

Family Information Service

Newsletter for Families and Professionals in Blaenau Gwent



Edition 1: June 2024

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent FIS Newsletter! Here you will find loads of information on local events/groups; what our teams have been up too recently; helpful information and advice; some activities you can do with your little ones; and lots more!

Breastfeeding Campaign 2024

This year, our amazing teams have launched a breastfeeding campaign to encourage and support more mums to breastfeed! This year's campaign kicked off in Cwm with a visit from Television personality and breastfeeding champion Ferne McCann!

Ferne met with mums at the local Flying Start hub to highlight the benefits of breastfeeding. Ferne had this to say about her visit to Cwm: 'It was a real pleasure to visit Cwm today to get behind the launch of the 'Get Blaenau Gwent breast feeding' campaign. There are loads of reasons why some mums choose not to breast feed, but one of the biggest reasons seems to be a lack of support and confidence. I hope that this campaign will encourage young mums in Blaenau Gwent to get the right help to overcome of

the one of the biggest hurdles for mums wanting to give it a try - lack of support.

There's so much to navigate when you begin your breast-feeding journey but on the other side is pure joy, convenience and the great health benefits and I am sure that this campaign will bring these benefits to life.' Cwm was featured on an episode on Ferne McCann's 'My Family & Me' in April. You can catch up on all episodes on ITVx now!



Why is this campaign so important?

Blaenau Gwent has the one of lowest breast-feeding rates when compared to the rest of Wales and the UK. The joint campaign with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is focussed on increasing breastfeeding rates. A recent infant feeding survey identified some of the common barriers to breastfeeding and this information will be used to better inform mums and expectant mums targeted by the strategy and campaign this year.

There are lots of benefits to breastfeeding as well! For mothers it reduces the risk of ovarian and breast cancer, diabetes and heart disease. There are also health benefits for babies as it reduces the risk of some common infections like ear, respiratory, gastrointestinal as well reducing some of the risks of overweight and obesity. It also helps to reduce other risks like SIDS, type 1 diabetes and asthma.

Another big benefit of breastfeeding is its free! It can cost between £33 and £80 a month to feed your little one on just formula. Breast feeding also helps bonding and attachment between mum and baby which promotes brain development and **emotional regulation of the infant.**

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Integrated Children's Centre, High Street, Blaina. NP13 3BN

Play Team

Our play team have been working really hard this term. They hosted 5 play in the park sessions over the Easter holidays; a huge play event at the Blaina ICC; and they have been running their Wild Tot's groups every week!

Here's some of the amazing feedback from the families who attended:

'This Easter event is just super. A great free event for the children. Thank you play team'

'My child is so happy thank you for the activities provided I just loved getting involved.'

'You always go above and beyond in the ICC! The Christmas extravaganza was just so magical, so we decided to come back for Easter too.'

'We are so grateful for this free event as we are a large family and things cost a lot of money especially if you have more than 1 child'

'The team are always so happy and full of enthusiasm for playing if only I could bottle up some of that energy'

Keep an eye on our socials to be the first to know about their upcoming events!



Multiply Team

The Multiply Team have also had an incredibly busy half term, running their first round of courses at Flying Start Hubs in Cwm, Swffryd, Hilltop and Sirhowy! The team has amazing feedback from their participants and have just launched their second round of courses:

- > Child Development & Growth at Sirhowy (for Adults)
- > First Steps to English (Turkish Edition) (for Adults) at Abertillery
- > Making Confidence Count at Abertillery & Garnlydan (for Adults)
- > Measure for Cooking at Hilltop (for Adults)
- > My First Numbers at Swffryd
- > Curious Crawlers at Brynithel

New course have started again after the May half-term! Follow us on Facebook to find out which course are coming to a hub near you!

'The course really inspired me it taught me that I can also put myself first instead of always putting others above me it has also helped with reaching my goals I now have options to lead me into employment.'

'The staff were so lovely, attentive to each child individually and the group as a whole.'



Baby Showers

On the 24th April, our amazing Flying Start Team hosted a baby shower for all expecting mums in Blaenau Gwent. The event was also attended by ourselves at the Family Information Service, Mudiad Meithrin, Multiply, Health Visitors, Mini Movers, Aneurin Leisure, Families First and many more!

The expectant mums were able to find out about lots of the services across Blaenau Gwent and meet lots of the Flying Start team. The mums to be were also able to take watch an amazing presentation about labour and delivery. The team wanted to pass on their thanks to everyone who attended the event and helped to make it a success.

There are currently four responsive feeding groups in Blaenau Gwent that you can attend to help support you with your feeding journey. These groups can provide you with friendly advice on feeding your baby and a chance to meet new and expectant mums in the area.

