



Maternity Circles Impact Report

October 23 - October 25

CORE20 PLUS 5

KHL Healthy
Living



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Introduction

Maternity Circles (Keighley) was created in 2023 to provide a community-based service, supporting families during the critical first 1001 days - from preconception through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

This report captures the impact of our work between October 2023 and October 2025, highlighting how Maternity Circles has grown into a trusted, accessible, and inclusive space for parents and carers.

Through regular groups, pop-up clinics, and collaborative events, we have offered practical guidance, emotional support, and opportunities for families to connect. Our work has focused on reducing health inequalities, improving maternal wellbeing, and strengthening social networks, while ensuring families are signposted to the right services at the right time.

This report demonstrates the reach of Maternity Circles, the voices of families who have benefited, and the partnerships that have enabled us to deliver joined-up, holistic support. It also reflects on key learning and outlines our future plans, including our role as a partner in the Keighley Community and Family Hub launching in 2026.



About Maternity Circles





Current Service Delivery

Maternity Circles offer a friendly and welcoming space in a community environment. We can offer support with:

- Pregnancy & parenting journeys
- Maternal wellbeing
- Baby's health & development
- Information & guidance
- Building social connections



Baby weighing is available at every session.

Our groups run across 9 local venues:

- 2 weekly groups
- 3 fortnightly groups
- 3 monthly groups
- 1 monthly evening pregnancy group
- Frequent drop-in clinics in collaboration with the local PCN, to deliver child immunisations, baby weighing and access to services





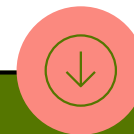
Accessible, Community-Based Services Close to Home

Maternity circles at local venues within pram-pushing distance, providing a wrap-around service (feeding advice, smoking cessation, parent education, perinatal mental health), making care timely and accessible throughout pregnancy and early parenthood.



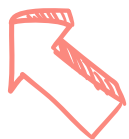
Improved Mental Health Support During the 1001 Days

Signposting to community and mental health organisations, with better access to perinatal services, ensuring support is available during the most vulnerable stages from preconception to infancy.



Reduced Health Inequalities in Deprived Areas

Targeted support in the 1001 days to help mitigate poor outcomes, particularly for low-income families (64.9% locally), where health risks are significantly higher.



Intended Outcomes



Greater Awareness of Local Support & Resources

Families gain clearer knowledge of community organisations, Family Hubs, and available services, ensuring timely access to the right support during the critical 1001 days.



Confidence, Empowerment & Social Connection

Parents build confidence, reduce isolation, and strengthen peer networks through maternity circles and pop-up events, laying strong foundations for family wellbeing in the earliest years.

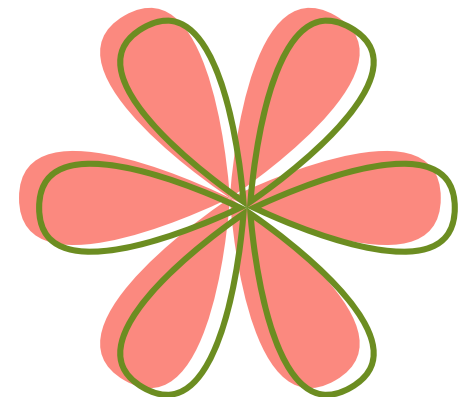
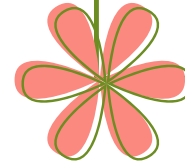


Healthier Lifestyle Choices for Parents and Babies

Deliver initiatives during the 1001 days encourage reductions in smoking rates, increased physical activity, and improved nutrition, contributing to healthier pregnancies and stronger infant development.



Impact and Reach



Impact for families

The wide range of venues maternity circles has, makes it easy to access and plenty of groups to attend throughout the week. It has helped me form friendships with other mums. I feel more confident to ask for help and offer advice to others too.

Maternity Circle is such a supportive, well needed service which is an asset to the community. Due to being part of the circles, I have made friends outside of the service which has made me feel included and a valuable part of a friendship group. I feel my child is thriving and any concerns I have I can chat to the staff, amazing, warm, friendly and professional I have been very supported throughout my journey.

Love attending these sessions, even though I am a third time mum, there is still so much to learn from these sessions, meeting other mums with invaluable advice and info has been great - I wouldn't get this anywhere else. Managing to stay up to date with all the maternity services has been good to this group.

