

Babywearing UK is a social enterprise whose mission is to promote babywearing and provide support, information & resources to parents and professionals. In 2009, Victoria Ward, Babywearing UK's founder, was running a sling shop in Cambridge and was offered the chance to promote babywearing in Bounty packs so that parents-to-be across the UK could find out about slings. Although many manufacturers & retailers were interested in clubbing together to fund the advertisement, the logistics of pulling together so many different small businesses without one umbrella organisation to provide the funding proved impossible. The idea of such an organisation, which could join together everyone interested in babywearing advocacy, whether a parent, peer supporter, babywearing or health professional, large manufacturer or small retailer, was born.

In 2010 she had the idea of funding joint projects through money raised from babywearing training and the School of Babywearing was launched as a Community Interest Company offering accredited training in Babywearing. Courses were offered from Autumn 2011 due to the work involved in getting qualifications approved and reviewed by an educational awarding body. In 2012, the organisation renamed itself Babywearing UK to reflect the broader purpose behind their activities. They work very closely with sling manufacturers, with the Baby Carrier Industry Alliance (BCIA) and with other babywearing schools who link together through the Center for Babywearing Studies in the US.

In 2012, Babywearing UK produced and distributed over 20,000 babywearing guides, thousands of babywearing safety postcards, colouring postcards and safety cards. They trained over 150 people, attended the International Babywearing Conference in Washington and began planning the European Babywearing Conference which is taking place in July 2013. They coordinated, funded and distributed 50 'International Babywearing Week playdate packs' which included babywearing resources and giveaways to sling libraries and sling meets. They also generated national publicity and advertised in publications including the Green Parent, Juno, Breastfeeding Matters. Victoria was asked to become the NCT's sling coordinator advising them on media and internal issues relating to babywearing and was chosen jointly as Babywearing International's Babywearing Advocate of the Year for 2012.

In 2013, the Babywearing UK team are extremely busy preparing for July's European Babywearing Conference (www.babywearingconference.co.uk) and the opportunity that it offers to gather together the UK's babywearing professionals alongside those from around the world. They are also promoting babywearing to midwives and health professionals through attendance at midwifery conferences and events and are planning further activities and packs for International Babywearing

Week 2013 along with a number of interested manufacturers and distributors who will be offering prizes and giveaways. They have two new publications for parents and professionals in the pipeline as well as further resources to support sling meets, libraries and Consultants and they will continue to provide all of their resources for free to parents, babywearing groups and interested professionals.

Another big achievement has been the Local Support page on the Babywearing UK website (www.babywearing.co.uk/localsupport) which offers one page for parents & professionals to access details of their local Babywearing Consultant, sling library or sling meet. As Babywearing UK was asked to take over ownership of Slingmeet, the site that links organisers of informal slingmeets, in 2012, this link to informal and formal groups of babywearers is especially appropriate. While Babywearing UK will continue to offer babywearing training through the School of Babywearing, they are keen to support all babywearing groups and all parents and professionals interested in babywearing (or who don't even yet know that they may be interested!).

For further information, contact Babywearing UK on 0300 800 1471 or e-mail enquiries@babywearing.co.uk.

Notes for Editors

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