

# Family Information Service

Spring Newsletter for Families and Professionals in Blaenau Gwent



Edition 3: March 2025

**Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent FIS Newsletter!** Here you will find loads of information on local events and 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 and Responsive Groups

Last year, Blaenau Gwent experienced a significant rise in breastfeeding rates! More new-borns are now being breastfed at birth compared to bottle-fed. From January to August, we saw a 20% increase in breastfeeding at birth.

Our goal is ambitious: to move from having the lowest breastfeeding rates in the UK to achieving the highest! Thank you to all the mam's who have supported us with our goal!

To support mam's in Blaenau Gwent we have launched new Breastfeeding and Responsive Groups. You can now find our support groups in:

- > Abertillery Flying Start
- > Maitri House, Brynmawr
- > Hilltop Flying Start
- > Sirhowy Flying Start
- > Blaina Integrated Childrens Centre (ICC)

Find more information, along with the full list of times, here: <https://bgfis.org.uk/en/flying-start/responsive-feeding-groups/>



## Antenatal Events

On Tuesday 1st April, our fantastic Flying Start Team will be throwing their FREE Antenatal Baby Shower Event!

Here, you will be able to join us for a presentation from the midwife and ask any questions you might have about pain, the birth and what to expect. You will also be able to meet lots of other professionals who can offer information and advice to help you prepare for your new arrival.

Find out more and book here: <https://bgfis.org.uk/en/what-s-on/upcoming-events/>

## Dad's Group: Music for Well-Being

Are you a dad looking for a creative outlet to get to know your community or a way to recharge?

Flying Start are pleased to offer a 12-Week Workshop in Blaenau Gwent to bring dad's together through the power of music! Find our more here: <https://bgfis.org.uk/en/what-s-on/upcoming-events/>

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

## Ti a Fi Brynithel

**We are incredibly lucky to have a wealth of Ti a Fi's across Blaenau Gwent; along with a range of Welsh Baby Groups and Cylch Meithrins!**

***Read what Zoe has to say about running the Ti a Fi in Brynithel Flying Start Hub:** I started running the Ti a Fi (Welsh language Stay and Play), at Brynithel hub in 2023. The first session I ran I had one parent and child attend; from there we have grown to have around 12 children attending at one time with 32 registered attendees. Out of the children who have attended 5 children have left Ti a Fi to enter into the Cylch Meithrin (Welsh language Preschool) and I have 6 current attendees who plan on their children attending in the next 2 terms.*

You don't have to speak Welsh yourself to join Ti a Fi. Attending the Cylch Ti a Fi is a great opportunity to start using the Welsh language. The activities support families to use some Welsh at home and gives non-Welsh speaking families the opportunity to use Welsh for the first time with their children.

The parents enjoy being able to get together in a relaxed environment where basic language patterns and incidental Welsh is used. We focus on a topic of the week, for example, the farm, snack, all about me, and we celebrate events such as Chinese New Year, Santes Dwynwen, Gwyl Dewi etc. The children have had opportunities to join the Cylch Meithrin on trips out to the farm and to the Dewin and Doti festival at St Fagans as well!

We run sessions, free of charge, in the community room where I switch between quiet sensory sessions, reading sessions, singing sessions and messy play sessions. We have picnics on the field and go to the local park where we learn the words for the things we see and do. The benefit of a Ti a Fi is that children are immersed in the Welsh language from a young age, and it gives parents more understanding of the things we have to offer in the Cylch Meithrin and eventually move on to the local Welsh medium school. I am happy we have grown to such a big group and hope to continue to grow with more parents choosing Welsh Medium education for their children. You can find out more about a Cylch Ti a fi here: <https://meithrin.cymru/cylch-ti-a-fi/?lang=en>

## Oral Health - Did you know, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board offers a Community Dental Service?

The Community Dental Service provides dental care to vulnerable children and adults from 12 dental clinics across Torfaen, Monmouth, Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. If you require urgent dental treatment or advice, please contact the Dental Helpline on **Tel: 01633 744387**.

### Opening Times:

**Monday - Friday:** 9:00am to 12:15pm and 1:15pm - 4:00pm

**Weekday Evenings:** 6:30pm until 8am (advice only)

**Weekends and Bank Holidays:** Limited Appointments and Advice Service

For a list of Dentists taking on NHS patients in your area please email: **ABBDental.Helpline@wales.nhs.uk** or download an app to read this for an up to date list. To find out more good oral hygiene for your children please visit: <https://www.gov.wales/designed-smile-improving-childrens-dental-health>

## Blaenau Gwent Play Team Events

**Our incredible Play Team have had another busy half term! They hosted five Play in the Park sessions as well as two Play at the ICC sessions!**

Thank you to everyone who attended these sessions and helped to make them such a success! Check out some of the things the children got up to at our play at the ICC session! Wild tots have also come out from their winter hibernation and groups have started running every Wednesday and Friday again! Search @Wildtotsblaenau on Facebook to keep up to date!

Finally, **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Our Play Team are conducting their 'Big Play Survey' and need feedback from children and young people across Blaenau Gwent. If you can complete the survey with a child or young person in your life, we would be very grateful: <https://forms.office.com/r/gR4zcqs64k>.



## Families First

Daniel Evans and Richard Taylor will be joining Families First as Family Support Workers and Carly Evans will be joining the team as Team Lead. They'll be a brilliant asset and Families First are looking forward to them joining!

We would like to give a fond farewell to Viv Wells, Viv is retiring after almost 30 years as a Social Worker in the Local Authority and since July 2023, has been a Team Lead in Families First. Congratulations Viv, enjoy your well-earned retirement!

Families First have become finalists in the category of Social Care Wales Building Brighter Futures Accolade Award at this year's Social Care Accolade Awards 2025! This will be the second time the team has reached the finals for such an award, and being finalists is such a fantastic achievement. It shows the team's strength, determination and considerate care and attention for the families they support.

The Accolades are awards that recognise, celebrate and share notable work in social care and childcare, play and early years in Wales. The awards recognise the work of groups, teams and organisations, as well as workers from across the public, private, voluntary and co-operative sectors in Wales.

## 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/>

## Spring Recipe

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

### What you will need:




- > 150g easy-cook brown or white rice
- > 227g pineapple pieces (in natural juice)
- > 1 tablespoon cornflour
- > 2 tablespoons tomato purée
- > 1 teaspoon reduced-salt soy sauce
- > 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- > 300g chicken breast or thigh (cut into chunks)
- > 1 medium onion (thinly sliced)
- > 1 pepper (cut into chunks)
- > 3 celery sticks (sliced)
- > 2 medium tomatoes (cut into wedges)

### What you will need to do:

1. Cook the rice as per the packet.
2. Meanwhile, drain the juice from the pineapple into a small bowl. Add the cornflour and mix till smooth. After that, mix in the tomato purée and soy sauce.
3. 10 minutes before the rice is finished, heat the oil in a wok or very large frying pan. Add the chicken and fry over a high heat for 3 to 4 minutes.
4. Add the onion, pepper and celery to the pan. Fry for another 3 to 4 minutes, then add the tomato wedges and pineapple chunks.
5. Give the pineapple juice mixture a final stir, then add to the pan. Keep stirring until the sauce is hot and thickened.
6. Serve with the rice.

For more healthy recipes, visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/>

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