80%

strongly agree that Maternity Circles has helped them address questions or concerns regarding their own health and their baby's wellbeing.

75%

strongly agree that Maternity Circles has given them the confidence to support others.

92%

strongly agree that Maternity Circles has been easy to access.

79%

strongly agree that Maternity Circles has helped them access information, other services, and additional support when needed.

85%

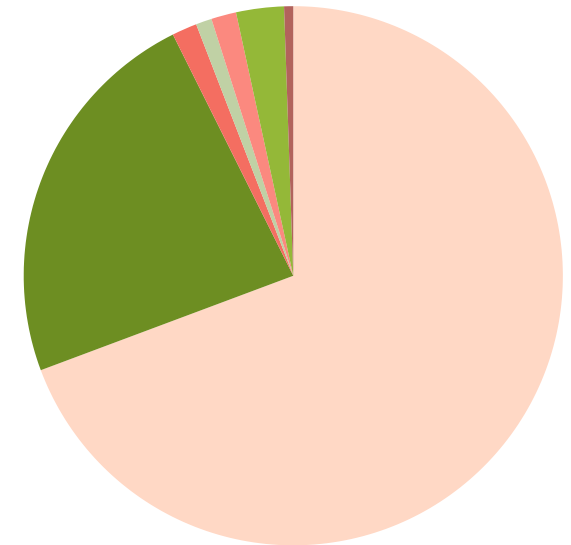
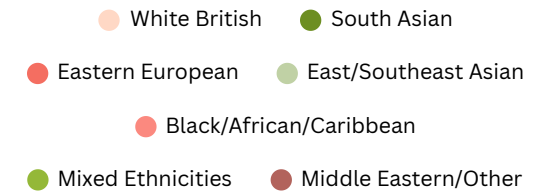
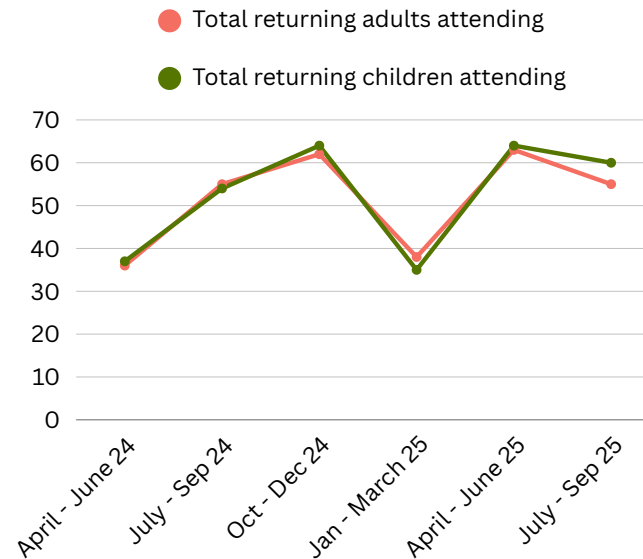
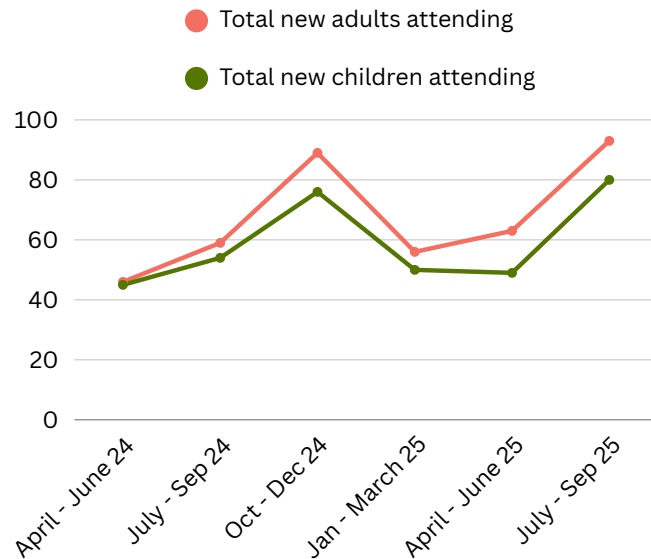
strongly agree that Maternity Circles helped them feel less isolated and more connected as part of a group.

This is a really great idea, a nice space for expectant ladies to attend to see what services are on offer, I will definitely be returning once my baby is born as I don't have much family around me.