Mondays:

The Bevan
Health and
Wellbeing Centre
10am - 12pm
(Term time only)

Tuesdays:

Hilltop Flying
Start Hub
10am - 11am
(Term time only)

Wednesdays:

Blaina Integrated
Children's Centre
10am - 11am
(Term time only)

Thursdays:

Swffryd Flying
Start Hub
10am - 3pm
(Term time only)

Did you know that all expectant mothers in Blaenau Gwent are entitled to support during their pregnancy and following the birth of their baby?

Catherine Davies and Tracy Thompson are both Antenatal Family Support workers and can offer support and guidance through pregnancy. They can also provide advice and support on becoming a new parent, infant feeding, breastfeeding, housing issues, healthy eating and budgeting!

If you feel you need additional support during your pregnancy journey, do not hesitate to get in touch with the Family Information Service. You can call us on 08000 32 33 39 or email us at FIS@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Teulu Cymru

In April, the Welsh Government launched Teulu Cymru. This brings all of the main childcare and parenting campaigns under one roof. Here you can find campaigns such as Learning to Talk, Parenting Tips, Physical Punishment and the Law and Family Well-being!

The service is aimed at parent, carers and families of children aged 0 – 18 and it signposts services and information to families.

You can follow them online here:


www.instagram.com/teulu.cymru

www.facebook.com/teulucymruwales

Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service Website

Have you had a chance to check out our new website yet? You can now find an up to date list of parent and toddler groups in the area; a list of all childcare providers in the area; advice on schemes to help you pay for childcare; frequently asked questions; and a list of upcoming events!

Visit us at: <https://bgfis.org.uk/> you can also follow us on social media as well:

 Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service

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June Recipe

With Summer just around the corner, why not try this new, healthy and exciting recipe!

Jerk Chicken with Rice and Beans for Four People!

What you'll Need:

- > Chicken Breast - Cut into Strips (200g)
- > 1 Tablespoon of Jerk Seasoning (Heaped)
- > 1 Tablespoon of Vegetable Oil
- > 1 Small Onion – Peeled and Diced
- > 1 Pepper – De-seeded and sliced
- > 1 Can of Red Kidney Beans (410g)
- > White Rice (200g)
- > Water (400ml)

What you'll need to do:

1. Coat the chicken strips in jerk seasoning and stir well. Leave in the fridge for an hour to marinate.
2. In a large saucepan, heat the oil and fry the onion and pepper for 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add the chicken and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Add the kidney beans, rice and water to the mixture and bring to the boil.
5. Simmer for about 20 minutes with the lid on the pan until the rice has absorbed the water and the chicken and vegetables are cooked.

For more healthy recipes, visit: **Bwyd Teulu | Every Child Every Child** (everychildwales.co.uk)



Online Safety

Did you know WhatsApp have lowered the minimum age for users from 16 years old to only 13 years old? If your child is using the app, here are some things to look out for as well as some tips to help keep them safe.

Scams

Due to WhatsApp popularity, it makes it the perfect place for scammers! Some scammers will pose as someone your child might know and ask for them to transfer for money for an emergency. Others will trigger a verification message by trying to log into the account; they will then message your child pretending to be WhatsApp and ask for the code. This will then give them access to your child's account!

Contact from strangers

On WhatsApp, if someone has your child's number they can message them directly. They can also be added to group chats by one of their friends; this group might contain people they do not know!

To keep them safe, you can change your child's settings so only certain people can add them to group chats. Go to Privacy, then Groups, then chose who you wish to give permission to!

Locations

WhatsApp's 'live location' allows users to share their location. This can be really useful for parents to know where their children are; or for children to use when meeting their friends. However, if you have your 'live location' visible to everyone, even people in group chats (who you might not know) can see your location! Remember to check your child's settings to ensure the live location is off or only visible to certain people.

For more information, visit: [Free Online Safety Guide](#) | [WhatsApp \(nationalcollege.com\)](#)

Small Steps

Our amazing staff have been working together to help support parents of children with additional needs. On the last Wednesday of every month, a group of parents meets at Blaina ICC with some of our staff to discuss a range of topics. These topics are led by the parents attending the group and our staff work really hard to find the answers and even invite other services to speak at the group.

Since the group changed their name this year, the group has been going from strength to strength! We are grateful to all those parents who attend the group as without them, the group wouldn't be so successful. If you think you would also benefit from the group, please feel free to get in touch or come along to our next group!

Families First Team

Alongside Small Steps, our amazing Families First Team has been busy planning other events for the families they support. They have a fun day for Young Carers arranged for the end of May - 'we want to recognize and appreciate all of their hard work in their caring role and offer some much-needed fun and enjoyment'.

The team also have multiple trips arranged for throughout the year, for the families who attend both the inclusive club and the Young Carers youth club - Alton Towers, Porthcawl, Ninja Warrior, pantomimes as well as our residential trips to PGL, Brecon.