

Infant Mental Health Forum - Scotland

- Introduction to the Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (NBAS)
- Introduction to the Newborn Behavioral Observation (NBO)

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Our goal is to promote healthy parent-infant relationships

How can practitioners support parents with their new baby?

- Form a relationship with the parents by sharing observations of the baby together
- Understand the baby's language – their behaviour



Importance of reading baby's cues

The importance of providing parents with information on their child's behavior and development so that they can respond appropriately to their infant's cues has been well documented (Als, 1993; Taffe Young et al. 1998).

JK Nugent, 2006



Helping parents read, interpret and respond to behavior

- Research shows that parent's ability to read and respond appropriately to their infant's needs is the most important component of parental interactive competence (Brazelton et al. 1974; Tronick and Weinberg, 1997).
- There is evidence to show that sensitive and contingent maternal interactions between mothers and their infants have been related to better social and cognitive competence and the formation of secure attachment in infants (Barnard and Bee, 1984; Egeland and Farber, 1984; Greenberg et al. 1988; Grossmann and Grossmann, 1991; Mertesacker et al. 2004; Pederson et al, 1990; Van den Boom, 1994)

JK Nugent, 2006



The first months of life

A period of great vulnerability for
the baby, the parents and the
baby's family system

The period of greatest opportunity
for clinicians

JK Nugent, 2006





Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS)



What is the NBAS?

Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale

- Systematic observation and neurobehavioural interactive assessment producing a profile of infant behaviour (birth – 2 months old)
- How does the baby manage sleeping, crying, feeding and social interaction?
- How does the baby manage stimulation, how does he/she tell us what they need?

(Brazelton and Nugent, 1973)



Content of NBAS

- **28 behavioural items** - each scored on a 9-point scale; assesses the infant's behavioural repertoire
- **18 reflex items** - each scored on a 4-point scale - assesses the infant's neurological status, and will identify gross abnormalities, but is not diagnostic
- **7 Supplementary items** - to capture the range of the behaviour of frail, high-risk infants.



The NBAS can be used with:

- Pre-term babies (over 35 weeks g.a., medically stable)
- Down's syndrome, congenital malformations, birth trauma
- Maternal anxiety, fear, previous babies with problems
- Postnatally depressed mothers and fathers
- Teen mothers

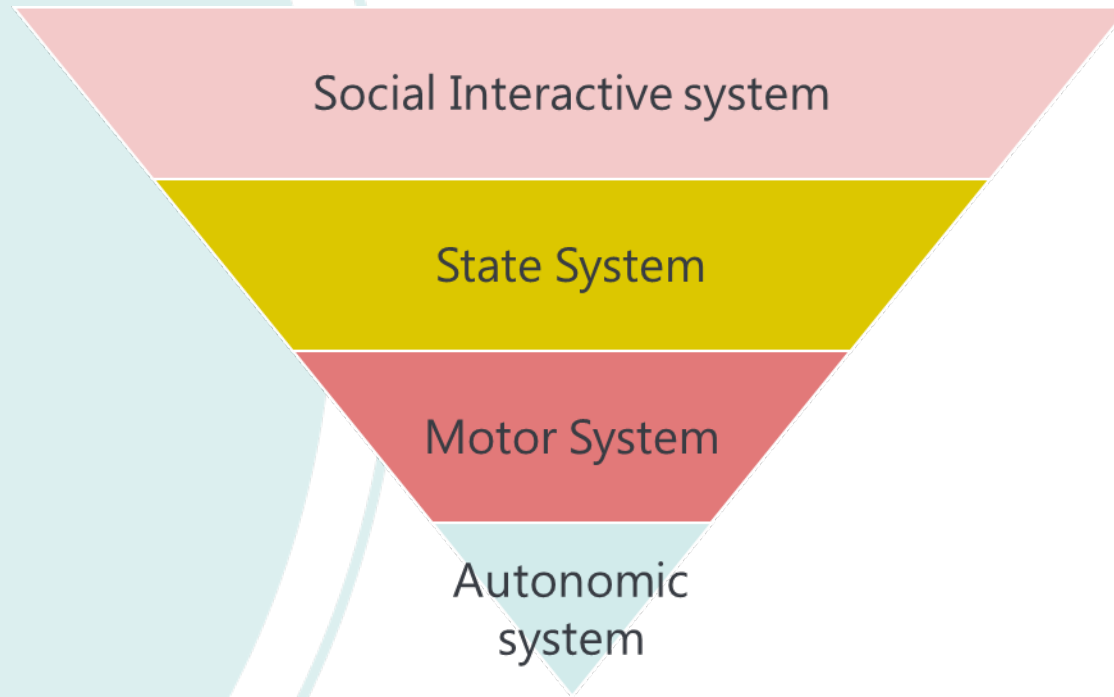


Behavioural states and organisation

1. Deep (non-REM) Sleep,
2. Light (REM) Sleep
3. Drowsy
4. Quiet alert
5. Active alert
6. Crying



Newborn Developmental Agenda



Self-regulation and facilitation

Important to **recognise infant's efforts to respond and self-regulate:**

- Shows dislikes: turning away, yawning, sneezing, hand movements
- Shows likes: bright, focused look, smiling
- Ability to self-soothe: suck on fingers/hand, look, listen