Thank you all so much for the support, advice, kindness and love you have shown us at the maternity circle groups over the last 9 months. The groups have been a staple and special part of our lives each week and have provided a great opportunity to get out the house and meet other mums. The groups, and you all will hold a special place in our hearts. Looking forward to seeing you for baby no.2.

Maternity circles are good, because you get a range of different mums attending like first time mums, mums with children already, mum's of premature babies you can talk share experiences and get advice.

Growth and reach of service



On average, we deliver 34 groups per quarter in Keighley.

Since the start of our data collection, we have seen a steady flow of both new and returning participants. As children grow beyond the age of two, new families join Maternity Circles, highlighting the ongoing demand for the service. Attendance typically dips slightly after Christmas due to illness, weather, and other external factors, but numbers consistently recover throughout the year.

At our peak, 291 adults and children accessed Maternity Circles within a single quarter at our Keighley locations.

By delivering sessions across multiple locations, we are reaching a diverse mix of communities and ensuring our groups remain accessible to all.

Growth and reach of service

In total, we have supported

770

parents and children
through Maternity Circles
delivered in Keighley

We are supporting families during the crucial first 1001 days.

Our service has been accessed by parents as young as 15, and 5% of attending adults are dads. Increasing engagement with fathers is an area we are keen to develop further.

Identified disabilities and health issues amongst Maternity Circles adults and children

Psychosis
Poor Mental Health
Anxiety
Migraines
Learning Disability
Bi-Polar
Isolation

Speech and Language Issues
Substance Use
Type 1 Diabetes
Dyslexia
Autism
Depression
Mobility Issues

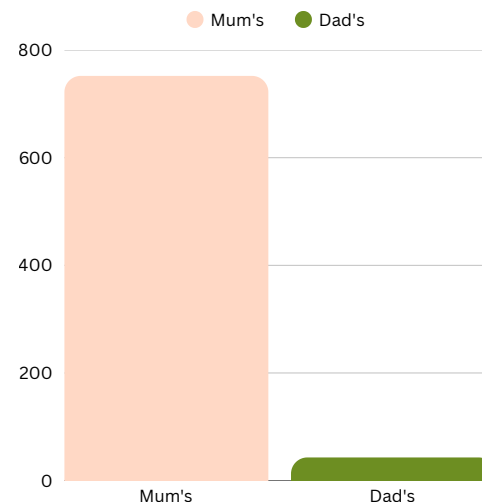
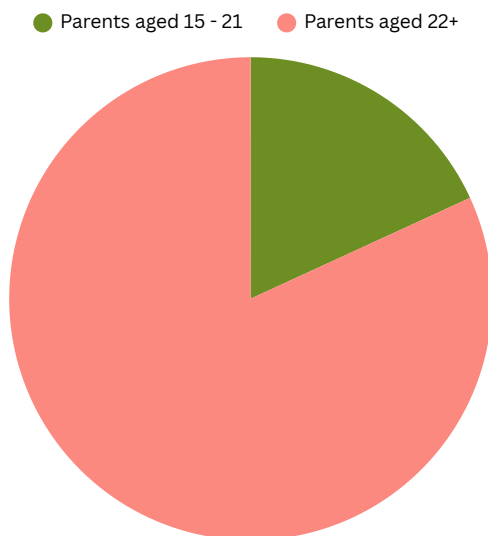
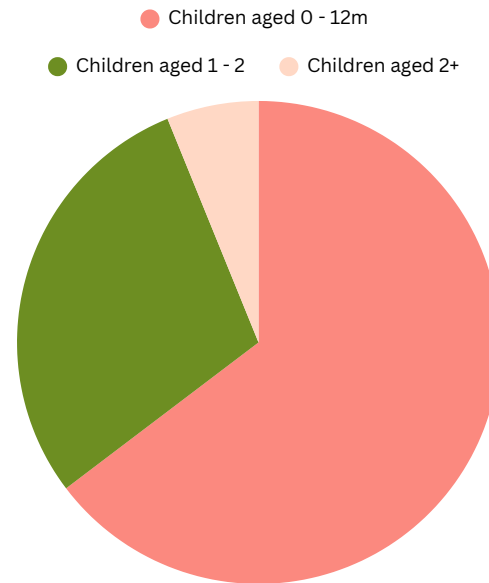
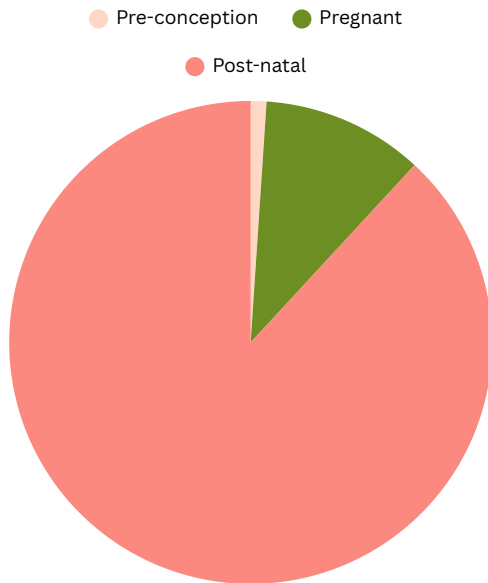
ADHD
Pre-Eclampsia
Heart Condition
Thyroid Condition
Rheumatoid Arthritis,
Osteoarthritis & Joint Disorder

