



Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

MEDIA RELEASE

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Latest cohort of Rutland breastfeeding peer supporters celebrate their graduation

On Monday 6 March, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) marked the graduation of our latest group of seven trained volunteer breastfeeding peer supporters with a special celebration event at Visions Community and Children's Centres in Oakham.



Some of the newly graduated breastfeeding peer supporters (L-R): Vicki Oliver, Louisa Finch, Alison Tummon, Abigail Richardson, Louise Docker, Nicole Bissett

LPT's health visiting service holds the prestigious international 'Baby Friendly' accreditation in recognition of the high quality of its infant feeding support, and our 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 set up by LPT in 2009 to champion breastfeeding as the best choice where possible for parents and babies. There are now around 80 trained volunteers - all of whom have breastfed their own children – across four geographical areas, including Rutland. Working closely with other breastfeeding organisations including the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) and the Mammias Programme, 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.

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 Rutland, and am delighted that they have chosen to help us 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.

Course leaders and family health visitors, Hayley Vernon and Jan Laverty, said: "We are delighted to celebrate the graduation of seven new peer supporters who will provide continued support for breastfeeding mothers in Rutland. Whether by offering advice and reassurance to a new mum at the coffee morning or providing an empathetic listening ear on the telephone helpline, their contributions are invaluable to ensuring women feel supported to feed their babies with confidence."

The Rutland breastfeeding group meets weekly on Wednesdays from 10am until 12 noon at Visions Community and Children's Centres, Catmose Campus, Huntsmans Drive, Oakham LE15 6RP. New and breastfeeding mums are very welcome to drop in.

We are also looking for volunteers who would like to take part in the upcoming breastfeeding peer supporter training programme for the Market Harborough area which starts in May. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining the programme, please contact the health visiting team on 01858 411521

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
- **For further information contact:** Rosie Huckle, Communications Manager for Families, Young People and Children's Services, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0802, Email: rosie.huckle@leicspart.nhs.uk
- For more information on LPT's health visiting service, please visit <http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/OurServices-HealthVisiting.aspx>
- To find out more about the peer support available in Rutland, visit www.breastfeedingsupportrutland.