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Breastfeeding – Executive Summary

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Breastfeeding rates in the UK continue to be among the lowest in Europe, despite evidence that increased breastfeeding has the potential to improve the health of both mother and baby. In Scotland, breastfeeding rates are poor and static. Recognising that co-created, iterative methodologies, and a 'bottom up' approach have the potential to develop more person-centred service innovation, this project brought together end users and key health professionals to design interventions tailored to empower and motivate users.

The aim of the research project was to employ a user-driven approach to develop new ways of promoting breastfeeding among new mothers and young women. Key to this aim was to identify ways in which women want to be supported: the methods, models and timescales of information sharing and support provision as well as identifying how health professionals want to provide that support in practice. The project sought to develop a model of delivery that meets the needs of all groups and has a positive impact on baby feeding decision-making.

The project involved a series of Mini-Labs and Experience Labs involving participation of new mothers, health professionals, health academics and young people. The Labs were designed to capture the experience and knowledge of baby feeding decision making, and identify preferred methods of support and promotion with respect to breastfeeding.

The findings of the Labs illustrate the individual, social, cultural, and societal challenges around breastfeeding and the need for a collaborative approach in designing support and promotional materials tailored to meet the needs of each group.

Future recommendations are suggested relating to five key areas of opportunity: exploring the care pathway, developing a single maternity service voice, developing a tailored educational programme for schools, the potential of community collaboration, and the co-design requirements of a new website.