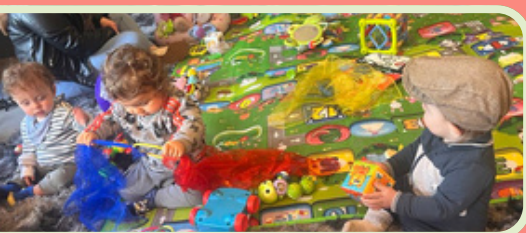


Our monthly evening pregnancy group offers pregnancy and parenting information, support as needed, and the chance to connect with others on the same journey.

In total, this group has supported 26 expectant mums

(from Oct 24 - 25).





Key Talking Points



INFANT FEEDING & NUTRITION

Weaning anxieties & guidance: When to start, foods to avoid, baby-led weaning, fussy eating, recipe ideas.

Feeding challenges: Reflux, colic, tongue tie, allergies, cluster feeding, milk supply concerns.

Breastfeeding & formula support: Positioning, expressing, stopping breastfeeding, balancing formula and breast milk.

Weight monitoring: Concerns after immunisations, reassurance through weighing clinics and health visitor checks.

Healthy eating: Nutrition for babies, toddlers, pregnancy and pre-conception.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

Milestones & behaviour: Nap routines, potty training, speech and language development, autism concerns.

Health issues: Eczema, cradle cap, dental decay, immunisation side effects, childhood illnesses (scarlet fever, impetigo, viral bugs).

Sleep challenges: Regression, bedtime routines, safe sleep, co-sleeping risks.

Premature babies: Monitoring weight, progress, and development.

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & FERTILITY

Pregnancy experiences: Symptoms, antenatal classes, colostrum harvesting, pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, IVF journeys.

Birth experiences: C-sections, inductions, premature births, traumatic and positive labour stories, NICU stays.

Fertility struggles: PCOS, infertility testing, donor eggs, vasectomy barriers.

Future planning: Timing next pregnancy, contraception, pre-conception health.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING & SOCIAL SUPPORT

Mental health: Anxiety, PTSD after birth, isolation, confidence building, peer reassurance.

Bereavement & loss: Miscarriage, stillbirth, coping strategies, available support.

Domestic violence & safeguarding: Refuge support, safe housing, counselling after abuse.

Isolation reduction: Building friendships, peer support, support for new attendees.

Cost of living pressures: Struggles to meet basic needs, referrals for baby items.

PRACTICAL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Childcare & nurseries: Availability issues, funding entitlements, settling children.

Financial support: Benefits advice, Healthy Start vouchers, maternity grants, debt management.

Housing & energy: Warm Homes projects, advice on bills, safe housing.

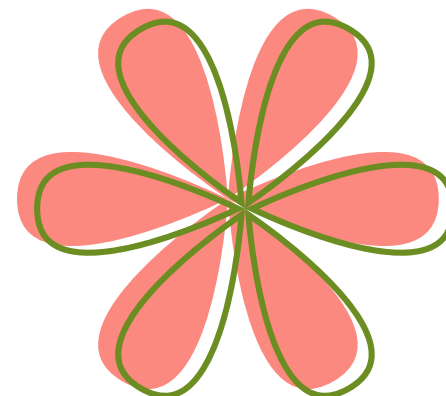
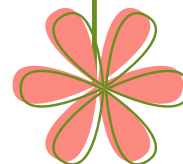
Community resources: Family Hubs, Bookstart bags, "50 Things to Do" campaign, library activities.

