



message

What is a BFS?

B: Breast

F: Feeding

S: Supporter

Who are they?

First and foremost they are a group of volunteer Message mothers who have breastfed their own babies for at least 6 months. This gives them a background of personal experience covering quite a few milestones in the life of a breastfeeding child.

They all have an interest in breastfeeding and so have committed themselves to an ongoing, intensive training programme provided by Message. The initial training takes up to 10 months to complete and requires the trainee to attend a study day once a month. It also contains various elements of academic work. The course is run by a qualified International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. Each year the BFS must attend one further study day to keep up to date with the very latest information.

What do they do as a team?

The base of their work is giving information on breastfeeding subjects to breastfeeding mothers or future breastfeeding mothers so that they can make informed decisions which suit them. They talk through issues and support breastfeeding mothers in their day to day lives especially when they meet difficulties with breastfeeding.

Where do you find them?


There is one BFS for each Message area. Each BFS is in contact with the Area Leader and Bumps2Babies contact for that area and will be told of opportunities to meet mothers and babies.

So, you might find a BFS at a pregnant mothers meeting or at a babies and non-mobile babies group. There is always a BFS in attendance at the Café Bébé which is held at the same time, same place and the same date as the Message Monthly Meetup. You will meet them at events such as the Message Bring and Buy sales too. They also write articles on breastfeeding issues for the Message magazine and answer questions on the forums on the Message website.

Under the terms of their contract the BFS is asked to contact “mothers to be” before their baby arrives. This happens most of the time but not always so instead of waiting for the call, ring them. Some will go and see mothers in hospital or at home but they are volunteers so it is for the individual BFS to decide if that is a service they can offer. They quite often get caught up in family life and don't reach all the mothers in their area.

How do I get in touch with the BFS for my Area?

All of their telephone numbers appear on the website under the Support - "Having a Baby" heading and are always listed at the back of the Message magazine. If the BFS for your Area is not available, you can call anyone on the list – anyone on the team will be more than happy to help. You can also post a query on the Message website forums where someone from the BFS Team will do their utmost to post a reply or may call you directly.



Why not save the number for your BFS in your mobile phone. That way you'll have it to hand when you need it

Do they have to abide by some rules?

Well, yes, at the end of their training each fledgling BFS is asked to read and agree to the terms and conditions set down in two documents. The first is a job description and the second is a code of conduct. The Team is required to sign the code of conduct at the beginning of each year. Each BFS is issued with the latest edition of "The Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple" book by Nancy Mohrbacher, a highly respected professional in the field. If, when supporting a mother with a breastfeeding difficulty, they are unable to find a solution, they can ask the advice of the professional advisor attached to the team. This advisor is a qualified Lactation Consultant (please note in this role within Message she too is a volunteer and is unable to take calls directly from Message members). The BFS can also provide information on where else to go for help if necessary. They are not qualified to give medical advice.

*Some mothers find breastfeeding a really satisfying experience and some find it difficult and restricting. Any breastfeeding mother can go through a rough patch sometimes, but good support, commitment and determination can help her through it. Never hesitate to get in touch a **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTER**. That's what they are there for and they are waiting for you call!*