



Impact Analysis Report

Executive Summary

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Bottom Line: Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support is a high-quality service, highly valued by both users and health professionals. It provides expert breastfeeding support and a welcoming community for new families. There is demand for more services at different times and in new locations within and outside Oxford City.

'It was clear from attending the sessions that the support offered by OBS is invaluable; not only are they supporting mothers with practical advice, they are also creating a much-needed sense of community... It was surprising to hear from mothers that they would have given up breastfeeding without OBS. I think this says it all in terms of the need for this service'



Naya Yerolemou, Impact Labs

Supporting your family from pregnancy to weaning



WHO WE ARE

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support provides local breastfeeding support in the community in four weekly drop-in sessions in Oxford, facilitated by experienced International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) and breastfeeding support workers, and supported by specially trained volunteer peer supporters. In addition, OBS provides monthly antenatal breastfeeding preparation courses and a very large peer to peer, IBCLC-supported community via Facebook. They support the training of local health professionals through placements.



Service user Ines (R) and her baby Aksel

'We are focusing on [providing an] accessible service, serving the whole community, multidisciplinary working, and promoting and supporting breastfeeding for all... [We aim to] empower women and their supporters to define and achieve their own breastfeeding goals by providing them with evidence-based information, skilled breastfeeding support, emotional care and positive connections with other families.'

OBS Annual Report, 2017-18

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

OBS commissioned Impact Labs at the Oxford Hub in February 2019. Impact Lab volunteers prepared and distributed questionnaires at drop-ins and online. They targeted service users, families of service users, volunteers and local health professionals. 212 service users responded (37 of whom had never attended a drop-in), 8 family members, 14 volunteers and 26 health professionals/students. They also analysed existing comprehensive demographic data recorded by OBS during 2018.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT

'[OBS is] far superior to all other services in terms of knowledge, skill, compassion, non-judgmental approach to supporting women, families and babies who struggle with breastfeeding. Attending [OBS] is like getting a hug from the wise elders of womanhood!... The community ethos and emphasis on the whole family runs through their practice. The ability to drop in throughout the full breastfeeding journey and have continuity of support is especially helpful'

Brid Spillane, OBS service user

- 99.5% of drop-in users and their families would recommend OBS to others
- 98% of drop-in users reported that they felt welcome and learnt something new at sessions
- 95% of drop-in users reported a positive impact on their social and emotional wellbeing, and increased confidence with breastfeeding
- Users valued OBS for being relaxed, friendly, understanding, knowledgeable and convenient. The feeling of community, both in person and online, was important to them. Facilities such as parking and concurrent health visitors and stay & play sessions were praised



- Health professionals valued OBS' specialist expertise, its ability to offer more time with families than they were able to, and for providing continuity of support in the community. Without OBS, health professionals felt there would be a strain on their own services (e.g. health visiting) and that breastfeeding rates and mothers' mental health would suffer
- There is significant demand for more OBS services, both in terms of extended sessions and additional locations. North Oxfordshire, Didcot and Headington/Barton areas are particular demand hotspots.

WHO IS USING OBS?

- Online-only service users are younger than those who use drop-ins (16% of online-only users are <29 years compared to 6% of drop-in users). 36% of births in Oxford are to mothers in this age group
- 12% of service users are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. 22% of all Oxford residents are from BME communities. There is no accurate data for new mothers
- 73% of sampled drop-in users had attended at least 3 times
- Figures 1 & 2 show where surveyed drop-in users live. Routinely collected data has shown that 33% of users live in OX4 (Southeast), 23% in OX2 (North & West), 16% in OX3 (East), 12% in OX1 (central & south) and 16% in other postcodes. Two OBS drop-ins are located in OX4, one in OX2 and one in OX1.

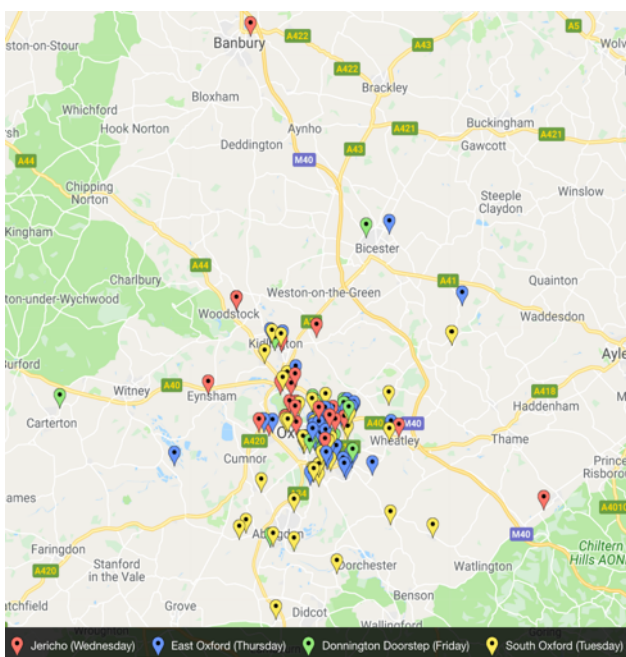


Figure 1: where do drop-in users live?

