56.4	0	0.0	1,603	56.4
	N	929	32.7	310	10.9	0	0.0	1,239	43.6
	Missing	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.0
	Total	930	32.7	1,913	67.3	0	0.0	2,843	100.0
Causeway	Y	0	0.0	505	59.2	0	0.0	505	59.2
	N	267	31.3	81	9.5	0	0.0	348	40.8
	Total	267	31.3	586	68.7	0	0.0	853	100.0
Craigavon	Y	0	0.0	1,632	54.8	0	0.0	1,632	54.8
	N	984	33.1	360	12.1	0	0.0	1,344	45.2
	Total	984	33.1	1,992	66.9	0	0.0	2,976	100.0
Daisyhill	Y	0	0.0	1,155	59.5	0	0.0	1,155	59.5
	N	670	34.5	117	6.0	0	0.0	787	40.5
	Total	670	34.5	1,272	65.5	0	0.0	1,942	100.0
RJMS	Y	0	0.0	2,211	48.6	0	0.0	2,211	48.6
	N	1,547	34.0	794	17.4	0	0.0	2,341	51.4
	Total	1,547	34.0	3,005	66.0	0	0.0	4,552	100.0
SWAH	Y	0	0.0	672	61.5	0	0.0	672	61.5
	N	284	26.0	136	12.5	0	0.0	420	38.5
	Total	284	26.0	808	74.0	0	0.0	1,092	100.0
Ulster / Lagan Valley	Y	0	0.0	2,390	62.3	0	0.0	2,390	62.3
	N	919	23.9	530	13.8	0	0.0	1,449	37.7
	Total	919	23.9	2,920	76.1	0	0.0	3,839	100.0
Northern Ireland	Y	0	0.0	11,401	56.2	0	0.0	11,401	56.2
	N	6,350	31.3	2,544	12.5	0	0.0	8,894	43.8
	Missing	1	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.0	3	0.0
	Total	6,351	31.3	13,945	68.7	2	0.0	20,298	100.0

Source: NIMATS; Live births, NI resident mothers; excludes infants who died in delivery suite, home births and infants born before arrival.
 Note: Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Table C: Skin-To-Skin (STS) contact at birth by feeding type at birth, 2022 NIMATS Experimental data

Year	Feeding at birth	Skin-To-Skin (STS) contact	Yes		Total	
			N	%	N	%
2022	All births*	STS	17,954	88.5	20,298	100
		STS at least 1 hour	14,907	73.4	20,298	100
		STS until after first feed	14,137	69.6	20,298	100
		STS at least 1 hour & until after first feed	13,743	67.7	20,298	100
	Breastfed	STS	10,785	94.6	11,401	100
		STS at least 1 hour	9,789	85.9	11,401	100
		STS until after first feed	9,480	83.2	11,401	100
		STS at least 1 hour & until after first feed	9,313	81.7	11,401	100
	Formula fed	STS	5,679	89.4	6,351	100
		STS at least 1 hour	4,396	69.2	6,351	100
		STS until after first feed	4,073	64.1	6,351	100
		STS at least 1 hour & until after first feed	3,894	61.3	6,351	100
	Neither breastfed nor formula fed	STS	1,490	58.6	2,544	100
		STS at least 1 hour	722	28.4	2,544	100
		STS until after first feed	584	23.0	2,544	100
		STS at least 1 hour & until after first feed	536	21.1	2,544	100

Source: NIMATS; Live births, NI resident mothers; excludes infants who died in delivery suite, home births and infants born before arrival.
 * All births includes two births where feeding status at birth is blank

Table D: Skin-to-skin contact at birth by hospital, 2022 NIMATS Experimental data

Year	Hospital	Births	Skin-to-skin		Skin-to-skin for at least 1 hour		Skin-to-skin until after first feed		Skin-to-skin for at least 1 hour & skin-to-skin until after first feed	
		N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2022	Altnagelvin	2,201	1,987	90.3	1,708	77.6	1,709	77.6	1,613	73.3
	Antrim	2,843	2,477	87.1	2,116	74.4	1,997	70.2	1,934	68.0
	Causeway	853	816	95.7	769	90.2	740	86.8	729	85.5
	Craigavon	2,976	2,533	85.1	2,108	70.8	2,026	68.1	1,972	66.3
	Daisyhill	1,942	1,698	87.4	1,495	77.0	1,426	73.4	1,402	72.2
	RJMS	4,552	4,064	89.3	3,237	71.1	3,021	66.4	2,950	64.8
	SWAH	1,092	933	85.4	887	81.2	851	77.9	846	77.5
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	3,839	3,446	89.8	2,587	67.4	2,367	61.7	2,297	59.8
	All births	20,298	17,954	88.5	14,907	73.4	14,137	69.6	13,743	67.7

Source: NIMATS; Live births, NI resident mothers. Excludes infants who died in delivery suite, home births and infants born before arrival.

Table E: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by Health and Social Care Trust*, 2013-2022

HSCT	Year	Y		N		Missing		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Belfast	2022	2,293	60.1	1,504	39.4	18	0.5	3,815	100.0
	2021	2,413	58.2	1,717	41.4	16	0.4	4,146	100.0
	2020	2,464	59.6	1,654	40.0	18	0.4	4,136	100.0
	2019	2,569	59.3	1,749	40.3	17	0.4	4,335	100.0
	2018	2,519	56.8	1,903	42.9	15	0.3	4,437	100.0
	2017	2,383	54.7	1,965	45.1	11	0.3	4,359	100.0
	2016	2,495	53.4	2,173	46.6	-	-	4,668	100.0
	2015	2,485	53.4	2,171	46.6	-	-	4,656	100.0
	2014	2,531	53.8	2,176	46.2	-	-	4,707	100.0
2013	2,454	52.2	2,249	47.8	-	-	4,703	100.0	
Northern	2022	3,025	61.2	1,894	38.3	24	0.5	4,943	100.0
	2021	3,148	61.7	1,932	37.9	20	0.4	5,100	100.0
	2020	3,232	63.1	1,870	36.5	22	0.4	5,124	100.0
	2019	3,278	61.5	2,027	38.1	22	0.4	5,327	100.0
	2018	3,185	60.6	2,051	39.0	22	0.4	5,258	100.0
	2017	3,295	59.3	2,238	40.3	23	0.4	5,556	100.0
	2016	3,206	56.4	2,474	43.6	-	-	5,680	100.0
	2015	3,118	54.3	2,620	45.7	-	-	5,738	100.0
	2014	3,192	54.7	2,647	45.3	-	-	5,839	100.0
2013	3,161	54.9	2,598	45.1	-	-	5,759	100.0	
South Eastern	2022	2,315	64.3	1,266	35.1	21	0.6	3,602	100.0
	2021	2,471	65.0	1,289	33.9	40	1.1	3,800	100.0
	2020	2,371	64.7	1,273	34.7	23	0.6	3,667	100.0
	2019	2,491	64.7	1,341	34.8	21	0.5	3,853	100.0
	2018	2,586	64.2	1,419	35.2	26	0.6	4,031	100.0
	2017	2,444	61.6	1,494	37.7	28	0.7	3,966	100.0
	2016	2,533	59.9	1,693	40.1	-	-	4,226	100.0
	2015	2,536	58.9	1,766	41.1	-	-	4,302	100.0
	2014	2,472	57.4	1,834	42.6	-	-	4,306	100.0
2013	2,471	57.2	1,846	42.8	-	-	4,317	100.0	
Southern	2022	2,956	62.7	1,736	36.8	22	0.5	4,714	100.0
	2021	3,088	60.9	1,954	38.6	26	0.5	5,068	100.0
	2020	2,963	61.3	1,849	38.2	23	0.5	4,835	100.0
	2019	3,145	60.9	2,002	38.8	15	0.3	5,162	100.0
	2018	3,144	59.7	2,087	39.6	39	0.7	5,270	100.0
	2017	3,232	60.2	2,122	39.5	18	0.3	5,372	100.0
	2016	3,247	59.0	2,253	41.0	-	-	5,500	100.0
	2015	3,125	56.7	2,390	43.3	-	-	5,515	100.0
	2014	3,197	58.3	2,285	41.7	-	-	5,482	100.0
2013	3,056	57.3	2,279	42.7	-	-	5,335	100.0	
Western	2022	2,094	62.9	1,217	36.5	19	0.6	3,330	100.0
	2021	2,330	63.9	1,294	35.5	23	0.6	3,647	100.0
	2020	2,330	64.5	1,262	34.9	23	0.6	3,615	100.0
	2019	2,400	65.3	1,249	34.0	25	0.7	3,674	100.0
	2018	2,483	65.8	1,272	33.7	17	0.5	3,772	100.0
	2017	2,524	64.7	1,355	34.8	20	0.5	3,899	100.0
	2016	2,427	61.6	1,514	38.4	-	-	3,941	100.0
	2015	2,487	62.3	1,503	37.7	-	-	3,990	100.0
	2014	2,405	60.1	1,594	39.9	-	-	3,999	100.0
2013	2,321	59.7	1,565	40.3	-	-	3,886	100.0	
Northern Ireland	2022	12,683	62.2	7,617	37.3	104	0.5	20,404	100.0
	2021	13,450	61.8	8,186	37.6	125	0.6	21,761	100.0
	2020	13,360	62.5	7,908	37.0	109	0.5	21,377	100.0
	2019	13,883	62.1	8,368	37.4	100	0.4	22,351	100.0
	2018	13,917	61.1	8,732	38.4	119	0.5	22,768	100.0
	2017	13,878	59.9	9,174	39.6	100	0.4	23,152	100.0
	2016	13,908	57.9	10,107	42.1	-	-	24,015	100.0
	2015	13,751	56.8	10,450	43.2	-	-	24,201	100.0
2014	13,797	56.7	10,536	43.3	-	-	24,333	100.0	
2013	13,463	56.1	10,537	43.9	-	-	24,000	100.0	

Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS). Data includes live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants died in delivery suite. * Based on maternal residence.

