In May 2013, Dudley midwives identified a gap in their service. When they considered the evidence that involving grandmothers in breastfeeding can be beneficial to increase support for the new mother (Kaunonen et al, 2012), they realised that this was not something that routinely happened.

After consulting pregnant women, their families, the wider multidisciplinary teams and midwives for their opinions and views, a new initiative was introduced.

Now the birth mother’s own mother or close family member can receive basic breastfeeding information to equip them with the knowledge and practical skills to support their daughter with her breastfeeding experience. The information is delivered in workshops called Mom2Mom, which are evening events running for around two-and-a-half hours, during which time families get together in small groups, as this is an effective way to learn and facilitate discussions (Jaques, 2011). There is the opportunity to role-play the principles and practical skills needed for effective breastfeeding.

On completion, the grandmothers are issued with a Mom2Mom passport, which gives them permission to access the maternity unit at any time to support their daughter/new mother with breastfeeding. The passport was created so that grandmothers are not restricted to visiting times. This allows for Mom2Mom support to be available from the outset and then as a mother requires, which is essential for establishing and sustaining breastfeeding (Hoddinott et al, 2008).

Although in its infancy, Mom2Mom is proving successful and women and families rate the initiative highly. A database of participants has been started so that contact can be made about three months post-delivery to identify if Mom2Mom support was helpful. A positive audit of the service will allow expansion for the future.

The Mom2Mom initiative enables the new grandparent to support, encourage and assist their daughter to breastfeed and help bridge that challenging transition from hospital to home. At the same time, a breastfeeding buddy has been created within the family.

Kaunonen et al (2012) believe that continuous breastfeeding support produces effective results and the role of peer support is essential in the postnatal period. On a busy ward or at home, staff cannot always meet this need; the scheme assists midwives, MSWs and breastfeeding buddies because they know that grandmothers and family members will be providing consistent and supportive advice.

The initiative is raising the profile of midwifery because the team are ensuring parts of society are better educated and involved in maternal and baby care. Therefore, the public health agenda outcomes (Department of Health, 2013) are being addressed. By keeping family members aware of modern standards of practice, they hope to create a better family network to enhance maternity service provision.

The service proves that midwives are open to family involvement and willing to try new initiatives to achieve better breastfeeding outcomes and, so far, it is a success.

The attractiveness of Mom2Mom is that it is an effective process that can be set up in any trust, offering women and their families more choice for support, while helping to maintain the achievement of breastfeeding targets and quality initiatives.

Lucy Johnson
Lead community midwife, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

For references, visit the RCM website.