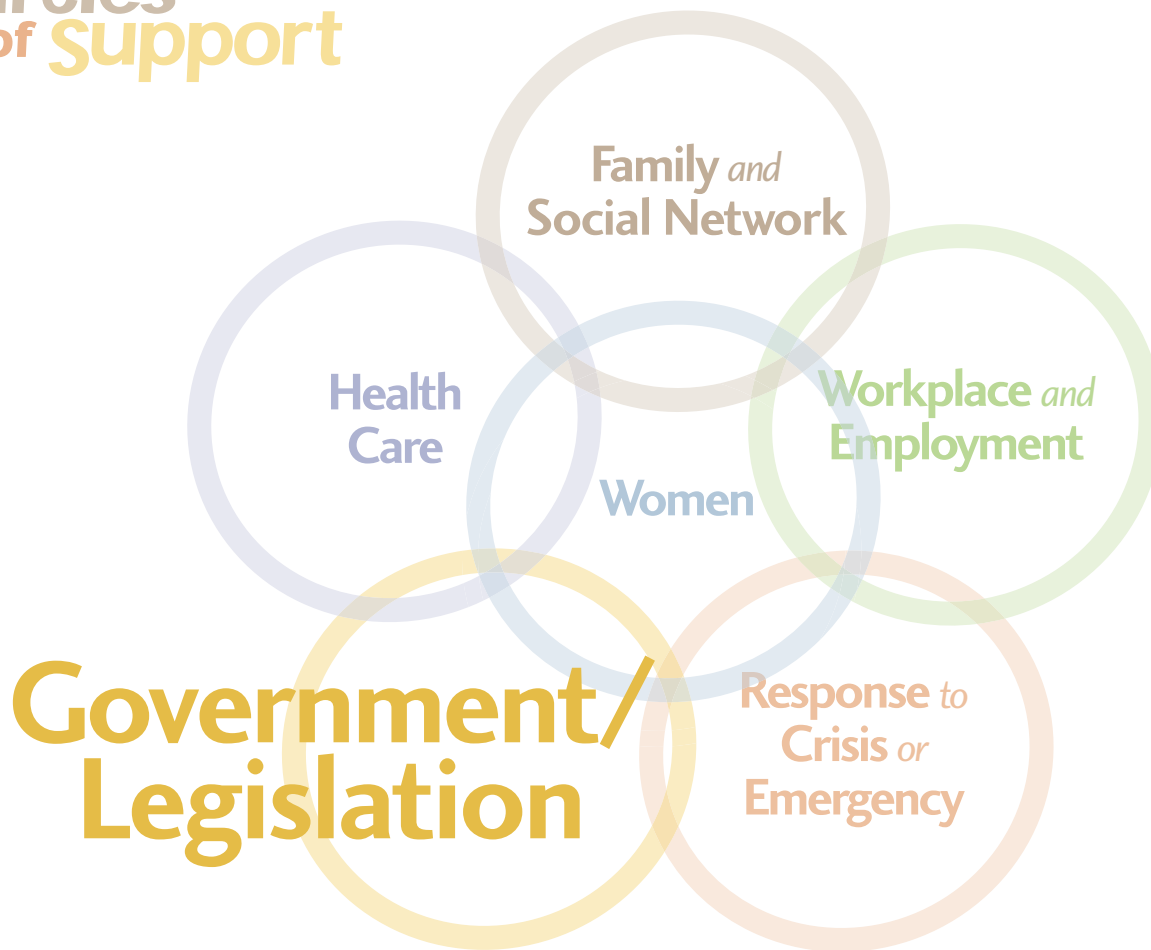




## Circles of Support



**Barbara Higham**, LLL Leader; Editor, *Breastfeeding Matters* (formerly *LLLGB News*); Contributing Editor, *NEW BEGINNINGS*; La Leche League Great Britain, Wharfedale

*While La Leche League International (LLLI) is not a lobbying organization, it has always actively promoted and protected breastfeeding and breastfeeding mothers and their babies.*

As a part of the LLLI organizational structure, La Leche League Great Britain (LLGB) works to promote, protect and support breastfeeding mothers and babies at the national and local levels in Great Britain. LLLGB is, therefore, proud to be a member of the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition, an unprecedented alliance of not-for-profit, professional and charitable organizations, which includes, among others, the other main breastfeeding support organizations in the United Kingdom (UK), The Royal College of General Practitioners, UNICEF and The

Royal College of Nursing. The Coalition aims to improve awareness of the health benefits of breastfeeding and its role in reducing health inequalities. The Coalition wants to achieve widespread cross-party support to ensure that its principles are reflected in UK government policy and legislation.

In the UK fewer than 2% of babies are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life as recommended by The World Health Organization (WHO) and nine out of ten mothers stop breastfeeding before they want to.

The Breastfeeding Manifesto outlines seven key objectives for the UK government to start to address this critical issue. To download a copy of the Manifesto, go to: [www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk).

Working towards these seven key objectives will help to ensure that women, irrespective of their socio-economic background, can make informed choices about how to feed

their babies and will be supported in their decisions.

Recently LLLGB provided a pre-printed postcard to every La Leche League Leader in the country and to all the LLLGB members, with the guidance to send this postcard to their local Member of Parliament (MP) to seek support for the Manifesto.

LLLGB also encouraged LLL Leaders\*\*\* and members to consider adding their own names in support of the Manifesto at [www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk/signup.php](http://www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk/signup.php). It is hoped that, with help the Coalition will ensure that the Manifesto is adopted by the major political parties in the lead up to the next general election.

### Implementation of the Manifesto will:

- Have a significant effect in tackling health inequalities across the UK.
- Improve the health of the nation.
- Save the National Health Service money.
- Ensure that the UK government fulfils its existing commitments.

If you would like more information please visit [www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk) or contact Phoebe Tait (LLLGB's representative on the steering committee of the Coalition) at [phoebetait@hotmail.com](mailto:phoebetait@hotmail.com).

In addition, LLLGB actively supports the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. A global report about multinational companies violating the WHO

rules on marketing, *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2007*, produced by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), shames the UK. The Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula (England) Regulations 2007 fail to close the loopholes in the regulatory system. LLLGB is represented in The Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG), an ad hoc grouping of UK health worker organizations/agencies striving to bring the UK law into line with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly. The BFLG is seeking that a thorough review be conducted during the first year of operation of these new Regulations and that the measures be revised to address any concerns about continued aggressive marketing of formula milk. For more information visit [www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk](http://www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk)

When La Leche League collaborates with other organizations and works together in alliances such as those described in this article, the chance to improve the health of future generations is increased in addition to what LLL achieves as a single organization.

*\*\*\*A La Leche League Leader is a mother who has breast-fed her own baby for about a year or longer and who has done additional reading and training to be accredited by La Leche League. She draws not only on her own experience but on the wealth of information and evidence in her LLL resources.*



Special thanks to the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action for assisting in the printing and distribution of this publication.



### The LLL Mission

To help mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

La Leche League International is a globally recognized, not-for-profit organization that maintains a presence in more than 68 countries. Since 1956, over 43,000 women have become accredited Leaders who assist other women who want to breastfeed their babies. For breastfeeding information, to find a LLL Leader or LLL Group in your area, or to order materials, visit <http://www.llli.org> or call 800-LALECHE.