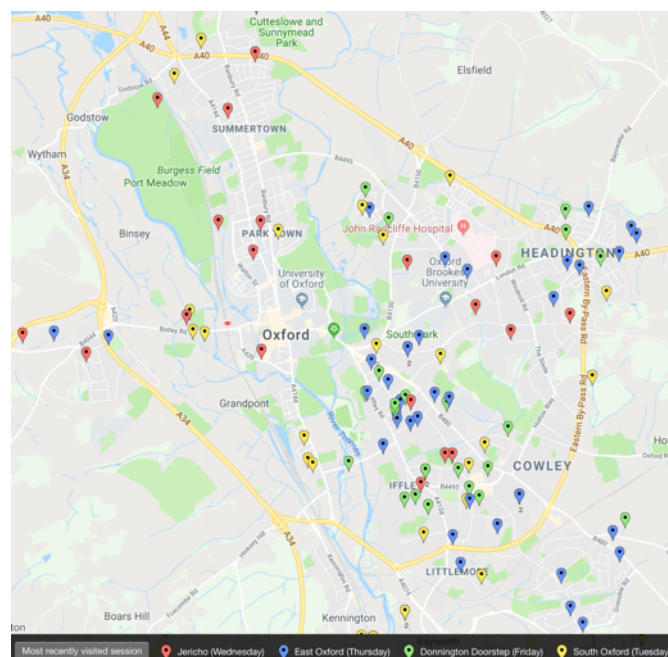


Figure 2: a closer look at Oxford city drop-in users

IMPACT ON VOLUNTEERS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- 79% of volunteers do so in order to help the community, 64% to gain new skills
- 71% of students and other observers reported a large or very large contribution to their own learning



KEY LEARNING

- Users want more OBS services: more sessions, times, locations, facilitators, and longer sessions
- 30% of respondents who had never visited a drop-in said that time or day were barriers to access
- 60% of respondents who had never visited a drop-in said that location was a barrier to access. Figure 3 shows that north of Oxford city (between Oxford and Banbury) was a particular hotspot, and there was also a cluster of users in Didcot who couldn't access OBS services. Figure 1 shows that some users in these locations will travel considerable distances to come to Oxford City sessions

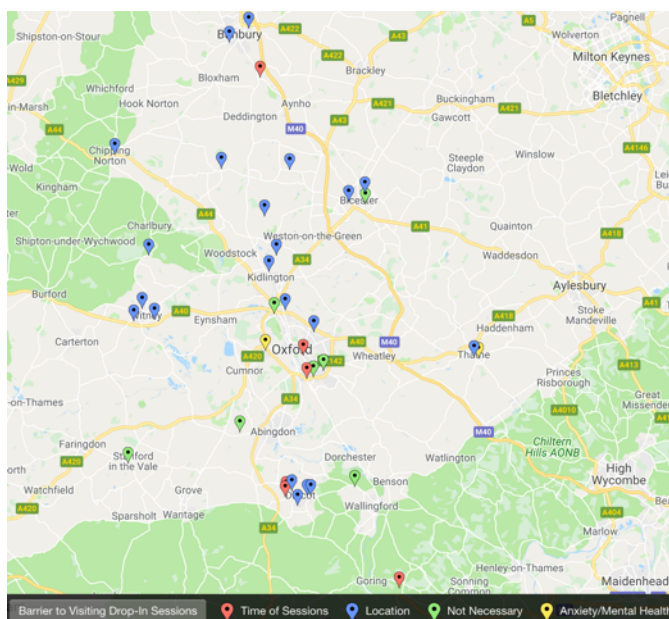


Figure 3: where do online-only users live and what keeps them from using drop-in services?

- OX3 service users attend the East Oxford Children's centre (OX4) in large numbers, but significant numbers also attend Donnington (OX4) and South Oxford (OX1)
- 15% of online users said they didn't feel comfortable posting on the Facebook group
- Drop-in users want to know more about how long waiting times are to see a facilitator
- One user asked for more "flexibility of advice around combination feeding"

'It would be good to increase the number of locations. As a C-section mum living in Headington, it was hard for me to get to sessions when I really needed them early on.'

Lucy, drop-in session user

'I have never seen such kindness and support among strangers before attending an OBS session and I am truly amazed at the community they have fostered among mothers, partners, family members, and other supporting members in Oxfordshire to offer physical, emotional, and technical support to all those in need.'

Kayla Li, Impact Labs