Note: In June 2016 a number of changes were implemented on NIMATS in relation to infant feeding, including the recording breastfeeding attempted during the postnatal stay.

Table F: Breastfeeding attempted by maternal age, 2018-2022

Year	Age group	Yes		No		Missing		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2022	Under 20	166	38.6	261	60.7	3	0.7	430	100.0
	20-24	1,034	46.8	1,162	52.6	12	0.5	2,208	100.0
	25-29	2,871	58.2	2,039	41.3	24	0.5	4,934	100.0
	30-34	4,899	65.7	2,523	33.8	36	0.5	7,458	100.0
	35-39	3,010	68.6	1,353	30.8	24	0.5	4,387	100.0
	40+	703	71.2	279	28.3	5	0.5	987	100.0
	Total	12,683	62.2	7,617	37.3	104	0.5	20,404	100.0
2021	Under 20	186	41.7	259	58.1	1	0.2	446	100.0
	20-24	1,098	44.9	1,334	54.6	11	0.5	2,443	100.0
	25-29	3,128	58.0	2,230	41.3	35	0.6	5,393	100.0
	30-34	5,246	65.2	2,762	34.3	39	0.5	8,047	100.0
	35-39	3,118	69.6	1,331	29.7	34	0.8	4,483	100.0
	40+	674	71.0	270	28.5	5	0.5	949	100.0
	Total	13,450	61.8	8,186	37.6	125	0.6	21,761	100.0
2020	Under 20	180	35.4	326	64.0	3	0.6	509	100.0
	20-24	1,137	45.6	1,344	54.0	10	0.4	2,491	100.0
	25-29	3,170	57.9	2,271	41.5	30	0.5	5,471	100.0
	30-34	5,118	67.3	2,455	32.3	33	0.4	7,606	100.0
	35-39	3,072	71.2	1,214	28.1	29	0.7	4,315	100.0
	40+	683	69.3	298	30.3	4	0.4	985	100.0
	Total	13,360	62.5	7,908	37.0	109	0.5	21,377	100.0
2019	Under 20	252	40.5	368	59.2	2	0.3	622	100.0
	20-24	1,315	47.1	1,458	52.3	17	0.6	2,790	100.0
	25-29	3,394	58.7	2,360	40.8	27	0.5	5,781	100.0
	30-34	5,149	66.4	2,574	33.2	29	0.4	7,752	100.0
	35-39	3,079	69.8	1,312	29.8	19	0.4	4,410	100.0
	40+	694	69.7	296	29.7	6	0.6	996	100.0
	Total	13,883	62.1	8,368	37.4	100	0.4	22,351	100.0
2018	Under 20	261	40.7	378	59.0	2	0.3	641	100.0
	20-24	1,257	44.7	1,541	54.8	13	0.5	2,811	100.0
	25-29	3,455	57.1	2,565	42.4	31	0.5	6,051	100.0
	30-34	5,279	66.4	2,620	33.0	51	0.6	7,950	100.0
	35-39	3,054	68.9	1,365	30.8	16	0.4	4,435	100.0
	40+	611	69.4	263	29.9	6	0.7	880	100.0
	Total	13,917	61.1	8,732	38.4	119	0.5	22,768	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS). Data includes live births to NI resident mothers, excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite.

Table G: Breastfeeding attempted by deprivation quintile (SOA), 2018-2022

Year	Deprivation quintile 1 – Most deprived 20% 5 – Least deprived 20%	Yes		No		Missing		Total	
		Breastfeeding attempted		Breastfeeding not attempted					
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2022	1	2,167	49.7	2,172	49.8	21	0.5	4,360	100.0
	2	2,561	59.6	1,708	39.8	25	0.6	4,294	100.0
	3	2,656	62.7	1,561	36.9	18	0.4	4,235	100.0
	4	2,671	66.8	1,310	32.7	20	0.5	4,001	100.0
	5	2,628	74.8	866	24.6	20	0.6	3,514	100.0
	Total	12,683	62.2	7,617	37.3	104	0.5	20,404	100.0
2021	1	2,218	47.6	2,414	51.8	24	0.5	4,656	100.0
	2	2,661	57.7	1,922	41.7	26	0.6	4,609	100.0
	3	2,772	62.3	1,648	37.1	28	0.6	4,448	100.0
	4	2,942	68.3	1,341	31.1	22	0.5	4,305	100.0
	5	2,857	76.3	861	23.0	25	0.7	3,743	100.0
	Total	13,450	61.8	8,186	37.6	125	0.6	21,761	100.0
2020	1	2,318	48.7	2,419	50.8	24	0.5	4,761	100.0
	2	2,746	60.5	1,774	39.1	21	0.5	4,541	100.0
	3	2,714	62.9	1,575	36.5	23	0.5	4,312	100.0
	4	2,821	68.0	1,300	31.3	26	0.6	4,147	100.0
	5	2,761	76.4	840	23.2	15	0.4	3,616	100.0
	Total	13,360	62.5	7,908	37.0	109	0.5	21,377	100.0
2019	1	2,408	48.4	2,544	51.1	25	0.5	4,977	100.0
	2	2,804	58.8	1,940	40.7	25	0.5	4,769	100.0
	3	2,837	62.5	1,679	37.0	20	0.4	4,536	100.0
	4	3,048	69.2	1,342	30.5	16	0.4	4,406	100.0
	5	2,786	76.1	863	23.6	14	0.4	3,663	100.0
	Total	13,883	62.1	8,368	37.4	100	0.4	22,351	100.0
2018	1	2,364	46.8	2,664	52.8	20	0.4	5,048	100.0
	2	2,878	58.8	1,986	40.6	30	0.6	4,894	100.0
	3	2,904	62.3	1,734	37.2	24	0.5	4,662	100.0
	4	2,983	67.0	1,445	32.5	23	0.5	4,451	100.0
	5	2,788	75.1	903	24.3	22	0.6	3,713	100.0
	Total	13,917	61.1	8,732	38.4	119	0.5	22,768	100.0

Source: NIMATS: Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in delivery suite.
 Note: Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA).

Table H: Breastfeeding attempted (%) by maternal age and deprivation quintile (SOA), 2022

Maternal age group at birth	Deprivation quintile (SOA)	Yes		No		Missing		Total	
	1 – Most deprived 20%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	5 – Least deprived 20%								
<20 years	1	48	28.4	121	71.6	0	0.0	169	100.0
	2	44	45.8	52	54.2	0	0.0	96	100.0
	3	33	40.2	46	56.1	3	3.7	82	100.0
	4	27	46.6	31	53.4	0	0.0	58	100.0
	5	14	56.0	11	44.0	0	0.0	25	100.0
	Total	166	38.6	261	60.7	3	0.7	430	100.0
20-24 years	1	306	40.5	447	59.1	3	0.4	756	100.0
	2	271	49.4	273	49.7	5	0.9	549	100.0
	3	232	51.6	217	48.2	1	0.2	450	100.0
	4	140	49.6	141	50.0	1	0.4	282	100.0
	5	85	49.7	84	49.1	2	1.2	171	100.0
	Total	1,034	46.8	1,162	52.6	12	0.5	2,208	100.0
25-29 years	1	577	47.6	627	51.7	9	0.7	1,213	100.0
	2	618	58.0	443	41.6	5	0.5	1,066	100.0
	3	615	59.4	415	40.1	6	0.6	1,036	100.0
	4	617	64.1	343	35.7	2	0.2	962	100.0
	5	444	67.6	211	32.1	2	0.3	657	100.0
	Total	2,871	58.2	2,039	41.3	24	0.5	4,934	100.0
30-34 years	1	728	54.4	604	45.1	7	0.5	1,339	100.0
	2	927	61.4	575	38.1	7	0.5	1,509	100.0
	3	1,020	65.1	543	34.6	5	0.3	1,568	100.0
	4	1,042	68.7	465	30.7	9	0.6	1,516	100.0
	5	1,182	77.5	336	22.0	8	0.5	1,526	100.0
	Total	4,899	65.7	2,523	33.8	36	0.5	7,458	100.0
35-39 years	1	411	57.6	302	42.3	1	0.1	714	100.0
	2	568	63.3	321	35.8	8	0.9	897	100.0
	3	605	68.8	273	31.0	2	0.2	880	100.0
	4	690	71.2	273	28.2	6	0.6	969	100.0
	5	736	79.4	184	19.8	7	0.8	927	100.0
	Total	3,010	68.6	1,353	30.8	24	0.5	4,387	100.0
40+ years	1	97	57.4	71	42.0	1	0.6	169	100.0
	2	133	75.1	44	24.9	0	0.0	177	100.0
	3	151	68.9	67	30.6	1	0.5	219	100.0
	4	155	72.4	57	26.6	2	0.9	214	100.0
	5	167	80.3	40	19.2	1	0.5	208	100.0
	Total	703	71.2	279	28.3	5	0.5	987	100.0
Northern Ireland		12,683	62.2%	7,617	37.3%	104	0.5%	20,404	100.0

Source: NIMATS: Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in delivery suite.
 Note: Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA).