And to offer examiner-facilitation-based on infant's own efforts at self-regulation



What do we know about the baby after the NBAS?

After scoring, we have a Behavioural profile of the baby:

- How does the baby manage the tasks and handling
- Is the baby easily overstimulated?
- Does the baby have any self-soothing strategies?
- Does the baby manage to protect his sleep?
- How does the baby manage state changes?
- How does the baby manage crying?
- Is the baby available for social interaction?



The Newborn Behavioral Observation (NBO)



The Newborn behavioural Observations (NBO) System

The **NBO** consists of a set of 18 neurobehavioural observations for newborn babies between 0-3 months old



The infant as catalyst

- The aim of the NBO is to “capture” what the infant is bringing to the relationship
- Through his behaviour, the infant can elicit from his caregiving environment the nurturing and caregiving that he needs for his successful adaptation.
- It is through the infant that practitioners hope to motivate and support parents in their efforts to respond to their infants and enhance the relationship between parent and infant.



The Baby as a Person

- *The NBO describes the baby's capacities in such a way that:*
- Parents can begin to see their baby as a person
- Parents can better appreciate their baby's unique competencies and vulnerabilities
- Parents can understand and respond to their baby in a way that meets the baby's unique developmental needs.



Purpose of the NBAS and NBO

- For the practitioner and the parents to work together
- To observe and interpret behaviours of the individual baby
- To develop supportive strategies
- To promote parent-infant relationship
- To establish an environment where babies can grow, develop and thrive



Research using the NBO

- Kristensen et al (2019) Health Visitors' competencies before and after implementing the Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) System in a community Setting.
- McManus et al (2018) The NBO improves Maternal Mental Health and Infant Attention and Social Skills.
- Shah et al (2018) The Effects of the NBO on breastfeeding mothers with high levels of perinatal maternal anxiety.
- Nugent et al (2017) The Effects of the Newborn Behavioral Observation (NBO) system on Sensitivity of Mother-infant Interactions.
- Gibbs (2015) Supporting the Parent-Infant Relationship: Using the Newborn Behavioral Observation in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
- Nugent et al (2014) Effects of an Infant-Focused Relationship-Based Hospital and Home Visiting Intervention on Reducing Symptoms of Postpartum Maternal Depression.



The NBO and Postpartum Depressive symptoms

- Controlled study of first time mothers and their healthy infants (n=112)
- NBO used as intervention within two days of delivery and at one month
- Results showed that mothers involved with the NBO were almost 5 times less likely to show depressive symptomatology (EPDS)

(Nugent et al. 2014)



Baby Communication
Awareness Week
(14-20 June 21)



Changing the World One Baby at a Time: The Power of Promoting the Infant's Voice as a Professional

In conversation with Rita Mahey (Nursery Nurse), Pip Vipham (Health Visitor) and Sujata Noronha (Physiotherapist)



Brazelton Centre UK Facebook Page
15th June @ 12pm



Baby Communication
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Happily Ever After: Getting to Know my Baby's Amazing Abilities After a Down's Syndrome Diagnosis



Faith Bleasdale Author and Mother of Xavier
tells her powerful and heart-warming story.



Instagram Live
17th June @ 11am

#learningbabieslanguage



Baby Communication
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Speaking Babies' Language Across Manchester

Anulika Ifezue, Specialist Health Visitor and Lead for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, gives an inspiring example of how sharing babies' communication with every parent has become part of the care provision across Greater Manchester.



