

MEDIA RELEASE

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Melton's 'BreastFriends' group welcomes new peer supporters

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) is proud to announce the upcoming graduation of the latest cohort of mothers who have completed their training to become breastfeeding peer supporters in the Melton area. A celebration event is being held to mark this occasion, and also to acknowledge the success of the peer support programme which is delivered through the BreastFriends group.

MEDIA INVITATION:

The graduation will take place on Thursday 26 April from 10.30am – 12 noon at The Edge Children's Centre, Dalby Road, Melton LE13 0BQ.

Members of the press are warmly invited to attend as there will be opportunities to take photos, and interview the newly trained and long-standing breastfeeding peer supporters, as well as members of LPT's infant feeding team. If you would like to attend, please contact Rosie Huckle, Communications Manager for Families, Young People and Children's Services at LPT (rosie.huckle@leicspart.nhs.uk).



LPT's health visiting service holds the prestigious international 'Baby Friendly' accreditation in recognition of the high quality of its infant feeding support, provided as part of Healthy Together – our 0-19 services for children, young people and families. The network of trained breastfeeding peer supporters working in the local community is a key part of that provision.

The Breastfeeding Peer Support Programme was originally established in 2009, through funding from the local authority. It was set up to champion breastfeeding as the best choice where possible for parents and babies. LPT currently supports around 143 trained volunteers –all of whom have breastfed their own children, across seven geographical areas, including Rutland. Working closely with other breastfeeding organisations and colleagues at Children's Centres, LPT's peer supporters speak at ante-natal workshops, as well as running local support groups and providing on-the-spot advice to new mums via phone and social media.

The women graduating this week have had to overcome their own issues relating to breastfeeding. The range of their experiences makes them ideally placed to offer practical help to new mums.

Carole Fishwick, LPT's Infant Feeding lead, explains: "All of our peer supporters undergo a rigorous training programme. The course covers everything from how to latch a baby on to the breast to the emotional impact that breastfeeding can have on women. We have good breastfeeding rates in our area, but we want to improve them because we know that breast milk is the best nutrition that you can give to your baby. I am really proud of the dedication and commitment shown by our latest graduates in Melton, and am delighted that they have chosen to help our health visiting teams to support new families in this way."

Breastfeeding has a range of health benefits for both mothers and babies. Breastfed babies are less likely to suffer from gastro-intestinal, respiratory, urinary tract and ear infections. They are less likely to have asthma, eczema, food allergies and diabetes. The danger of obesity in later childhood is also lessened by breastfeeding. At the same time, mothers who breastfeed may find it easier to return to their pre-pregnancy weight and are less likely to develop breast and ovarian cancers.

ENDS



NOTES TO EDITORS

- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk. Our registered charity is called Raising Health (charity number 1057361). The charity fundraises to support excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. See www.raisinghealth.org.uk
- Healthy Together is a public health programme for children and young people aged 0-19 and their families, provided by LPT in partnership with some other organisations, including Leicester Mammias. Healthy Together includes health visiting and school nursing services, giving families the care they need, including early help if necessary. Visit the Health for Under 5s website: www.healthforunder5s.co.uk to access infant feeding advice and support.
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