Table I: Breastfeeding attempted by place of birth, 2022

Place of birth	Breastfeeding attempted				Missing		Total	
	Yes		No		N	%	N	%
	N	%	N	%				
Altnagelvin	1,365	61.7	835	37.7	14	0.6	2,214	100.0
Antrim	1,751	61.4	1,082	37.9	20	0.7	2,853	100.0
Craigavon	1,849	61.8	1,126	37.6	16	0.5	2,991	100.0
Causeway	538	62.7	318	37.1	2	0.2	858	100.0
Daisyhill	1,244	64.0	695	35.7	6	0.3	1,945	100.0
RJMS	2,547	55.5	2,022	44.1	21	0.5	4,590	100.0
SWAH	744	67.8	350	31.9	4	0.4	1,098	100.0
Ulster / Lagan Valley	2,633	68.5	1,187	30.9	21	0.5	3,841	100.0
Northern Ireland	12,683	62.2	7,617	37.3	104	0.5	20,404	100.0

Source: NIMATS: Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births and infants who died in the delivery suite.
Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Table J: At least one effective breastfeed during postnatal stay by hospital, 2022 NIMATS experimental data

	Effective breastfeed during postnatal stay						Total Base n = 12,726 infants attempted breastfeeding	
	Yes		No		Missing		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Altnagelvin	1,152	84.0	205	15.0	14	1.0	1,371	100.0
Antrim	1,485	84.1	260	14.7	20	1.1	1,765	100.0
Causeway	491	91.6	44	8.2	1	0.2	536	100.0
Craigavon	1,615	87.0	225	12.1	16	0.9	1,856	100.0
Daisyhill	1,063	85.2	179	14.3	6	0.5	1,248	100.0
RJMS	2,215	86.8	315	12.3	21	0.8	2,551	100.0
SWAH	674	90.6	66	8.9	4	0.5	744	100.0
Ulster / Lagan Valley	2,349	88.5	285	10.7	21	0.8	2,655	100.0
Total attempted breastfeeding	11,044	86.8	1,579	12.4	103	0.8	12,726	100.0

Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital and infants who died in the delivery suite.
Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Table K: Breastfeeding at discharge by hospital and feeding method, 2022 NIMATS experimental data

Site / Milk type at discharge	Method of feeding at discharge								Total	
	Breast		Both breast and expressed		Expressed		Missing			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Altnagelvin	673	72.0	221	23.6	40	4.3	1	0.1	935	100.0
Antrim	1,134	80.7	221	15.7	50	3.6	0	0.0	1,405	100.0
Causeway	394	88.1	53	11.9	<5	-	0	0.0	447	100.0
Craigavon	1,183	74.9	351	22.2	45	2.8	0	0.0	1,579	100.0
Daisyhill	764	74.5	239	23.3	22	2.1	0	0.0	1,025	100.0
RJMS	1,550	68.2	574	25.3	146	6.4	2	0.1	2,272	100.0
SWAH	421	73.9	132	23.2	17	3.0	0	0.0	570	100.0
Ulster / Lagan Valley	1,741	77.9	377	16.9	118	5.3	0	0.0	2,236	100.0
Total – Any Breastmilk	7,860	75.1	2,166	20.7	440	4.2	3	0.0	10,469	100.0
<i>Totally breastfeeding</i>	6,582	90.5	582	8.0	110	1.5	2	0.0	7,276	100.0
<i>Breast and formula feeding</i>	1,278	40.0	1,584	49.6	330	10.3	1	0.0	3,193	100.0

Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Disclosure controls have been applied to Causeway by combining the categories of 'Both breast and expressed' and 'Expressed'.

Table L: Supplementation by hospital, 2022 NIMATS Experimental data

Hospital	Supplementation of breastfed infants during post-natal stay	Total (Base = 7,276 infants totally breastfed at discharge)
	%	N
Altnagelvin	25.6%	630
Antrim	16.4%	954
Causeway	12.4%	370
Craigavon	14.6%	1,127
Daisyhill	15.5%	684
RJMS	14.2%	1,413
SWAH	17.8%	399
Ulster / Lagan Valley	14.2%	1,689
Total	15.8%	7,276

Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI resident mothers; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in the delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Table M: Breastfeeding support at discharge with hospital range, 2022 NIMATS experimental data

Feeding type at discharge	Site	Effective Positioning		Recognise Enough		Hand Expression		Help At Home		Total	
		N	% mothers	N	% mothers	N	% mothers	N	% mothers	N	% mothers
Totally breastfed	Altnagelvin	618	98.9	621	99.4	618	98.9	621	99.4	625	100.0
	Antrim	940	98.9	943	99.3	942	99.2	941	99.1	950	100.0
	Craigavon	368	99.5	368	99.5	365	98.6	368	99.5	370	100.0
	Causeway	1,105	98.8	1,106	98.9	1,019	91.1	1,027	91.9	1,118	100.0
	Daisyhill	668	97.9	670	98.2	665	97.5	653	95.7	682	100.0
	RJMS	1,369	97.4	1,376	97.9	1,374	97.7	1,370	97.4	1,406	100.0
	SWAH	391	98.0	392	98.2	391	98.0	392	98.2	399	100.0
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	1,662	98.6	1,664	98.8	1,660	98.5	1,661	98.6	1,685	100.0
	Total	7,121	98.4	7,140	98.7	7,034	97.2	7,033	97.2	7,235	100.0
Partially breastfed	Altnagelvin	289	97.3	295	99.3	293	98.7	294	99.0	297	100.0
	Antrim	419	95.7	428	97.7	430	98.2	430	98.2	438	100.0
	Craigavon	75	97.4	75	97.4	74	96.1	75	97.4	77	100.0
	Causeway	409	93.6	426	97.5	400	91.5	409	93.6	437	100.0
	Daisyhill	318	96.7	327	99.4	320	97.3	323	98.2	329	100.0
	RJMS	776	93.8	809	97.8	810	97.9	810	97.9	827	100.0
	SWAH	166	97.6	168	98.8	168	98.8	168	98.8	170	100.0
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	504	96.0	514	97.9	514	97.9	515	98.1	525	100.0
	Total	2,956	95.4	3,042	98.1	3,009	97.1	3,024	97.5	3,100	100.0
Any breastfeeding	Altnagelvin	907	98.4	916	99.3	911	98.8	915	99.2	922	100.0
	Antrim	1,359	97.9	1,371	98.8	1,372	98.8	1,371	98.8	1,388	100.0
	Craigavon	443	99.1	443	99.1	439	98.2	443	99.1	447	100.0
	Causeway	1,514	97.4	1,532	98.5	1,419	91.3	1,436	92.3	1,555	100.0
	Daisyhill	986	97.5	997	98.6	985	97.4	976	96.5	1,011	100.0
	RJMS	2,145	96.1	2,185	97.9	2,184	97.8	2,180	97.6	2,233	100.0
	SWAH	557	97.9	560	98.4	559	98.2	560	98.4	569	100.0
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	2,166	98.0	2,178	98.6	2,174	98.4	2,176	98.5	2,210	100.0
	Total	10,077	97.5	10,182	98.5	10,043	97.2	10,057	97.3	10,335	100.0

Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI residents; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward.

Table N: Formula feeding support at discharge with hospital range, 2022 NIMATS experimental data

Feeding type at discharge	Site	Sterilise		Make Up Feed		Discuss Milk		Total	
		N	% mothers	N	% mothers	N	% mothers	N	% mothers
Formula fed	Altnagelvin	1,222	98.7	1,226	99.0	1,229	99.3	1,238	100.0
	Antrim	1,355	98.0	1,357	98.2	1,354	98.0	1,382	100.0
	Causeway	396	97.8	396	97.8	396	97.8	405	100.0
	Craigavon	1,342	99.1	1,337	98.7	1,179	87.1	1,354	100.0
	Daisyhill	878	97.2	880	97.5	868	96.1	903	100.0
	RJMS	2,144	97.6	2,140	97.4	2,144	97.6	2,196	100.0
	SWAH	507	98.8	507	98.8	507	98.8	513	100.0
	Ulster / Lagan Valley	1,538	98.8	1,539	98.8	1,537	98.7	1,557	100.0
	Total	9,382	98.3	9,382	98.3	9,214	96.5	9,548	100.0

Source: NIMATS experimental data; Live births to NI residents; excludes home births, babies born before arrival at hospital, infants who died in delivery suite, neonatal unit or postnatal ward. Disclosure controls have been applied by combining data for the Ulster and Lagan Valley due to the small number of births at Lagan Valley.