Instagram Live
18th June @ 1.00pm

#learningbabieslanguage



Speaking Babies' Language across Manchester

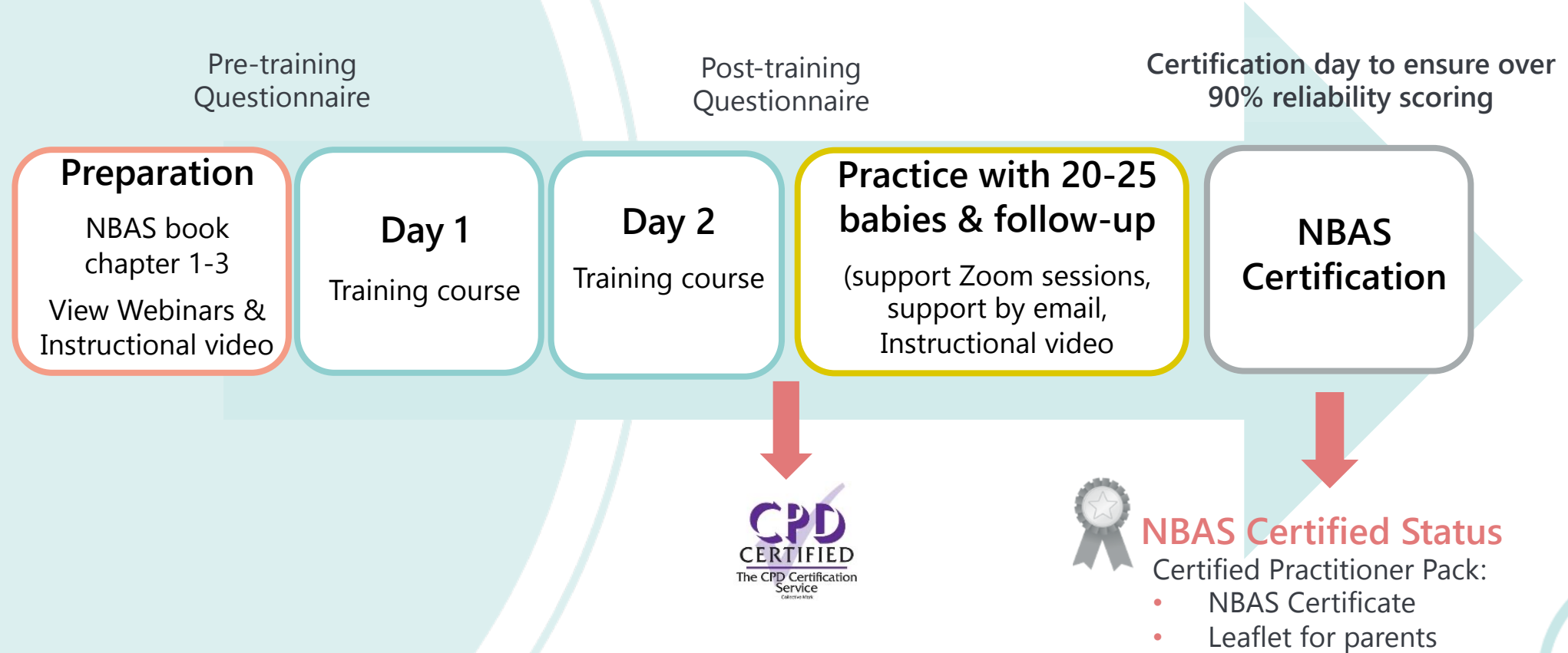
Anulika Ifezue



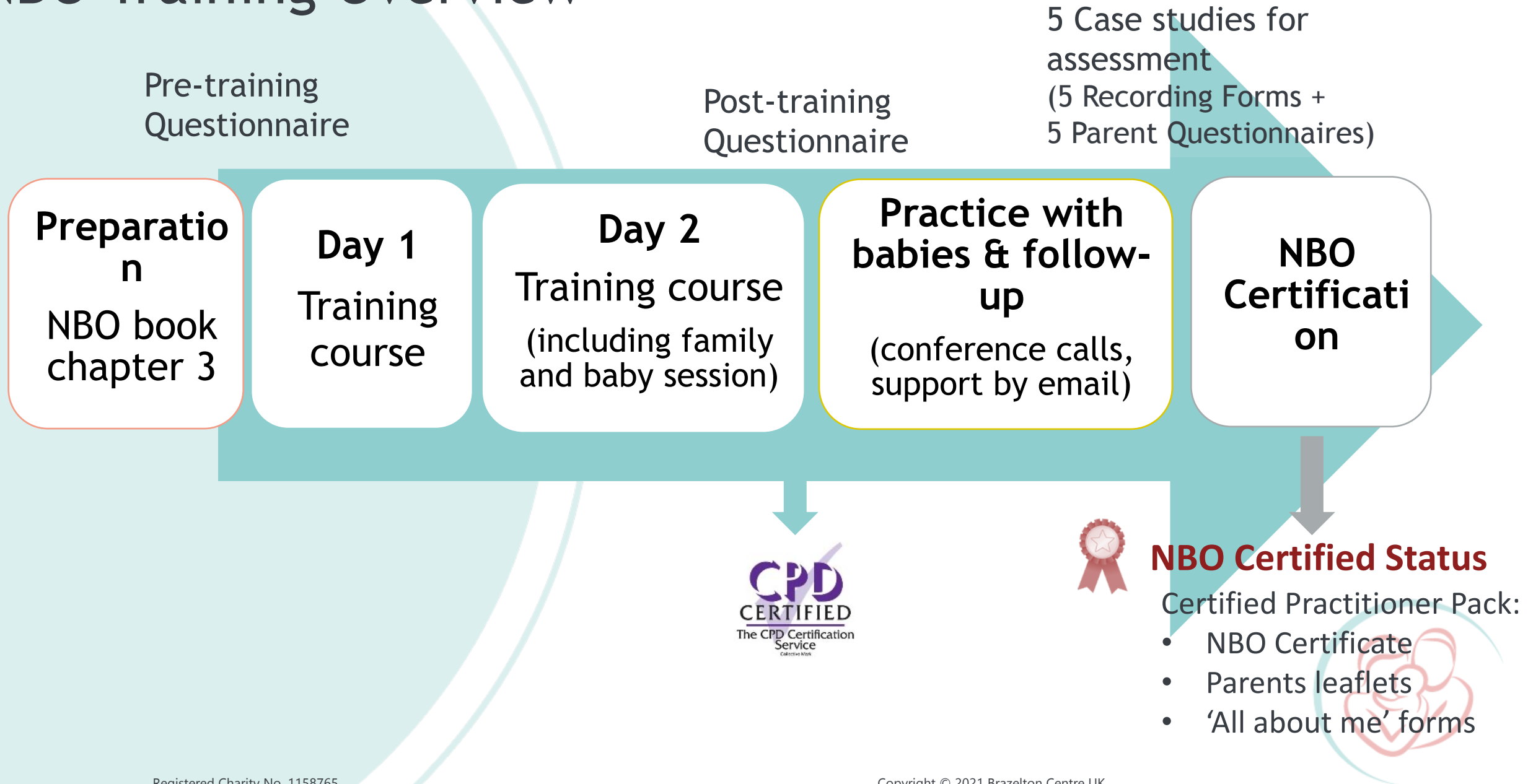
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBToVaMUMIoMbzcUmGtO_Lw



NBAS Certification Process Overview



NBO Training Overview





Organisation name: Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust

Location: Hertfordshire

How has baby communication been embedded into care: 240 Health Visitors trained in the NBO and it is offered universally to families across Hertfordshire during the new birth visit. The guidance provided by the NBO is supplemented with an HCT pamphlet entitled 'Getting to know your baby' which discusses infant behaviour including sleep and wake states. If the health visitor is unable to conduct the NBO at the new birth visit it is usually offered at the 6-8 week review.

What benefits have been seen: Health visitors feel the NBO enables them to facilitate sensitive parenting. By encouraging parents to observe and understand their baby's communication they are better equipped to contain their baby and respond to their needs appropriately.

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Organisation name: Flying Start Health Visiting Service in Torfaen

Location: Torfaen, Wales

How has baby communication been embedded into care: NBO is a universal part of our service and is used within the first 6 weeks, it is usually used at the new birth visit and will sometimes be repeated if parents are experiencing difficulties. We have produced a leaflet "understanding your baby" which is available in English and Welsh and is provided to all families as part of our birth pack.

What benefits have been seen: Practitioners find it such a pleasure and a privilege to be able to experience using such a positive tool with parents and new babies. I have never had a negative experience, and it is one of the favourite parts of my job. There are multiple benefits for families including increased parental sensitivity and responsivity to baby and babies' cues which can reduce things like over-feeding issues and parental anxiety.

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Baby Communication
Awareness Week
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Organisation name: For Baby's Sake

Location: West London, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Blackpool and CONNECT (national remote service)

How has baby communication been embedded into care: 30

Practitioner's in the Trust have been trained in NBO and it is used with every parent on the programme where possible between 2-8 postnatally. We use the NBO with co-parents who are experiencing domestic abuse to break the cycle and give babies the best possible start in life by supporting sensitive attuned parenting. Following delivering of the NBO the parents are introduced to Video Interaction Guidance which compliments the NBO in supporting their attuned sensitive parenting and also promoting safeguarding and connection to their baby.

What benefits have been seen: Introducing the NBO to expectant parents early in the pregnancy harnesses their motivations and offers them a chance to make changes that last, for them and their baby. Parents are amazed at their baby who is born ready to communicate with them.

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HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

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