

# HOW CAN WE HELP?

## Understanding the Support Available for Breastfeeding

When looking for help with breastfeeding, it can get confusing as to what the titles mean, what their skill set is, and what sort of support they can offer within their role.

Here's a simple explanation that can help you to work out who you might need to see to get over any breastfeeding obstacles you may be experiencing.



### The BFI Health Professional

*Not all Health Professionals are BFI trained & accredited, but if they are they have a minimum of 16 hours breastfeeding education specific to their specialised qualification. They maintain annual training of 1-6 hours to stay up to date.*

They can offer breastfeeding support specific to their area of specialisation; i.e. neonatal nurses can help with breastfeeding your premature baby, midwives can help with latching and establishing feeding, health visitors can help with issues feeding older babies. They can also offer clinical diagnosis & care specific to their professional qualification.

### The Peer Supporter

*Training can vary depending on the organisation they've trained with, but usually 16-35 hours. This is a volunteer roll that takes place under organisational supervision. It's recommended that continued learning be undertaken, but isn't required.*

Peer Supporters can offer support around the normal course of breastfeeding, they can help with latching, what to expect, assure you of normal behaviour and point you in the direction of more qualified support where you feel your baby's behaviour is outside the realm of normal and you're in need of more help. They can't diagnose.

### The Breastfeeding Counsellor

*Training can vary from 8 months to 2 years depending on the organisation. This can be a volunteer or paid role that takes place under organisational supervision. Updated training is provided but not required.*

They use counselling skills to help you explore solutions to common breastfeeding problems like painful feeding, sleep and feeding, weaning to solids or off the breast. They can't diagnose or recommend a course of action, but if they feel that one may be needed they will refer on. They often provide ongoing emotional support around difficult feelings arising around feeding.

### The IBCLC

*An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, is a regulated title requiring years of study, 1000 clinical hours experience and a board exam. They recertify every 5 years.*

They can offer the support that all other roles offer, and diagnose & provide clinical support specialised to the most complex feeding issues, like slow gain/weight loss in babies, low supply, feeding alongside medical situations & conditions, non-latching babies, & more. Many IBCLCs hold additional qualifications like tongue tie practitioner, cranial therapist, midwife, nutritionist, so check the practitioner you're working with.