Table O: Breastfeeding at discharge by Health and Social Care Trust, 2022

HSCT / LCG	Number of births						Rate (%)					
	Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All
Belfast	1,327	686	<i>2,013</i>	1,728	63	3,804	34.9	18.0	<i>52.9</i>	45.4	1.7	100.0
Northern	1,799	734	<i>2,533</i>	2,401	48	4,982	36.1	14.7	<i>50.8</i>	48.2	1.0	100.0
South Eastern	1,422	525	<i>1,947</i>	1,614	67	3,628	39.2	14.5	<i>53.7</i>	44.5	1.8	100.0
Southern	1,723	749	<i>2,472</i>	2,180	133	4,785	36.0	15.7	<i>51.7</i>	45.6	2.8	100.0
Western	1,009	460	<i>1,469</i>	1,753	114	3,336	30.2	13.8	<i>44.0</i>	52.5	3.4	100.0
Unknown	37	12	<i>49</i>	33	3	85	43.5	14.1	<i>57.6</i>	38.8	3.5	100.0
Total	7,317	3,166	<i>10,483</i>	9,709	428	20,620	35.5	15.4	<i>50.8</i>	47.1	2.1	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table P: Breastfeeding at discharge by hospital, 2022

Birthplace	Number of births						Rate (%)					
	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown/ blank	All
Altnagelvin	619	299	918	1,234	66	2,218	27.9	13.5	41.4	55.6	3.0	100.0
Antrim	958	451	1,409	1,423	22	2,854	33.6	15.8	49.4	49.9	0.8	100.0
Causeway	371	79	450	405	1	856	43.3	9.2	52.6	47.3	0.1	100.0
Craigavon	1,121	444	1,565	1,372	88	3,025	37.1	14.7	51.7	45.4	2.9	100.0
Daisyhill	684	339	1,023	907	27	1,957	35.0	17.3	52.3	46.3	1.4	100.0
RJMS	1,419	831	2,250	2,236	119	4,605	30.8	18.0	48.9	48.6	2.6	100.0
SWAH	392	169	561	514	22	1,097	35.7	15.4	51.1	46.9	2.0	100.0
Ulster / Lagan Valley	1,712	537	2,249	1,583	45	3,879	44.1	13.8	58.0	40.8	1.2	100.0
All locations*	7,280	3,154	10,434	9,676	425	20,535	35.5	15.4	50.8	47.1	2.1	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers; All locations* Includes 44 births: At home (n=25), ROI Hospital (n=17), Overseas Hospital (n=1), Location other than hospital (n=1). Current procedures are being reviewed with respect to data transfer which may impact on data quality for place of birth.

Table Q: Breastfeeding at discharge by maternal age group, 2022

Age group	Number of births						Rate (%)					
	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All
Under 20	67	45	112	312	9	433	15.5	10.4	25.9	72.1	2.1	100.0
20-24	504	256	760	1,420	46	2,226	22.6	11.5	34.1	63.8	2.1	100.0
25-29	1,539	768	2,307	2,557	104	4,968	31.0	15.5	46.4	51.5	2.1	100.0
30-34	2,962	1,160	4,122	3,249	155	7,526	39.4	15.4	54.8	43.2	2.1	100.0
35-39	1,783	745	2,528	1,787	87	4,402	40.5	16.9	57.4	40.6	2.0	100.0
40+	425	178	603	351	24	978	43.5	18.2	61.7	35.9	2.5	100.0
Unknown	0	2	2	0	0	2	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	7,280	3,154	10,434	9,676	425	20,535	35.5	15.4	50.8	47.1	2.1	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table R: Breastfeeding at discharge by deprivation quintile (SOA), 2022

Deprivation quintile	Number of births						Rate (%)					
	Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All
1 - Most deprived	1,033	623	<i>1,656</i>	2,609	89	4,354	23.7	14.3	<i>38.0</i>	59.9	2.0	100.0
2	1,415	637	<i>2,052</i>	2,173	92	4,317	32.8	14.8	<i>47.5</i>	50.3	2.1	100.0
3	1,506	631	<i>2,137</i>	2,052	91	4,280	35.2	14.7	<i>49.9</i>	47.9	2.1	100.0
4	1,609	655	<i>2,264</i>	1,683	78	4,025	40.0	16.3	<i>56.2</i>	41.8	1.9	100.0
5 - Least deprived	1,717	608	<i>2,325</i>	1,159	75	3,559	48.2	17.1	<i>65.3</i>	32.6	2.1	100.0
Total	7,280	3154	<i>10,434</i>	9,676	425	20,535	35.5	15.4	<i>50.8</i>	47.1	2.1	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.
Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA).

Table S: Prevalence of breastfeeding (%) up to 12 months for infants born 2012 to 2021

Year	Stage	Number of births						Rate (%)					
		Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown/ Blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown/ Blank	All
2021	Discharge	8,176	2,843	11,019	10,495	398	21,912	37.3	13.0	50.3	47.9	1.8	100.0
	Primary visit	6,935	2,498	9,433	11,716	763	21,912	31.6	11.4	43.0	53.5	3.5	100.0
	6 weeks	5,704	1,871	7,575	13,500	837	21,912	26.0	8.5	34.6	61.6	3.8	100.0
	3 months	4,912	1,503	6,415	14,283	1,214	21,912	22.4	6.9	29.3	65.2	5.5	100.0
	6 months	3,795	1,110	4,905	14,336	2,671	21,912	17.3	5.1	22.4	65.4	12.2	100.0
	12 months	1,833	648	2,481	12,436	6,995	21,912	8.4	3.0	11.3	56.8	31.9	100.0
2020	Discharge	7,840	2,804	10,644	10,376	314	21,334	36.7	13.1	49.9	48.6	1.5	100.0
	Primary visit	6,539	2,329	8,868	11,465	1,001	21,334	30.7	10.9	41.6	53.7	4.7	100.0
	6 weeks	5,056	1,693	6,749	12,641	1,944	21,334	23.7	7.9	31.6	59.3	9.1	100.0
	3 months	4,669	1,288	5,957	13,875	1,502	21,334	21.9	6.0	27.9	65.0	7.0	100.0
	6 months	3,501	934	4,435	13,312	3,587	21,334	16.4	4.4	20.8	62.4	16.8	100.0
	12 months	1,750	641	2,391	12,002	6,941	21,334	8.2	3.0	11.2	56.3	32.5	100.0
2019	Discharge	8,363	2,657	11,020	11,009	359	22,388	37.4	11.9	49.2	49.2	1.6	100.0
	Primary visit	6,923	2,226	9,149	11,864	1,375	22,388	30.9	9.9	40.9	53.0	6.1	100.0
	6 weeks	5,501	1,834	7,335	14,001	1,052	22,388	24.6	8.2	32.8	62.5	4.7	100.0
	3 months	4,628	1,327	5,955	14,332	2,101	22,388	20.7	5.9	26.6	64.0	9.4	100.0
	6 months	2,869	810	3,679	12,002	6,707	22,388	12.8	3.6	16.4	53.6	30.0	100.0
	12 months	1,254	492	1,746	10,125	10,517	22,388	5.6	2.2	7.8	45.2	47.0	100.0
2018	Discharge	8,406	2,604	11,010	11,411	370	22,791	36.9	11.4	48.3	50.1	1.6	100.0
	Primary visit	6,651	2,030	8,681	11,968	2,142	22,791	29.2	8.9	38.1	52.5	9.4	100.0
	6 weeks	5,504	1,776	7,280	13,581	1,930	22,791	24.1	7.8	31.9	59.6	8.5	100.0
	3 months	4,746	1,362	6,108	14,028	2,655	22,791	20.8	6.0	26.8	61.6	11.6	100.0
	6 months	3,465	899	4,364	13,184	5,243	22,791	15.2	3.9	19.1	57.8	23.0	100.0
	12 months	1,910	698	2,608	13,948	6,235	22,791	8.4	3.1	11.4	61.2	27.4	100.0
2017	Discharge	8,381	2,518	10,899	11,964	313	23,176	36.2	10.9	47.0	51.6	1.4	100.0
	Primary visit	6,518	2,068	8,586	12,878	1,712	23,176	28.1	8.9	37.0	55.6	7.4	100.0
	6 weeks	5,145	1,763	6,908	14,459	1,809	23,176	22.2	7.6	29.8	62.4	7.8	100.0
	3 months	4,370	1,240	5,610	15,072	2,494	23,176	18.9	5.4	24.2	65.0	10.8	100.0
	6 months	3,132	836	3,968	13,779	5,429	23,176	13.5	3.6	17.1	59.5	23.4	100.0
	12 months	1,734	701	2,435	14,925	5,816	23,176	7.5	3.0	10.5	64.4	25.1	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. Advise caution: feeding status not fully recorded

Table S (continued): Prevalence of breastfeeding (%) up to 12 months for infants born 2012 to 2021

