

Best Beginnings 2018 Highlights Report

2018 has been marked with some significant successes. Some highlights follow below:

Crisis Messenger LIVE in Baby Buddy!

In partnership with Mental Health Innovations which was set up by the Royal Foundation, we launched the Baby Buddy Crisis Messenger in November 2018. Baby Buddy Crisis Messenger is a text support service offering 24/7 confidential text help to parents who are in emotional pain or a crisis. Parents text "BABYBUDDY" to 85258 or gain automatic access through a link in the award-winning Baby Buddy app and through the Best Beginnings website. Crisis Messenger is powered by Crisis Text Line and Shout.

Baby Buddy Crisis Messenger uses state-of-the-art artificial intelligence and a powerful and effective U.S. operational model that relies on a several hundred-strong, trained Crisis Counsellor volunteer force, under 24/7 clinical supervision. The purpose of Crisis Messenger is to take someone from a high risk to a low risk situation and to signpost long term support. Crisis Text Line was developed in the United States in 2013 and has been imported to the UK for a national roll-out following its enormous success there. Watch this video about Crisis Text Line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H6BL2KKfA0>

NHS approval for Best Beginnings' Baby Buddy app in the NHS Digital Library. Baby Buddy is the ONLY digital App accredited for providing clinical advice during pregnancy and post birth!

Following eight months of process, in October we were thrilled that Baby Buddy received NHS accreditation resulting in it becoming the first pregnancy App to be granted with this accreditation and being featured on the NHS App Library. This reinforces the multiple endorsements that Baby Buddy has already secured. The accreditation further reassures frontline professionals to promote the app and integrate it into NHS care-pathways. We anticipate that this will pave the way to regional roll-outs ensuring many more thousands of pregnant women and new mothers across the UK access Baby Buddy and its free quality assured content and functionality designed to support their mental and physical health and help them maximise their children's potential. Find out more: <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/News/baby-buddy-available-on-nhs-apps-library>

Baby Buddy is going global!

Since the app's inception, Best Beginnings has dreamt of taking the Baby Buddy app with its rich, evidence based and accessible public health content, global. Through a grant from Erasmus Plus, a dynamic European partnership between Cyprus University of Technology, Birth Forward, The Berlin Protestant University of Applied Science, Athens University of Applied Science, Cosmoanelixis and Best Beginnings is underway. Together we are exploring the transferability and applicability of Baby Buddy in Cyprus. The process of exploring, co-creating and producing the Baby Buddy Cyprus web app is aptly named Baby Buddy Forward. The project team come from the UK, Cyprus, Germany and Greece, all with a shared vision to improve perinatal outcomes and give every child the best start in life. Our vision is to create a Baby Buddy Cyprus web app as a public health intervention that is translated into English, Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Russian and to measure the impact of the intervention on the local health system, local families and on health outcomes. Using a process of collaboration and co-creation with families, health professionals and policy makers we aim to integrate Baby Buddy Cyprus into the local health system to drive change and improve outcomes. Find out more: <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/news/taking-baby-buddy-abroad>

Self-care films in a bid to tackle what is a healthy weight during pregnancy

We have been successful in a partnership bid for self-care in Norfolk/Cambridge over 12 months to

enhance Baby Buddy's self-care content and create maternity healthy weight films. This is particularly important because of the current worrying social media trend for portraying “skinny pregnancies” as an ideal to aspire to, and because many vulnerable young mums have eating disorders whilst pregnant, which can lead to premature births, as well as high levels of health issues in the infant, and infant mortality. Find out more: <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/Blog/selfcare-partnership-with-just-one-norfolk>

A “one stop” digital app from preconception to the 5th birthday

We have begun working pro-bono with digital and data-base architecture experts from Accenture to develop a road map to create the next iteration of Baby Buddy, an app, or a series of apps that will actively support, mothers, fathers and partners from preconception to the child’s fifth birthday. It will be created in co-creation with parents, other charities and professionals and will have enhanced functionality including mood tracking and features to actively support the couple relationship. Collaboration is one of Best Beginnings guiding principles – when it comes to charities and impact, the whole can be much greater than the sum of its parts. Towards the end of the year we convened the Early Years Digital Partnership a group of over 30 organisations including national charities and professional bodies committed to working together to create compelling evidence-base content for the digital intervention that will support the work of all charity partners, support the effective delivery of the Healthy Child Programme, support the home-learning environment and crucial directly inform and empower parents and help them maximise their children’s potential.

