How breastfeeding statistics are used

The Scottish Government uses the statistics to inform strategy on infant feeding as outlined in Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A Framework for Action. A health improvement target was set to increase the proportion of newborn children exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks in Scotland from 26.2% in 2006/07 to 32.7% in 2010/11 (an increase of 25%). This target was set, and monitored, based on these statistics.

NHS Boards, community health partnerships and councils use the statistics to:

- Monitor the performance of local programmes to improve breastfeeding rates and report progress in board reports
- Plan services and initiatives to improve rates

The statistics are also used to inform local and national public marketing campaigns such as National Breastfeeding Awareness Week.

Breastfeeding statistics are published in Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics which has a range of users.

Other users include:

- The voluntary sector/charities and campaign groups: for example National Childbirth Trust (NCT)
- Academic researchers: for example Effectiveness of policy to provide breastfeeding groups (BIG) for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in primary care: cluster randomised controlled trial (Hoddinott, Britten, Prescott, Tappin, Ludbrook, Godden, British Medical Journal, January 2009)
- The public, for example mothers interested in breastfeeding
- The media: for example, Lack of support blamed for breastfeeding failure