Year	Stage	Number of births						Rate (%)					
		Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown/ Blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown/ Blank	All
2016	Discharge	8,801	2,310	11,111	12,659	323	24,093	36.5	9.6	46.1	52.5	1.3	100.0
	Primary visit	6,586	2,078	8,664	13,323	2,106	24,093	27.3	8.6	36.0	55.3	8.7	100.0
	6 weeks	5,216	1,755	6,971	14,981	2,141	24,093	21.6	7.3	28.9	62.2	8.9	100.0
	3 months	4,345	1,245	5,590	15,668	2,835	24,093	18.0	5.2	23.2	65.0	11.8	100.0
	6 months	2,827	882	3,709	13,939	6,445	24,093	11.7	3.7	15.4	57.9	26.8	100.0
	12 months	1,440	725	2,165	15,083	6,845	24,093	6.0	3.0	9.0	62.6	28.4	100.0
2015	Discharge	9,160	1,811	10,971	13,014	328	24,313	37.7	7.4	45.1	53.5	1.3	100.0
	Primary visit	6,543	2,044	8,587	13,541	2,185	24,313	26.9	8.4	35.3	55.7	9.0	100.0
	6 weeks	5,048	1,759	6,807	14,975	2,531	24,313	20.8	7.2	28	61.6	10.4	100.0
	3 months	4,097	1,215	5,312	15,524	3,477	24,313	16.9	5.0	21.8	63.9	14.3	100.0
	6 months	2,455	962	3,417	13,136	7,760	24,313	10.1	4.0	14.1	54.0	31.9	100.0
	12 months	1,180	778	1,958	15,558	6,797	24,313	4.9	3.2	8.1	64.0	28.0	100.0
2014	Discharge	9,338	1,820	11,158	12,931	363	24,452	38.2	7.4	45.6	52.9	1.5	100.0
	Primary visit	6,691	1,881	8,572	13,522	2,358	24,452	27.4	7.7	35.1	55.3	9.6	100.0
	6 weeks	5,010	1,728	6,738	15,164	2,550	24,452	20.5	7.1	27.6	62.0	10.4	100.0
	3 months	3,907	1,308	5,215	15,316	3,921	24,452	16.0	5.3	21.3	62.6	16.0	100.0
	6 months	2,060	999	3,059	12,672	8,721	24,452	8.4	4.1	12.5	51.8	35.7	100.0
	12 months	798	801	1,599	14,875	7,978	24,452	3.3	3.3	6.5	60.8	32.6	100.0
2013	Discharge	9,056	1,820	10,876	12,922	335	24,133	37.5	7.5	45.1	53.5	1.4	100.0
	Primary visit	6,279	1,794	8,073	12,908	3,152	24,133	26.0	7.4	33.5	53.5	13.1	100.0
	6 weeks	4,611	1,767	6,378	14,462	3,293	24,133	19.1	7.3	26.4	59.9	13.6	100.0
	3 months	3,503	1,305	4,808	15,275	4,050	24,133	14.5	5.4	19.9	63.3	16.8	100.0
	6 months	1,676	936	2,612	11,410	10,111	24,133	6.9	3.9	10.8	47.3	41.9	100.0
	12 months	532	730	1,262	13,434	9,437	24,133	2.2	3.0	5.2	55.7	39.1	100.0
2012	Discharge	9,106	1,727	10,833	14,022	463	25,318	36.0	6.8	42.8	55.4	1.8	100.0
	Primary visit	5,632	1,539	7,171	12,604	5,543	25,318	22.2	6.1	28.3	49.8	21.9	100.0
	6 weeks	4,231	1,568	5,799	14,173	5,346	25,318	16.7	6.2	22.9	56.0	21.1	100.0
	3 months	3,088	1,102	4,190	14,454	6,674	25,318	12.2	4.4	16.5	57.1	26.4	100.0
	6 months	1,351	830	2,181	11,911	11,226	25,318	5.3	3.3	8.6	47.0	44.3	100.0
	12 months	454	694	1,148	14,480	9,690	25,318	1.8	2.7	4.5	57.2	38.3	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. Advise caution: feeding status not fully recorded

Table T: Prevalence of breastfeeding (%) by Health and Social Care Trust / Local Commissioning Group, 2021

HSCT / LCG	Stage	Number of births (N)						Rate (%)					
		Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Blank	All
BHSCT	Discharge	1,492	574	2,066	2,012	68	4,146	36.0%	13.8%	49.8%	48.5%	1.6%	100.0%
	Primary visit	1,372	515	1,887	2,158	101	4,146	33.1%	12.4%	45.5%	52.1%	2.4%	100.0%
	6 weeks	1,125	393	1,518	2,419	209	4,146	27.1%	9.5%	36.6%	58.3%	5.0%	100.0%
	3 months	962	338	1,300	2,382	464	4,146	23.2%	8.2%	31.4%	57.5%	11.2%	100.0%
	6 months	734	248	982	2,392	772	4,146	17.7%	6.0%	23.7%	57.7%	18.6%	100.0%
	12 months	182	64	246	1,033	2,867	4,146	4.4%	1.5%	5.9%	24.9%	69.2%	100.0%
NHSCT	Discharge	1,955	660	2,615	2,474	67	5,156	37.9%	12.8%	50.7%	48.0%	1.3%	100.0%
	Primary visit	1,677	566	2,243	2,805	108	5,156	32.5%	11.0%	43.5%	54.4%	2.1%	100.0%
	6 weeks	1,378	433	1,811	3,233	112	5,156	26.7%	8.4%	35.1%	62.7%	2.2%	100.0%
	3 months	1,221	322	1,543	3,473	140	5,156	23.7%	6.2%	29.9%	67.4%	2.7%	100.0%
	6 months	996	263	1,259	3,629	268	5,156	19.3%	5.1%	24.4%	70.4%	5.2%	100.0%
	12 months	655	205	860	3,953	343	5,156	12.7%	4.0%	16.7%	76.7%	6.7%	100.0%
SEHSCT	Discharge	1,652	446	2,098	1,663	89	3,850	42.9%	11.6%	54.5%	43.2%	2.3%	100.0%
	Primary visit	1,342	488	1,830	1,815	205	3,850	34.9%	12.7%	47.5%	47.1%	5.3%	100.0%
	6 weeks	1,123	364	1,487	2,162	201	3,850	29.2%	9.5%	38.6%	56.2%	5.2%	100.0%
	3 months	990	296	1,286	2,393	171	3,850	25.7%	7.7%	33.4%	62.2%	4.4%	100.0%
	6 months	707	212	919	2,269	662	3,850	18.4%	5.5%	23.9%	58.9%	17.2%	100.0%
	12 months	473	186	659	2,680	511	3,850	12.3%	4.8%	17.1%	69.6%	13.3%	100.0%
SHSCT	Discharge	1,934	687	2,621	2,385	96	5,102	37.9%	13.5%	51.4%	46.7%	1.9%	100.0%
	Primary visit	1,610	557	2,167	2,748	187	5,102	31.6%	10.9%	42.5%	53.9%	3.7%	100.0%
	6 weeks	1,324	421	1,745	3,155	202	5,102	26.0%	8.3%	34.2%	61.8%	4.0%	100.0%
	3 months	1,103	348	1,451	3,376	275	5,102	21.6%	6.8%	28.4%	66.2%	5.4%	100.0%
	6 months	859	240	1,099	3,340	663	5,102	16.8%	4.7%	21.5%	65.5%	13.0%	100.0%
	12 months	222	70	292	1,814	2,996	5,102	4.4%	1.4%	5.7%	35.6%	58.7%	100.0%
WHSCT	Discharge	1,143	476	1,619	1,961	78	3,658	31.2%	13.0%	44.3%	53.6%	2.1%	100.0%
	Primary visit	934	372	1,306	2,190	162	3,658	25.5%	10.2%	35.7%	59.9%	4.4%	100.0%
	6 weeks	754	260	1,014	2,531	113	3,658	20.6%	7.1%	27.7%	69.2%	3.1%	100.0%
	3 months	636	199	835	2,659	164	3,658	17.4%	5.4%	22.8%	72.7%	4.5%	100.0%
	6 months	499	147	646	2,706	306	3,658	13.6%	4.0%	17.7%	74.0%	8.4%	100.0%
	12 months	301	123	424	2,956	278	3,658	8.2%	3.4%	11.6%	80.8%	7.6%	100.0%
Total NI Residents	Discharge	8,176	2,843	11,019	10,495	398	21,912	37.3%	13.0%	50.3%	47.9%	1.8%	100.0%
	Primary visit	6,935	2,498	9,433	11,716	763	21,912	31.6%	11.4%	43.0%	53.5%	3.5%	100.0%
	6 weeks	5,704	1,871	7,575	13,500	837	21,912	26.0%	8.5%	34.6%	61.6%	3.8%	100.0%
	3 months	4,912	1,503	6,415	14,283	1,214	21,912	22.4%	6.9%	29.3%	65.2%	5.5%	100.0%
	6 months	3,795	1,110	4,905	14,336	2,671	21,912	17.3%	5.1%	22.4%	65.4%	12.2%	100.0%
	12 months	1,833	648	2,481	12,436	6,995	21,912	8.4%	3.0%	11.3%	56.8%	31.9%	100.0%

Source: Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers. Advise caution: feeding status not fully recorded

Table U: Prevalence of breastfeeding by maternal age, 2021

Mothers age group	Total births	Discharge		Primary visit		6 weeks		3 months		6 months		12 months	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 20	451	118	26.2	95	21.1	66	14.6	47	10.4	23	5.1	15	3.3
20 to 24	2,457	772	31.4	631	25.7	434	17.7	335	13.6	214	8.7	120	4.9
25 to 29	5,472	2,438	44.6	2,058	37.6	1,582	28.9	1,326	24.2	975	17.8	482	8.8
30 to 34	8,106	4,418	54.5	3,795	46.8	3,142	38.8	2,655	32.8	2,078	25.6	1,073	13.2
35 to 39	4,486	2,704	60.3	2,355	52.5	1,946	43.4	1,700	37.9	1,340	29.9	655	14.6
40+	937	569	60.7	497	53.0	403	43.0	351	37.5	273	29.1	135	14.4
Not known	3	0	0.0	2	66.7	2	66.7	1	33.3	2	66.7	1	33.3
Total	21,912	11,019	50.3	9,433	43.0	7,575	34.6	6,415	29.3	4,905	22.4	2,481	11.3

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers; Advise caution: feeding status not fully recorded

Table V: Prevalence of breastfeeding by deprivation quintile (SOA), 2021

Deprivation quintile	Total births	Discharge		Primary visit		6 weeks		3 months		6 months		12 months	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 Most deprived	4,664	1,637	35.1	1,394	29.9	1,049	22.5	839	18.0	619	13.3	279	6.0
2	4,625	2,102	45.4	1,801	38.9	1,415	30.6	1,188	25.7	925	20.0	451	9.8
3	4,512	2,249	49.8	1,843	40.8	1,454	32.2	1,214	26.9	926	20.5	477	10.6
4	4,351	2,511	57.7	2,144	49.3	1,751	40.2	1,506	34.6	1,153	26.5	646	14.8
5 Least deprived	3,760	2,520	67.0	2,251	59.9	1,906	50.7	1,668	44.4	1,282	34.1	628	16.7
Total	21,912	11,019	50.3	9,433	43.0	7,575	34.6	6,415	29.3	4,905	22.4	2,481	11.3

