

Breastfeeding Support Training



If you have breastfed for at least six months, we can offer qualification as an ABM Mother Supporter or as an ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor.

If you have no experience of breastfeeding (or less than six months) and wish to support breastfeeding mothers and babies, we also provide opportunities to learn.

Breastfeeding education is a core aim of the ABM.

Some of our students are health care professionals or doulas, while other trainees are mums who would like to provide voluntary mother-to-mother support. Most of our courses are distance learning but we can also offer group courses.

Our training courses:

- **ABM Mother Supporter**
- **ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor**
- **Supporting the breastfeeding mother and baby: Foundation level**
- **Supporting the breastfeeding mother and baby: Advanced level**

ABM Mother Supporter training

Mother Supporters are positive role models, who support and encourage local mums with straightforward breastfeeding relationships, as a well-informed friend. A Mother Supporter helps others in a voluntary capacity, so this course is not suitable for those working in a paid role or as a doula, for example.

A Mother Supporter doesn't offer counselling or detailed breastfeeding information for solving problems but she can put a mum in touch with her nearest breastfeeding counsellor.

All Mother Supporters must have breastfed for at least six months. You'll complete a short home study course to highlight certain areas of breastfeeding. This course is also a prerequisite for full counsellor training, if you later decide to move on to that. If you're not sure whether breastfeeding counsellor training is for you, the Mother Supporter training will give you a taste of what's involved.

ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor training

After successfully completing the Mother Supporter module, you can apply to train as a Breastfeeding Counsellor. The ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor training is based around eight modules, which are all completed by home study and assessed by post/internet. There follows a six month, supported, probationary counselling period.

Our counsellors tell us how rewarding it is to listen to mums' concerns and be able to offer help and reassurance.

The training programme includes anatomy and physiology, the management of breastfeeding, assessing and evaluating problems and how to resolve them with counselling and listening skills. There is also a practical breastfeeding observation to complete and practice telephone counselling with tutors which prepares trainees for offering appropriate information and support on the helpline.

The modules contain short-answer questions, as well as scenarios covering counselling and listening skills and practical work. The course is demanding and therefore not suitable for anyone already

engaged in further learning e.g. with the Open University. We strongly recommend that you attend any regional workshop or study day. All Breastfeeding Counsellor trainees have a regional supervisor, who will support them throughout training and beyond. There's also support through our online discussion group for trainees and counsellors.

We also offer this training specifically for members of Doula UK.

Breastfeeding Counsellor training takes approximately two years to complete in addition to the time taken to complete the mother supporter module. Training is flexible so that study can be fitted around family life, and there are no required weekends away or set dates for study sessions. We ask that each module is completed within eight weeks.

After training, an ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor is expected to remain a counsellor for at least two years and offer telephone counselling through our helpline in her own home. Before you start training you'll be asked to sign a contract agreeing to this and to abide by the ABM's code of conduct.

To remain an ABM Breastfeeding Counsellor, your membership fee must be paid promptly and you should attend either an approved study day or complete a revision module every year. You'll keep in regular touch with your regional co-ordinator and supervisor. The ABM is a mother-to-mother organisation and the role of a breastfeeding counsellor is not normally suitable for those in a paid health professional or breastfeeding role.

Supporting the Breastfeeding Mother and Baby (STBMAB) at *foundation* level

This course is suitable for those in a paid breastfeeding-related role e.g. doulas and children's centre workers. STBMAB Foundation training follows the syllabus of our ABM Mother Supporter training. It encourages a broad scope of study and research that will give you a deeper understanding of how breastfeeding works and a good foundation to further your breastfeeding education.

The cost of this course includes two years' membership fee and includes support during training. If you are in a paid role, your employer would be responsible for ongoing supervision. You do not need to have breastfed to complete this course.

Supporting the Breastfeeding Mother and Baby (STBMAB) at *advanced* level

If you're interested in advancing your knowledge in breastfeeding support but don't wish to train as an ABM breastfeeding counsellor (or don't meet the entry requirements) you may be interested in this course.

STBMAB Advanced training follows the syllabus of our ABM breastfeeding counsellor training, but does not lead to a breastfeeding counsellor qualification. You don't join the ABM helpline so this training course is not subsidised and requires a greater financial commitment. You'll be assigned a supervisor who will offer you help and support throughout your training.

Our STBMAB courses are suitable for those who may not have breastfed at all.

The cost of the course includes two years of ABM membership and is completed through home study. It takes approximately two years to complete.

For more information

Email training@abm.me.uk for more information about our training courses and details of how to apply and current training costs. You'll also be encouraged to contact our senior training co-ordinator, who will be pleased to chat through our courses and help you decide which is right for you.

ABM Breastfeeding Support training for groups

The ABM has been offering breastfeeding training for over 30 years and we were the first organisation to offer this type of training. Our breastfeeding course (usually on your own premises if a trainer is available in your area) is delivered by a qualified breastfeeding counsellor who is also an experienced facilitator.

Well trained breastfeeding supporters, who have developed good listening and communication skills and who are aware of confidentiality and boundaries, can be a valuable asset to managers when working towards breastfeeding targets. We strongly recommend that your trainees have adequate support and supervision and are not expected to work outside the scope of their training, knowledge or experience.

ABM-trained breastfeeding supporters will have supervision for at least a year after the course is completed. A typical course consists of eight sessions of two hours each. We can tailor courses to meet your needs, so please contact us for more information. Our breastfeeding training course is in line with UNICEF BFI and NICE guidelines.

Antenatal Breastfeeding Workshops

Our experienced training team may be able to help you develop your own antenatal breastfeeding workshops tailored to your own circumstances.

About the ABM

Founded in 1979, the ABM is a national charity that exists to support breastfeeding mothers and nurture families. We do this through helplines, face to face, and online. We provide training in how to support breastfeeding mothers and we advocate for breastfeeding mothers at a local and national level. ABM members are mostly mothers and supportive health professionals such as midwives, health visitors, lactation consultants, and GPs. ABM members receive our magazine throughout the year, our set of information leaflets and have special rates at our annual conference.

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www.abm.me.uk 08444 122948
ABM, PO Box 207, Bridgwater TA6 7YT
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