The Early Years Digital Partnership

We convened and chaired the first two meetings of the Early Years Digital Partnership in 2018. At the time of writing, the charity partners are: Anna Freud Centre, Best Beginnings, Birth Companions, Fatherhood Institute, Basis sleep, Family Action, Family Links, Family Nurse Partnership, First Steps Nutrition, Future Gingerbread, Henry, LGBT Alliance, National Children’s Bureau, NSPCC, National Literacy Trust, One Plus One, Place 2 Be and PiPUK. In addition, the Partnership includes the British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health, Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (awaiting, Faculty of Public Health, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Psychiatrists and also academics at UCL, the University of Hull, the University of Durham, Imperial and the University of Oxford.

We have convened around a clear vision: that families of all backgrounds will have the knowledge and agency to look after their physical and mental health and to maximise their children’s development and wellbeing from pre-conception to the child’s 5th birthday.

The Early Years Digital Partnership (EYDP) is committed to making this vision a reality by working collaboratively with families and stakeholders across the sector, to develop and deploy engaging, accessible, clinically-assured, evidence-based content for the digital resource that will provide information, content and support on psychosocial and physical health matters for all families with children up to the age of five years.

This Partnership has come together with a set of shared values to reduce inequality in child outcomes and support the most disadvantaged families in society, so that children of all background can have the best start in life. This project will also provide an innovative model of collaborative working that could be deployed by equally diverse partnerships to have positive impact on society by supporting people of all backgrounds at different life stages.

Embedding Baby Buddy into communities up and down the country!

The Best Beginnings Ops Team continue to be commissioned to deliver embedding projects by Health

Authorities and Local Authorities, and we are currently delivering in 4 London Boroughs (Hounslow, Southwark, Newham and Hillingdon) and 12 major UK cities or counties (Blackpool, Chester, County Durham & Darlington, East Sussex, Leeds, Luton, Newcastle, Norwich (C/R), Solent, South Tees, West Sussex, Warrington and South Tees). In these localities we have been working through our process of embedding the Baby Buddy App with professionals in maternity, midwifery and children's services.

Embedding within local health authorities and communities is incredibly important. We work with frontline professionals to ensure that Baby Buddy, a trusted and free resource, is made known to parents-to-be and parents of new babies. When the app is embedded within an area, around 50% of expectant and new mothers will use it, supporting their journey into parenthood.

In addition, we have learned that embedding has increased the overall uptake whilst maintaining the disproportionate uptake amongst young parents, parents for whom English isn't their first language and parents Not In Education, Employment or Training, (NEET's). ie: it is used by all families but disproportionately by families who need it most.

Feedback on Baby Buddy is excellent

As the image to the right highlights, over 99% of users completing the in-app questionnaire find Baby Buddy easy to use and understand, with 87% of mothers and 88% of fathers using the app finding it helps them look after their mental health. Further in-app feedback follows overleaf including the finding that 86% of mothers and 89% of fathers reported that the app is helping them get more out of their appointments.

UK wide Pregnant women & new mums and Dads & Partners completing pop-up in-app surveys to 31/10/2018 report the following about Baby Buddy:

- Easy to use >99% (n= 13,176) >99% (n=329)
- Easy to understand >99% (n= 13,099) >99% (n=325)
- Helps me look after my mental health 87% (n=3992) 88% (n= 341)
- Helps me look after my physical health 90% (n=4041) 88% (n=348)
- Helps me feel closer to my baby 90% (n=3850) 92% (n=320)
- Helps me feel more confident caring for my baby 98% (n=3460) 97% (n=105)
- Helps me get more out of my appointments 86% (n=6884) (n=542): 89%