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers; Advise caution: feeding status not fully recorded
Deprivation status as per Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 for Super Output Area (SOA)

Table W: Breastfeeding at discharge by Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) / Local Commissioning Group (LCG), 2013-2022

Year		HSCT / LCG						Total
		Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Unknown / blank	
2022	Total births (n)	3,804	4,982	3,628	4,785	3,336	85	20,620
	Any BF (n)	2,013	2,533	1,947	2,472	1,469	49	10,483
	Rate (%)	52.9	50.8	53.7	51.7	44.0	57.6	50.8
2021	Total births (n)	4,146	5,156	3,850	5,102	3,658	87	21,999
	Any BF (n)	2,066	2,615	2,098	2,621	1,619	50	11,069
	Rate (%)	49.8	50.7	54.5	51.4	44.3	57.5	50.3
2020	Total births (n)	4,135	5,048	3,693	4,876	3,582	267	21,601
	Any BF (n)	2,088	2,579	1,937	2,469	1,571	156	10,800
	Rate (%)	50.5	51.1	52.5	50.6	43.9	58.4	50.0
2019	Total births (n)	4,340	5,364	3,879	5,192	3,613	203	22,591
	Any BF (n)	2,157	2,651	2,009	2,631	1,572	106	11,126
	Rate (%)	49.7	49.4	51.8	50.7	43.5	52.2	49.2
2018	Total births (n)	4,442	5,300	4,050	5,299	3,700	198	22,989
	Any BF (n)	2,136	2,547	2,104	2,618	1,605	122	11,132
	Rate (%)	48.1	48.1	52.0	49.4	43.4	61.6	48.4
2017	Total births (n)	4,361	5,585	3,995	5,392	3,843	199	23,375
	Any BF (n)	2,006	2,608	2,020	2,650	1,615	112	11,011
	Rate (%)	46.0	46.7	50.6	49.1	42.0	56.3	47.1
2016	Total births (n)	4,665	5,710	4,269	5,519	3,930	175	24,268
	Any BF (n)	2,145	2,580	2,099	2,679	1,608	96	11,207
	Rate (%)	46.0	45.2	49.2	48.5	40.9	54.9	46.2
2015	Total births (n)	4,660	5,773	4,334	5,535	4,011	179	24,492
	Any BF (n)	2,112	2,536	2,120	2,600	1,603	77	11,048
	Rate (%)	45.3	43.9	48.9	47.0	40.0	43.0	45.1
2014	Total births (n)	4,711	5,875	4,336	5,502	4,028	167	24,619
	Any BF (n)	2,190	2,627	2,089	2,692	1,560	59	11,217
	Rate (%)	46.5	44.7	48.2	48.9	38.7	35.3	45.6
2013	Total births (n)	4,719	5,800	4,336	5,362	3,916	200	24,333
	Any BF (n)	2,086	2,613	2,113	2,518	1,546	113	10,989
	Rate (%)	44.2	45.1	48.7	47.0	39.5	56.5	45.2

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births

Table X: Breastfeeding at discharge by Council Area (LGD2014), 2013-2022

Council Area LGD2014)		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Antrim and Newtownabbey	Total births (n)	1,714	1,772	1,799	1,748	1,694	1,626	1,648	1,526	1,577	1,502
	Any BF (n)	838	831	819	853	850	845	816	839	824	822
	Rate (%)	48.9	46.9	45.5	48.8	50.2	52.0	49.5	55.0	52.3	54.7
Ards and North Down	Total births (n)	1,736	1,742	1,755	1,661	1,546	1,510	1,535	1,405	1,464	1,444
	Any BF (n)	902	874	883	855	837	818	809	748	837	787
	Rate (%)	52.0	50.2	50.3	51.5	54.1	54.2	52.7	53.2	57.2	54.5
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	Total births (n)	2,865	2,931	2,995	2,932	2,901	2,851	2,732	2,545	2,722	2,543
	Any BF (n)	1,330	1,405	1,386	1,431	1,398	1,429	1,362	1,286	1,370	1,320
	Rate (%)	46.4	47.9	46.3	48.8	48.2	50.1	49.9	50.5	50.3	51.9
Belfast	Total births (n)	4,687	4,649	4,591	4,616	4,218	4,292	4,197	3,975	3,987	3,681
	Any BF (n)	1,912	2,019	1,949	1,983	1,795	1,936	1,955	1,870	1,848	1,820
	Rate (%)	40.8	43.4	42.5	43.0	42.6	45.1	46.6	47.0	46.4	49.4
Causeway Coast and Glens	Total births (n)	1,759	1,699	1,721	1,631	1,622	1,500	1,515	1,433	1,477	1,404
	Any BF (n)	712	677	683	672	675	689	709	667	710	646
	Rate (%)	40.5	39.8	39.7	41.2	41.6	45.9	46.8	46.5	48.1	46.0
Derry City and Strabane	Total births (n)	2,072	2,089	2,106	1,978	1,921	1,837	1,820	1,868	1,866	1,708
	Any BF (n)	712	700	706	679	667	711	684	732	764	694
	Rate (%)	34.4	33.5	33.5	34.3	34.7	38.7	37.6	39.2	40.9	40.6
Fermanagh and Omagh	Total births (n)	1,436	1,508	1,428	1,517	1,485	1,461	1,391	1,326	1,405	1,237
	Any BF (n)	695	720	741	771	777	720	716	687	700	625
	Rate (%)	48.4	47.7	51.9	50.8	52.3	49.3	51.5	51.8	49.8	50.5
Lisburn and Castlereagh	Total births (n)	1,701	1,747	1,737	1,755	1,722	1,809	1,720	1,668	1,695	1,557
	Any BF (n)	959	997	971	986	983	1,054	1,027	1,034	1,060	983
	Rate (%)	56.4	57.1	55.9	56.2	57.1	58.3	59.7	62.0	62.5	63.1
Mid and East Antrim	Total births (n)	1,506	1,605	1,503	1,585	1,520	1,474	1,465	1,363	1,343	1,381
	Any BF (n)	687	740	701	730	733	693	770	718	675	701
	Rate (%)	45.6	46.1	46.6	46.1	48.2	47.0	52.6	52.7	50.3	50.8
Mid Ulster	Total births (n)	2,159	2,139	2,186	2,148	2,126	2,055	2,087	1,993	2,069	1,940
	Any BF (n)	1,020	1,022	987	1,012	1,036	1,013	1,039	972	1,058	961
	Rate (%)	47.2	47.8	45.2	47.1	48.7	49.3	49.8	48.8	51.1	49.5
Newry, Mourne and Down	Total births (n)	2,497	2,569	2,492	2,522	2,421	2,376	2,278	2,232	2,307	2,138
	Any BF (n)	1,109	1,172	1,145	1,139	1,148	1,102	1,133	1,091	1,173	1,075
	Rate (%)	44.4	45.6	45.9	45.2	47.4	46.4	49.7	48.9	50.8	50.3
Total NI Residents	Total births (n)	24,133	24,452	24,313	24,093	23,176	22,791	22,388	21,334	21,912	20,535
	Any BF (n)	10,876	11,158	10,971	11,111	10,899	11,010	11,020	10,644	11,019	10,434
	Rate (%)	45.1	45.6	45.1	46.1	47.0	48.3	49.2	49.9	50.3	50.8

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; live births to NI resident mothers.

Table Y: Breastfeeding at discharge (%) by Council area (LGD2014) and District Electoral Area (DEA2014), 2020-2022