Creative activities & events: Arts and crafts, scrapbooks, memory boxes, Baby Brunch, International Women's Day, World Book Day.

Our Maternity Circles facilitators provide guidance and support to all participants. By listening and monitoring conversations, we gain valuable insights into parental concerns and experiences. Often, people don't even realise they are receiving support - yet the inclusive environment helps them feel at ease, build meaningful connections, and learn both from us and from one another.



Joined-up working



Baby Week Bradford

Each year, the Maternity Circles team, in collaboration with Family Hubs – Start for Life, plays a key role in coordinating events across Keighley for Baby Week Bradford. These events are designed to raise the profile of maternity and charity organisations that support families. Our Maternity Circles session throughout baby week included:

- Baby massage
- Baby sensory
- Pregnancy afternoon tea
- Story boards and journalling
- Music time
- Baby wellbeing events



Help for you and baby



In partnership with the local Health and Care Partnership, Maternity Circles played a vital role in delivering the Help for You and Baby campaign.

The initiative focused on initiating and facilitating conversations with women at all stages – preconception, pregnancy, and post-pregnancy – to highlight the benefits of vaccinations during pregnancy and encourage early intervention, such as timely appointment attendance and early registration of pregnancies.

The campaign also ensured that women were provided with accurate information or signposted to the appropriate services. Key outcomes included increased uptake of vaccinations during pregnancy and improved knowledge and awareness of important milestones both before and after birth.

**Help for you
& baby**



Child Immunisations



The local PCN (Modality) responded to low vaccine uptake in Keighley by running regular baby wellbeing events from a dedicated shop unit in the Airedale Shopping Centre.

Maternity Circles actively support these events, encouraging families to attend for vaccinations, baby weighing, and signposting to additional services, including local Maternity Circles sessions.

Through collaborative working, we achieved an average 20.5% increase in immunisations for children under five.



Referrals and signposting

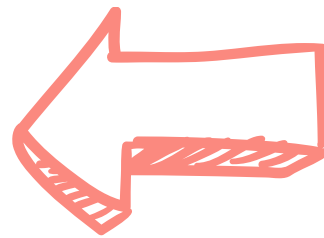
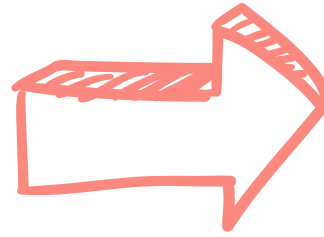
Where people heard about Maternity Circles, and who we referred them to.

Community & Hubs

- Rainbow Family Hub
- KHL (Keighley Healthy Living)
- KAWACC
- Centrepont
- Airedale Postnatal Group
- Sangat Centre
- Good Shepherd Centre
- Ilkley session
- Salvation Army
- Other local groups in surrounding areas

Health Professionals & Services

- Midwives (including Bereavement Midwives, GTT clinic)
- Keighley Pathways
- Project 6
- Health Visitors
- GPs/Doctors' Surgeries
- Social Workers / Social Services
- Community Infant Feeding Team
- Bradford Council/Early Help
- Baby Clinics
- Other health professionals



- GP (various concerns: breathing, head dropping, allergies, skin conditions, immunisations, medication side effects, constipation, general health)
- Psychiatrist (medication side effects)
- Health Visitors (weight concerns, constipation, general support)
- Infant Feeding Team
- Immunisation Clinics
- Counselling at Family Action
- Talking Therapies
- Healthy Minds
- MNVP (Maternity Voices Partnership)
- FYI (For Your Information service)
- POPI - pre-loved items
- Food parcel referral
- Family Action Perinatal Support
- Self-protection workshop course at KHL
- TA course (training)
- Cooking group referral (confidence building)
- Ante Natal Classes
- Bradford Council/Early Help
- Nursery access – 2-year offer
- Henry Weaning (starting solids workshop)
- Smoking Cessation

We evidence joined-up working by recording how people hear about Maternity Circles and logging the referrals made by our facilitators. Through consistent promotion of our services, we have built a strong reputation across Keighley. By continually learning and staying up to date with the latest support and information, Maternity Circles are able to provide truly holistic care.