best beginnings

@BestBeginnings | @AlisonBaum | @BabyBuddyApp | #ISSOP2018

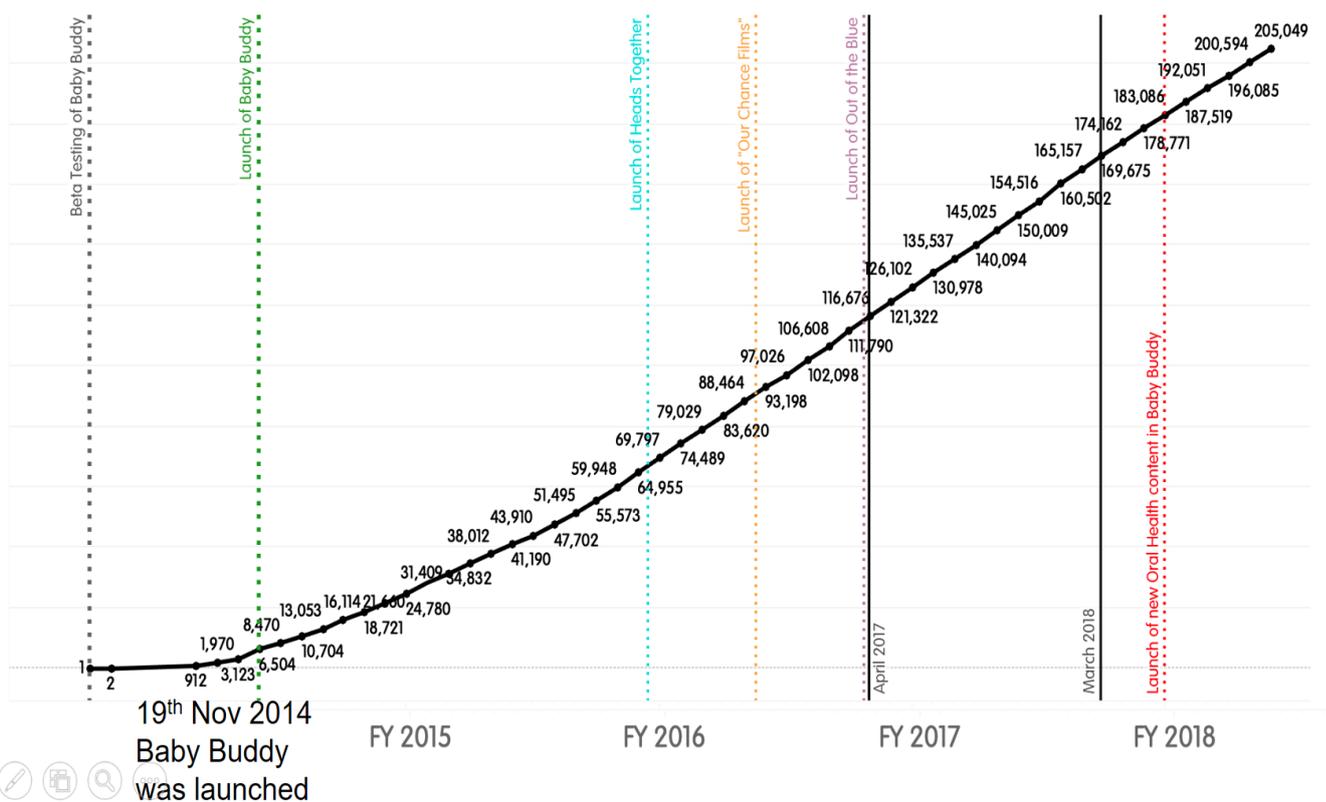
baby buddy

Baby Buddy Registrations continue to grow

Currently we have just under 5,000 new users register to use Baby Buddy every month. As the chart below shows, we've had over 200,000 families and professionals downloading and registering with the App since 2014. As we embed Baby Buddy in more areas and secure funding for marketing and promotion of Baby Buddy, and as our App content grows, we expect to see downloads rise further. Also, in due course, with funding secured and the extension of Baby Buddy to age four and the active involvement of our charity partners we envisage seeing a step-change in downloads with many more mothers, fathers and partners using Baby Buddy.

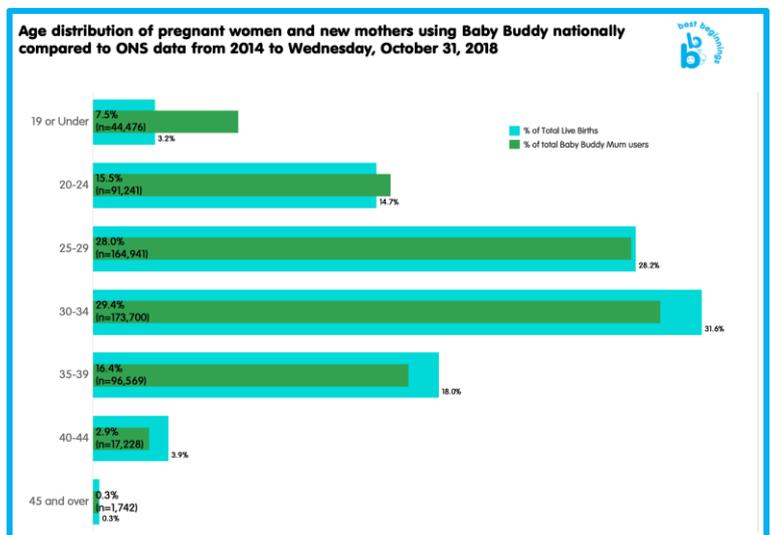
How many users have registered with Baby Buddy users across the UK up to 30th November 2018?