Council area LGD2014	District Electoral Area (DEA 2014)	2020			2021			2022		
		Total births	Any BF		Total births	Any BF		Total births	Any BF	
		N	N	%	N	N	%	N	N	%
Antrim and Newtownabbey	Airport	246	157	63.8	251	127	50.6	230	132	57.4
	Antrim	262	144	55	294	142	48.3	283	154	54.4
	Ballyclare	198	119	60.1	198	114	57.6	205	119	58.0
	Dunsilly	200	106	53	193	97	50.3	193	102	52.8
	Glengormley Urban	217	120	55.3	235	130	55.3	198	108	54.5
	Macedon	203	91	44.8	210	102	48.6	202	93	46.0
	Three Mile Water	200	102	51	196	112	57.1	191	114	59.7
	Total	1,526	839	55.0	1,577	824	52.3	1,502	822	54.7
Ards and North Down	Ards Peninsula	193	91	47.2	205	96	46.8	225	124	55.1
	Bangor Central	250	142	56.8	260	156	60	220	102	46.4
	Bangor East & Donaghadee	170	90	52.9	160	92	57.5	159	88	55.3
	Bangor West	169	99	58.6	189	105	55.6	176	99	56.3
	Comber	184	106	57.6	199	120	60.3	195	115	59.0
	Holywood & Clondeboye	151	103	68.2	159	117	73.6	155	112	72.3
	Newtownards	288	117	40.6	292	151	51.7	314	147	46.8
	Total	1,405	748	53.2	1,464	837	57.2	1,444	787	54.5
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	Armagh	382	182	47.6	446	200	44.8	370	189	51.1
	Banbridge	361	185	51.2	393	193	49.1	361	187	51.8
	Craigavon	367	180	49	363	185	51	346	178	51.4
	Cusher	322	171	53.1	319	172	53.9	317	166	52.4
	Lagan River	281	174	61.9	266	155	58.3	301	177	58.8
	Lurgan	470	217	46.2	524	250	47.7	475	229	48.2
	Portadown	362	177	48.9	411	215	52.3	373	194	52.0
	Total	2,545	1286	50.5	2,722	1370	50.3	2,543	1320	51.9
Belfast	Balmoral	257	174	67.7	241	182	75.5	236	163	69.1
	Black Mountain	511	189	37	481	151	31.4	420	150	35.7
	Botanic	375	251	66.9	384	240	62.5	430	293	68.1
	Castle	380	183	48.2	355	182	51.3	302	152	50.3
	Collin	454	148	32.6	455	158	34.7	426	158	37.1
	Court	415	101	24.3	479	111	23.2	428	127	29.7
	Lisnasharragh	333	224	67.3	297	220	74.1	268	187	69.8
	Oldpark	485	155	32	485	139	28.7	431	142	32.9
	Ormiston	354	245	69.2	339	236	69.6	333	230	69.1
	Titanic	411	200	48.7	471	229	48.6	407	218	53.6
	Total	3,975	1870	47.0	3,987	1,848	46.4	3,681	1,820	49.4
Causeway Coast and Glens	Ballymoney	281	143	50.9	285	130	45.6	245	108	44.1
	Bann	157	73	46.5	188	109	58	185	94	50.8
	Benbradagh	238	93	39.1	218	85	39	223	97	43.5
	Causeway	200	111	55.5	213	128	60.1	163	98	60.1
	Coleraine	225	99	44	221	98	44.3	222	100	45.0
	Limavady	150	59	39.3	168	70	41.7	166	51	30.7
	The Glens	182	89	48.9	184	90	48.9	200	98	49.0
	Total	1433	667	46.5	1477	710	48.1	1404	646	46.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table Y continued: Breastfeeding at discharge (%) by Council area (LGD2014) and District Electoral Area (DEA2014), 2020-2022

Council area (LGD2014)	District Electoral Area (DEA 2014)	2020			2021			2022		
		Total births	Any BF		Total births	Any BF		Total births	Any BF	
		N	N	%	N	N	%	N	N	%
Derry City and Strabane	Ballyarnett	353	118	33.4	345	132	38.3	314	112	35.7
	Derg	218	104	47.7	230	92	40	208	88	42.3
	Faughan	217	100	46.1	219	97	44.3	201	88	43.8
	Foyleside	193	77	39.9	216	90	41.7	210	80	38.1
	Sperrin	330	126	38.2	304	122	40.1	259	102	39.4
	The Moor	179	53	29.6	220	76	34.5	181	60	33.1
	Waterside	378	154	40.7	332	155	46.7	335	164	49.0
	Total	1,868	732	39.2	1,866	764	40.9	1,708	694	40.6
Fermanagh and Omagh	Enniskillen	158	95	60.1	182	99	54.4	167	95	56.9
	Erne East	190	80	42.1	199	93	46.7	163	74	45.4
	Erne North	163	83	50.9	181	77	42.5	165	78	47.3
	Erne West	181	93	51.4	188	112	59.6	137	79	57.7
	Mid Tyrone	229	114	49.8	243	123	50.6	211	110	52.1
	Omagh	198	103	52	213	92	43.2	199	86	43.2
	West Tyrone	207	119	57.5	199	104	52.3	195	103	52.8
	Total	1,326	687	51.8	1,405	700	49.8	1,237	625	50.5
Lisburn and Castlereagh	Castlereagh East	269	157	58.4	260	153	58.8	241	146	60.6
	Castlereagh South	270	186	68.9	281	199	70.8	233	180	77.3
	Downshire East	164	110	67.1	165	114	69.1	152	101	66.4
	Downshire West	185	139	75.1	177	120	67.8	184	135	73.4
	Killultagh	242	145	59.9	281	170	60.5	238	155	65.1
	Lisburn North	279	168	60.2	269	169	62.8	238	142	59.7
	Lisburn South	259	129	49.8	262	135	51.5	271	124	45.8
	Total	1,668	1,034	62.0	1,695	1,060	62.5	1,557	983	63.1
Mid and East Antrim	Ballymena	234	118	50.4	245	118	48.2	277	137	49.5
	Bannside	243	124	51	209	107	51.2	222	128	57.7
	Braid	263	148	56.3	261	139	53.3	239	120	50.2
	Carrick Castle	166	93	56	145	74	51	154	70	45.5
	Coast Road	150	57	38	154	62	40.3	145	53	36.6
	Knockagh	140	73	52.1	178	102	57.3	185	105	56.8
	Larne Lough	167	105	62.9	151	73	48.3	159	88	55.3
	Total	1,363	718	52.7	1,343	675	50.3	1,381	701	50.8
Mid Ulster	Carntogher	236	100	42.4	236	112	47.5	200	100	50.0
	Clogher Valley	287	149	51.9	348	203	58.3	302	151	50.0
	Cookstown	309	132	42.7	303	137	45.2	302	135	44.7
	Dungannon	366	215	58.7	357	194	54.3	354	187	52.8
	Magherafelt	255	127	49.8	275	139	50.5	251	121	48.2
	Moyola	224	101	45.1	256	139	54.3	235	122	51.9
	Torrent	316	148	46.8	294	134	45.6	296	145	49.0
	Total	1,993	972	48.8	2,069	1,058	51.1	1,940	961	49.5
Newry, Mourne and Down	Crotlieve	324	167	51.5	368	203	55.2	323	194	60.1
	Downpatrick	224	88	39.3	247	110	44.5	231	100	43.3
	Newry	367	178	48.5	360	175	48.6	318	153	48.1
	Rowallane	241	120	49.8	252	128	50.8	218	115	52.8
	Slieve Croob	224	111	49.6	261	132	50.6	210	102	48.6
	Slieve Gullion	481	226	47	462	227	49.1	468	209	44.7
	The Mournes	371	201	54.2	357	198	55.5	370	202	54.6
	Total	2,232	1,091	48.9	2,307	1,173	50.8	2,138	1,075	50.3
NI Total		21,334	10,644	49.9	21,912	11,019	50.3	20,535	10,434	50.8

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table Z: Breastfeeding prevalence (%) by Council area (LGD2014), 2021

Council area	Number of births (N)							Rate (%)					
	Stage	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All
Antrim and Newtownabbey	Discharge	600	224	824	730	23	1,577	38.0	14.2	52.3	46.3	1.5	100.0
	Primary visit	542	192	734	816	27	1,577	34.4	12.2	46.5	51.7	1.7	100.0
	6 weeks	444	154	598	941	38	1,577	28.2	9.8	37.9	59.7	2.4	100.0
	3 months	395	120	515	1,011	51	1,577	25.0	7.6	32.7	64.1	3.2	100.0
	6 months	318	98	416	1,039	122	1,577	20.2	6.2	26.4	65.9	7.7	100.0
	12 months	214	76	290	1,148	139	1,577	13.6	4.8	18.4	72.8	8.8	100.0
Ards and North Down	Discharge	673	164	837	598	29	1,464	46.0	11.2	57.2	40.8	2.0	100.0
	Primary visit	553	192	745	670	49	1,464	37.8	13.1	50.9	45.8	3.3	100.0
	6 weeks	475	143	618	807	39	1,464	32.4	9.8	42.2	55.1	2.7	100.0
	3 months	425	101	526	887	51	1,464	29.0	6.9	35.9	60.6	3.5	100.0
	6 months	290	77	367	838	259	1,464	19.8	5.3	25.1	57.2	17.7	100.0
	12 months	215	68	283	1,031	150	1,464	14.7	4.6	19.3	70.4	10.2	100.0
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	Discharge	1,014	356	1,370	1,297	55	2,722	37.3	13.1	50.3	47.6	2.0	100.0
	Primary visit	846	281	1,127	1,486	109	2,722	31.1	10.3	41.4	54.6	4.0	100.0
	6 weeks	714	218	932	1,675	115	2,722	26.2	8.0	34.2	61.5	4.2	100.0
	3 months	584	196	780	1,777	165	2,722	21.5	7.2	28.7	65.3	6.1	100.0
	6 months	481	114	595	1,804	323	2,722	17.7	4.2	21.9	66.3	11.9	100.0
	12 months	107	42	149	872	1,701	2,722	3.9	1.5	5.5	32.0	62.5	100.0
Belfast	Discharge	1,330	518	1,848	2,068	71	3,987	33.4	13.0	46.4	51.9	1.8	100.0
	Primary visit	1,234	464	1,698	2,181	108	3,987	31.0	11.6	42.6	54.7	2.7	100.0
	6 weeks	998	353	1,351	2,417	219	3,987	25.0	8.9	33.9	60.6	5.5	100.0
	3 months	844	303	1,147	2,406	434	3,987	21.2	7.6	28.8	60.3	10.9	100.0
	6 months	643	216	859	2,352	776	3,987	16.1	5.4	21.5	59.0	19.5	100.0
	12 months	184	69	253	1,178	2,556	3,987	4.6	1.7	6.3	29.5	64.1	100.0
Causeway Coast and Glens	Discharge	537	173	710	742	25	1,477	36.4	11.7	48.1	50.2	1.7	100.0
	Primary visit	438	132	570	857	50	1,477	29.7	8.9	38.6	58.0	3.4	100.0
	6 weeks	363	104	467	987	23	1,477	24.6	7.0	31.6	66.8	1.6	100.0
	3 months	316	89	405	1,041	31	1,477	21.4	6.0	27.4	70.5	2.1	100.0
	6 months	262	60	322	1,093	62	1,477	17.7	4.1	21.8	74.0	4.2	100.0
	12 months	173	51	224	1,162	91	1,477	11.7	3.5	15.2	78.7	6.2	100.0
Derry City and Strabane	Discharge	535	229	764	1,057	45	1,866	28.7	12.3	40.9	56.6	2.4	100.0
	Primary visit	427	193	620	1,166	80	1,866	22.9	10.3	33.2	62.5	4.3	100.0
	6 weeks	336	118	454	1,352	60	1,866	18.0	6.3	24.3	72.5	3.2	100.0
	3 months	283	100	383	1,405	78	1,866	15.2	5.4	20.5	75.3	4.2	100.0
	6 months	245	61	306	1,444	116	1,866	13.1	3.3	16.4	77.4	6.2	100.0
	12 months	126	62	188	1,535	143	1,866	6.8	3.3	10.1	82.3	7.7	100.0