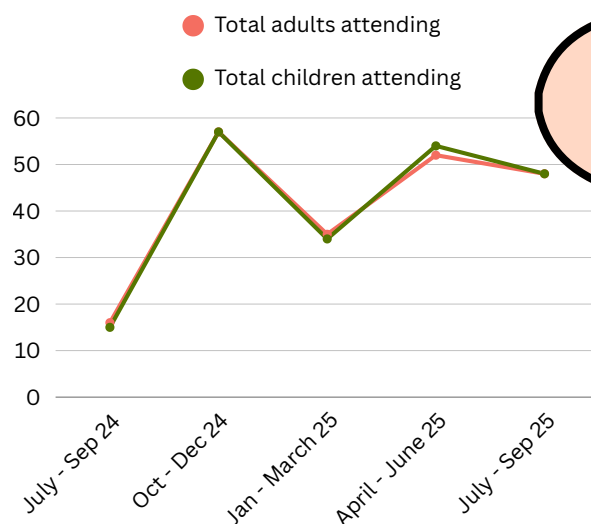
Please note, this is not an exhaustive list. We also provide a wide range of flyers, information, and resources to support parents and their babies.

Delivery in Silsden and Ilkley

In total, we have supported

216

parents and children through
**Maternity Circles delivered in
Silsden and Ilkley**



I love coming here and my baby loves it, as I don't have a support system it is nice to attend to meet new people. I like asking questions about my baby's care and I get a really good response from the MC staff

Maternity Circles makes it really easy to chat to other new mums. It makes it feel like a network. Also great because introductions to other local support services – sleep, physio for babies, feeding support. Baby brunch club is fab for weaning support.

At our peak, 114 adults and children accessed Maternity Circles within a single quarter at our Silsden and Ilkley locations.



Across sessions and baby brunch events, parents engaged in wide-ranging conversations reflecting the realities of early parenthood. Key themes included:

- **Feeding & Weaning:** Frequent discussions on breastfeeding (including antenatal information, pumping, nipple shields, positions, and introducing bottles), weaning anxieties (milk intake, allergies, choking, food refusal, healthy recipes), and signposting to HENRY workshops and breastfeeding support teams.
- **Sleep:** Baby sleep patterns, co-sleeping practices, safe sleep guidelines (Lullaby Trust), insomnia, and gentle transitions to independent sleep.
- **Birth & Recovery:** Sharing birth experiences, IVF journeys, miscarriage, baby loss, c-section recovery, postnatal physio, and planning for second pregnancies.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Postnatal depression, anxiety, confidence in attending groups, relationships with partners, fitness, and coping strategies.
- **Childcare & Work:** Returning to work, parental rights, nursery options (including Skipton), childcare costs, and balancing second pregnancies with toddlers.
- **Community & Social Support:** Attending baby groups, socialising post-birth, meeting other mums, sharing milestones, and accessing local services.
- **Practical Parenting:** Teething, dietary allergies, thumb sucking, potty training, travel safety, vaccinations, and first aid.
- **Broader Issues:** Cost of living, budgeting, supermarket prices, swimming activities, and local family-friendly venues (e.g., new café in Bingley).

Visitors and input

Maternity Circles often invite visitors and other organisations to share information about available support.

- 50 Things To Do Before 5
- Local Libraries (family sign-ups, free books, Bookstart packs)
- Family Action (Family Hub memberships, counselling, Start for Life support)
- Maternity Voices Partnership
- Makin Dixons (family legal advice and support)
- FYI (Family Hub sign-ups, goody bags, QR code access)
- Start for Life (hub memberships, QR code information, resources, family navigator)
- Safe Spaces (perinatal mental health support)
- Children's Trust/Rainbow Family Hub team
- Council Community Engagement (community development, neighbourhood wardens)
- NHS Airedale (RSV vaccine drop-ins)
- In Our Place (online emotional wellbeing resource)
- Bradford District & Craven Talking Therapies
- Little Minds Matter
- BDCT Health Visitors (premature baby advice, 6–8 week reviews)
- Locala (sexual health services)
- Bradford Trust (Hepatitis C testing)

