

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for a baby, lasting right into adulthood. Any amount of breast milk has a positive effect, and the longer a mother breastfeeds, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits.

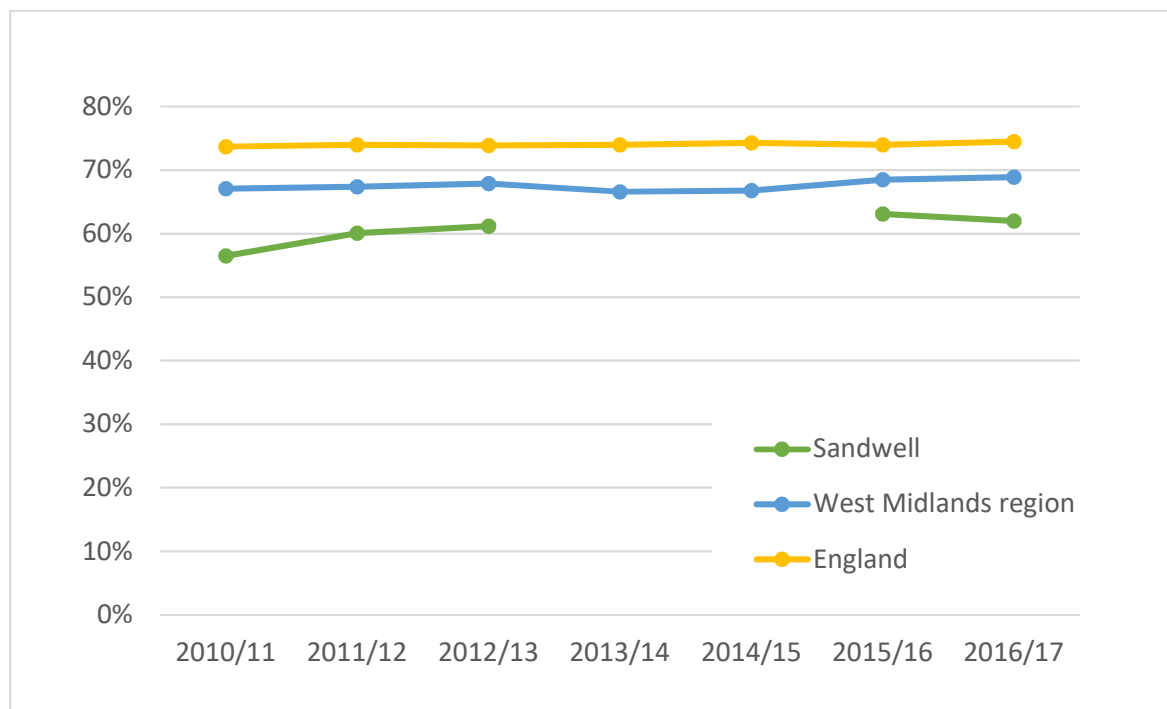
Breastfeeding reduces a baby's risk of:

- infections, with fewer visits to hospital as a result
- [diarrhoea and vomiting](#), with fewer visits to hospital as a result
- [sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\)](#)
- childhood leukaemia
- [obesity](#)
- [cardiovascular disease](#) in adulthood

Initiation

Breastfeeding initiation (in the first 48 hours after delivery) has slightly improved in Sandwell. In 2010-11, 56.6% of mothers started breastfeeding in the first 48 hours, while the percentage in 2016-17 increased to 62%. However, this is still significantly lower than England and West Midlands region (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Percentage of mothers who breastfed in the first 48 hours after delivery, 2010-2017



Source: Public Health Outcome Framework

*Note: Data missing for Sandwell for 2014 and 2015

At 6-8 weeks

This is the percentage of infants that are totally or partially breastfed at age 6-8 weeks. Totally breastfed is defined as infants who are exclusively receiving breast milk at 6-8 weeks of age - that is, they are not receiving formula milk, any other liquids or food. Partially breastfed is defined as infants who are currently receiving breast milk at 6-8 weeks of age and who are also receiving formula milk or any other liquids or food.

- The proportion of women who continue to breast feed at 6-8 weeks after birth in Sandwell (40.5%) in 2018/19 remains significantly lower than the England average (46.2%) (PHOF).