Table Z continued: Breastfeeding prevalence (%) by Council area (LGD2014), 2021

Council area	Stage	Number of births (N)						Rate (%)					
		Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All	Total BF	Partial BF	Any BF	Not at all	Unknown / blank	All
Fermanagh and Omagh	Discharge	502	198	700	683	22	1,405	35.7	14.1	49.8	48.6	1.6	100.0
	Primary visit	420	147	567	772	66	1,405	29.9	10.5	40.4	54.9	4.7	100.0
	6 weeks	347	124	471	888	46	1,405	24.7	8.8	33.5	63.2	3.3	100.0
	3 months	292	85	377	953	75	1,405	20.8	6.0	26.8	67.8	5.3	100.0
	6 months	206	76	282	950	173	1,405	14.7	5.4	20.1	67.6	12.3	100.0
	12 months	145	46	191	1,099	115	1,405	10.3	3.3	13.6	78.2	8.2	100.0
Lisburn and Castlereagh	Discharge	811	249	1,060	603	32	1,695	47.8	14.7	62.5	35.6	1.9	100.0
	Primary visit	660	260	920	677	98	1,695	38.9	15.3	54.3	39.9	5.8	100.0
	6 weeks	569	192	761	846	88	1,695	33.6	11.3	44.9	49.9	5.2	100.0
	3 months	504	169	673	909	113	1,695	29.7	10.0	39.7	53.6	6.7	100.0
	6 months	389	108	497	904	294	1,695	22.9	6.4	29.3	53.3	17.3	100.0
	12 months	168	85	253	850	592	1,695	9.9	5.0	14.9	50.1	34.9	100.0
Mid and East Antrim	Discharge	496	179	675	649	19	1,343	36.9	13.3	50.3	48.3	1.4	100.0
	Primary visit	434	160	594	728	21	1,343	32.3	11.9	44.2	54.2	1.6	100.0
	6 weeks	362	113	475	846	22	1,343	27.0	8.4	35.4	63.0	1.6	100.0
	3 months	336	71	407	904	32	1,343	25.0	5.3	30.3	67.3	2.4	100.0
	6 months	294	58	352	936	55	1,343	21.9	4.3	26.2	69.7	4.1	100.0
	12 months	200	51	251	1,015	77	1,343	14.9	3.8	18.7	75.6	5.7	100.0
Mid Ulster	Discharge	791	267	1,058	984	27	2,069	38.2	12.9	51.1	47.6	1.3	100.0
	Primary visit	644	226	870	1,130	69	2,069	31.1	10.9	42.0	54.6	3.3	100.0
	6 weeks	512	150	662	1,323	84	2,069	24.7	7.2	32.0	63.9	4.1	100.0
	3 months	430	118	548	1,430	91	2,069	20.8	5.7	26.5	69.1	4.4	100.0
	6 months	305	113	418	1,457	194	2,069	14.7	5.5	20.2	70.4	9.4	100.0
	12 months	139	48	187	1,257	625	2,069	6.7	2.3	9.0	60.8	30.2	100.0
Newry, Mourne and Down	Discharge	887	286	1,173	1,084	50	2,307	38.4	12.4	50.8	47.0	2.2	100.0
	Primary visit	737	251	988	1,233	86	2,307	31.9	10.9	42.8	53.4	3.7	100.0
	6 weeks	584	202	786	1,418	103	2,307	25.3	8.8	34.1	61.5	4.5	100.0
	3 months	503	151	654	1,560	93	2,307	21.8	6.5	28.3	67.6	4.0	100.0
	6 months	362	129	491	1,519	297	2,307	15.7	5.6	21.3	65.8	12.9	100.0
	12 months	162	50	212	1,289	806	2,307	7.0	2.2	9.2	55.9	34.9	100.0
Total Northern Ireland residents	Discharge	8,176	2,843	11,019	10,495	398	21,912	37.3	13.0	50.3	47.9	1.8	100.0
	Primary visit	6,935	2,498	9,433	11,716	763	21,912	31.6	11.4	43.0	53.5	3.5	100.0
	6 weeks	5,704	1,871	7,575	13,500	837	21,912	26.0	8.5	34.6	61.6	3.8	100.0
	3 months	4,912	1,503	6,415	14,283	1,214	21,912	22.4	6.9	29.3	65.2	5.5	100.0
	6 months	3,795	1,110	4,905	14,336	2,671	21,912	17.3	5.1	22.4	65.4	12.2	100.0
	12 months	1,833	648	2,481	12,436	6,995	21,912	8.4	3.0	11.3	56.8	31.9	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table AA: Breastfeeding at discharge by Sure Start and Non Sure Start areas, 2020-2022

Year		Number of births (N)						Rate (%)					
		Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	Total	Total BF	Partial BF	<i>Any BF</i>	Not at all	Unknown / blank	Total
2022*	Non Sure Start area	4,837	1,886	<i>6,723</i>	4,880	254	11,857	40.8	15.9	<i>56.7</i>	41.2	2.1	100.0
	Sure Start area	2,443	1,268	<i>3,711</i>	4,796	171	8,678	28.2	14.6	<i>42.8</i>	55.3	2.0	100.0
	All	7,280	3,154	<i>10,434</i>	9,676	425	20,535	35.5	15.4	<i>50.8</i>	47.1	2.1	100.0
2021*	Non Sure Start area	5,534	1,738	<i>7,272</i>	5,215	222	12,709	43.5	13.7	<i>57.2</i>	41.0	1.7	100.0
	Sure Start area	2,642	1,105	<i>3,747</i>	5,280	176	9,203	28.7	12.0	<i>40.7</i>	57.4	1.9	100.0
	All	8,176	2,843	<i>11,019</i>	10,495	398	21,912	37.3	13.0	<i>50.3</i>	47.9	1.8	100.0
2020	Non Sure Start area	5,601	1,844	<i>7,445</i>	5,735	175	13,355	41.9	13.8	<i>55.7</i>	42.9	1.3	100.0
	Sure Start area	2,239	960	<i>3,199</i>	4,640	141	7,980	28.1	12.0	<i>40.1</i>	58.1	1.8	100.0
	All	7,840	2,804	<i>10,644</i>	10,375	316	21,335	36.7	13.1	<i>49.9</i>	48.6	1.5	100.0

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Note: *Data for 2021 and 2022 is not directly comparable with previous years due to revisions in Sure Start geographical boundaries.

Table AB: Prevalence of breastfeeding by Sure Start and non Sure Start area, 2021

	Total births	Discharge		Primary Visit		6 weeks		3 months		6 months		12 months	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Non Sure Start area	9,203	3,747	40.7	3,203	34.8	2,453	26.7	2,014	21.9	1,506	16.4	709	7.7
Sure Start area	12,709	7,272	57.2	6,230	49.0	5,122	40.3	4,401	34.6	3,399	26.7	1,772	13.9
All births	21,912	11,019	50.3	9,433	43.0	7,575	34.6	6,415	29.3	4,905	22.4	2,481	11.3

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

Table AC: Prevalence of breastfeeding by Sure Start Child Care Partnership (CCP) area, 2021

	Total births	Discharge		Primary Visit		6 weeks		3 months		6 months		12 months	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Belfast CCP	2,439	876	35.9	792	32.5	586	24.0	468	19.2	347	14.2	95	3.9
Northern CCP	1,303	501	38.4	434	33.3	340	26.1	283	21.7	227	17.4	158	12.1
South Eastern CCP	1,053	414	39.3	364	34.6	270	25.6	228	21.7	157	14.9	110	10.4
Southern CCP	2,200	1,068	48.5	891	40.5	707	32.1	583	26.5	423	19.2	119	5.4
Western CCP	2,208	888	40.2	722	32.7	550	24.9	452	20.5	352	15.9	227	10.3
All Sure Start areas	9,203	3,747	40.7	3,203	34.8	2,453	26.7	2,014	21.9	1,506	16.4	709	7.7
Non Sure Start area	12,709	7,272	57.2	6,230	49.0	5,122	40.3	4,401	34.6	3,399	26.7	1,772	13.9
All births	21,912	11,019	50.3	9,433	43.0	7,575	34.6	6,415	29.3	4,905	22.4	2,481	11.3

Source: Northern Ireland Child Health System; Live births to NI resident mothers.

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