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## Guidance for students or Health Professionals who wish to observe a GBSN group

Welcome to GBSN.

If you are interested in coming along to see what we do, please email [info@gsbn.org.uk](mailto:info@gsbn.org.uk).

The purpose of this paper is to introduce you to who is who and what your role would be. Please have a read through and bring it with you to your first visit. Please also bring some ID.

GBSN Philosophy – the Breastfeeding Counsellor (BFC) will talk you through this. It's important to understand that we are not breastfeeding promotion-focused, rather we work in a **mother-centred** model. We do not give advice nor tell a mother what she should do. The BFC will also talk you through the group's risk assessment.

The BFC has had an extensive, long and in depth training in supporting breastfeeding mothers using counselling skills. The Peer Supporters are mothers who have breastfed their own child for at least 6 months and had a short training course based on listening skills. They will listen to mothers and offer options and suggestions that the mother may like to consider.

We invite you also to sit with the mothers and hear their stories. This is particularly helpful if you are interested in working towards a health professional career. However, we cannot stress enough, that you are *not* there to \*help\* them or share information. You *must* suggest that the Peer Supporters or BFC would be the best people to talk to. Your role is only to **listen**.

We want your observation experience to feel worthwhile and to be fun. Therefore if you were to hear something that worried you, please speak to the BFC before you go home. Please wear your NHS/University ID and we'll also provide you with a sticky label badge that says "visitor". Mothers at GBSN groups could meet a BFC, Peer Supporters, visitors and other mothers as well as the hostess and it is very important that they recognise who they are sitting next to.

GBSN relies on fundraising £25,000 per year to keep our 7 weekly groups going. We very much appreciate your contribution. We run many fundraisers. We invite you to contribute ideas, skills and / or energy to helping us to do this.

With many thanks,  
Elizabeth Mayo ([chair@gsbn.org.uk](mailto:chair@gsbn.org.uk)) and the Supporting the Supporters team

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