Author's response to reviews

Title: Incentives as Connectors: Insights into a breastfeeding incentive intervention in a disadvantaged area of North-West England

Authors:

Gill Thomson Dr (GThomson@uclan.ac.uk)
Fiona C Dykes Prof (FCDykes@uclan.ac.uk)
Margaret A Hurley Dr (MAHurley@uclan.ac.uk)
Pat Hoddinott Dr (p.hoddinott@abdn.ac.uk)

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Response to feedback

Quantitative data collection and analysis, paragraph 2: You say that postcodes were collected for all women enrolled on the scheme, but in the Discussion at the end of paragraph 2, you say that indices of deprivation were not collected. This inconsistency needs to be corrected.

Response: Thank you – this anomaly has been corrected with postcode reference removed from the paper as follows:

‘Peer supporters record data for each new woman at registration with the programme, including maternal age, parity, types of peer support provided, total contact time spent with women, programme completion rates and feeding outcomes (exclusive breastfeeding and any breastfeeding) at 6-8 weeks’

Discussion, paragraph 4: Future studies have been suggested, however, I don’t think the point I made previously in 4.1 has been addressed. I’m still left wondering about the views of the women who enrolled on the scheme but dropped out before the end. Surely their voices are of great interest – do you not want to know what they thought of the scheme? It’s not just about their reasons for stopping, but their experiences of stopping in the context of being part of the scheme. Was the scheme part of the reason they stopped? Was it harder for them to stop given the extra contact being received? Or did they receive appropriate support with their decision? I’m not suggesting that all these questions need answered in this paper, but I think this is an important aspect missing from this paper that has not been acknowledged.

Response: Additional/amended text has now been included as follows:
'As the study only recruited women who were engaging with the incentive intervention, no conclusions can be drawn about how the gifts may or may not have motivated women to either participate in the peer support programme and/or to breastfeed. Future studies need to differentiate feeding outcomes and participant perspectives for a) incentives alone b) incentives with peer support and c) peer support alone, as well as elicit views from women who choose not to engage, or withdraw from, an incentive intervention.'

3. Discussion, paragraph 5: The sentence starting 'Whilst insights into….' does not make sense. (and repeats a ‘whilst’ from the preceding sentence)

Response: The text has now been altered as follows:

‘Whilst these constructs are considered to fuel intrinsic motivation, these authors propose that external influences can equally promote wellbeing and growth [4]. The constructs of autonomy and competence were evident within the Star Buddy service in terms of how the peer supporters supported and empowered women. Whilst these insights have been reported in a previous publication [24], the issue of relatedness was a key theme identified within this study.’