The vertical lines reference key milestones for Baby Buddy.



Paving the way for Baby Buddy 2020

Despite how “girly” Baby Buddy is, 7% of registered app users are fathers and partners and the feedback they give (see page above) is very similar to the feedback from mothers using Baby Buddy. Also, we have evidence that Baby Buddy is being disproportionately used by families who need it the most, including young mothers and mothers for whom English isn't their first language



Best Beginnings income and expenditure 2016 to 2018

	Income	Expenditure
Year Ended 31st July 2016	£1,130,944	£1,166,887
8 Months to 31st March 2017	£734,559	£804,609
Year ended 31st March 2018	£1,027,445	£1,026,335

Our 2017-2018 Annual Report has been filed and is available on the Charity Commission's website and the charity's website: <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/annual-accounts>

Organisational development

In June 2017 we appointed Shabira Papain as Chief Operations Officer and to deputise for the CEO.

In August 2018, we welcomed Claire Dishington to the team as Financial Director.

We have a strong Senior Management Team, including Head of Operations Carly Bond, Head of Digital, Content and Comms, Stephanie Kronson and a part-time Head of Fundraising Abigail Rowe. The Heads of Teams continue to show high calibre of management and leadership skills which means that although we are only a team of 13 FTE, we continue to punch well above our weight with a strong focus on impact.

Baby Buddy evaluation

An independent evaluation, conducted by University of Lancashire by Dr Nicola Crossland, et al, conducted research across three sites where Baby Buddy had been embedded, found scores on the Mother to Infant Bonding Scale were significantly more positive in the post embedding phase. They also found that 89% of professionals feel that Baby Buddy is 'helping women to become more knowledgeable about their pregnancy'.

In summary

Thanks to generosity of our funders, Best Beginnings has achieved an enormous amount in the last year and reached some key milestones. We do not take our success for granted against what has been a particularly bleak time for charities and children's services at large. As we write this, we have learned that since 2010 one thousand children centres have ceased to exist. It is more important than ever that the Baby Buddy is rolled out as it is universal, cost effective, and able to reach out to the many tens of thousands of families who would have otherwise used the children centres for early parenting support. At no time did we ever envisage Baby Buddy and the work of Best Beginnings replacing frontline resources, but the unique health offer of Baby Buddy can offer a hugely significant support in areas where there have been cuts.

We would like to thank you for the support your funding has given us to stay focused on our vision to give every child the best start by ensuring parents have evidence-based info in the palms of their hands 24/7. With each donation we receive, we are able to help more families in need.

Here are some quotes from some of the many families our App has helped this year:

"Following real mother's stories. Getting/watching info from real woman helped me to feel more confident ..."

"I love checking the app daily to see what hints/tips are there for today. It has given me ideas about my baby's development and reassured me..."

"I'm so sad it's over - this app has been with me for a year, it actually felt like a friend!"

“Thank you everyone at baby buddy, you've kept me company at some of the loneliest and confusing times and I'll miss this app tremendously x”

“... Definitely hope they bring out an app for older baby's as it has been so great. So supportive better than any book or friend. Supplied me with facts & reassured me at times. 6/5 stars from me. Thank You so much to whoever took part in the making of the app. I love it & will/have recommended it to all my friends. Please bring out one for 6months+ & keep making them as they are great...”

“I loved the app it was always good if I needed information while I was pregnant and after was quite upset that it finished at six months I think it should last a lot longer than that because as you are aware every milestone with a baby can be stressful and worrying and I didn't feel so alone some days with just reassuring myself I'm a good mom as I know no one else with a baby...”

Thank you for your interest in the work of Best Beginnings.

Together we can improve the lives and life chances of children across the country.

Shabira Papain
COO & Deputy CEO

Alison Baum, OBE
Founder & Chief Executive