- Henry Programme (weaning workshops, starting solids)
- BDCT Trust (website navigation, parent feedback)
- Infant Feeding Team (breastfeeding support)
- Craven College (training courses e.g., TA)
- Bradford Council Neighbourhood Wardens
- Centre Point (youth support)
- University of York (cost of living, food banks)
- Dad's Matters/Homestart Bradford (support for dads and male carers)
- NHS Citizen Engagement (antenatal and postnatal care)
- NHS Infant Health Campaign
- Hale – Warm Homes Healthy People (housing support, insulation, reducing bills)
- Energy Solutions (housing support, grants, funding)
- MIND (Safe Spaces, inequalities link worker)
- Nurses (health pop-up immunisations)
- Doctors (health pop-ups)
- Perinatal Project Administrators (Airedale Hospital)



Learning and future plans





Key Learning



INFANT FEEDING & NUTRITION

Consistent demand:

Feeding and weaning are the most frequent concerns, showing the need for ongoing, accessible workshops and peer support.

Preventative health: Early guidance on nutrition and healthy eating reduces later health risks.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

Early identification: Parents frequently raise concerns about speech, autism, and developmental milestones, showing the value of community-based monitoring and referral pathways.

Reassurance role: Groups provide trusted spaces where parents seek advice before escalating to clinical services, reducing unnecessary demand on NHS services.

Integration need: Stronger links between maternity circles and health visitors could streamline support for common issues.

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & FERTILITY

Emotional impact: Birth trauma, miscarriage, and fertility struggles require sensitive pathways into perinatal mental health services.

Continuity of care: Families value antenatal classes and debriefs, suggesting investment in community-based preparation and recovery services.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING & SOCIAL SUPPORT

Isolation reduction: Peer groups significantly reduce loneliness and anxiety, especially for new mums and those with SEN children.

Mental health demand: Anxiety, PTSD, and low confidence are recurring, underscoring the need for accessible perinatal mental health provision.

Safeguarding role: Groups often surface domestic violence and abuse concerns, highlighting their importance as safe entry points into protective services.

PRACTICAL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Barriers to access: Childcare availability, housing insecurity, and financial pressures are ongoing challenges that directly affect family wellbeing.

Wrap-around model: Families benefit most when health, social, and practical support are co-located in community venues.

Equity of access: Delivering services across multiple local venues ensures inclusion of diverse communities, including low-income families.



Community groups play a vital role in early intervention, helping to identify and address issues before they escalate and thereby reducing pressure on NHS services. Families benefit most when support is holistic, integrating health, emotional, and practical assistance during the critical first 1001 days. Peer connections are equally important, as social interaction builds resilience and complements clinical advice in improving outcomes. However, significant system gaps remain, with recurring unmet needs in perinatal mental health, childcare, and housing support. To maximise impact and avoid duplication, stronger partnerships between the NHS, local authorities, and community organisations are essential.

Final Words



Since October 2023, our service has been privileged to walk alongside women and babies during the first 1001 days, from pre-conception through pregnancy and into early parenthood. The past 2 years have been full of growth, learning, and connection, and we are proud of what has been achieved together.

I want to express my deepest thanks to Ruqia, Jabeen, Rachel and Emily our Maternity Circles facilitators from Keighley, Silsden and Ilkley. Their dedication and hard work have been the driving force behind this project. They have created safe, welcoming spaces where parents could learn, share, and grow, and their commitment has made a real difference in the lives of families across Keighley, Silsden & Ilkley.

To all the parents and babies who have attended our sessions: thank you for putting your trust in us. We have watched you all blossom into confident, amazing caregivers and seen babies grow and thrive right before our eyes. Your engagement and openness have been at the heart of this journey.

We also want to thank the organisations and partners who have supported us along the way. Your collaboration has been vital in embedding Maternity Circles into our communities and ensuring families have access to the support they need. As we prepare for the opening of the new Keighley Community and Family Hub in January 2026, we look forward to building on this success, reaching more families and continuing to create a stronger, healthier future for our children.

Flora Jennings, Project Manager



Launching in 2026, KHL will be a key partner in the Keighley Community and Family Hub. Located in the town centre, the hub will provide a welcoming space where families and individuals can access support and advice on health, education, parenting, and other aspects of living a happier, healthier life. Maternity Circles will use the hub as a base for promotion, delivery, and ongoing support, strengthening our ability to serve local families while offering them a trusted and inclusive place to connect and receive guidance.

