

MEDIA RELEASE

23 May 2016
FYPC_12_16

Melton's Breast Friends 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 Breast Friends group.

MEDIA INVITATION: The graduation will take place on Wednesday 25 May from 10am – 11.30am at The Edge Children's Centre, Dalby Road, Melton LE13 0BQ.

LPT's health visiting service holds the prestigious international 'Baby Friendly' accreditation in recognition of the high quality of its infant feeding support. The network of trained breastfeeding peer supporters working in the local community is a key part of that provision. Our current social media campaign, #EveryStepMatters, celebrates the support that our public health professionals are able to provide for families through the Healthy Child Programme, and infant feeding support is a key part of that.

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 75 trained volunteers –all of whom have breastfed their own children, across four 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 on Wednesday have had to overcome their own issues relating to breastfeeding, including tongue tie, reflux, mastitis and blocked ducts. Some have fed premature babies, and some have continued to breastfeed their

toddlers. 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 14-week 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.

Additional breastfeeding resources for new parents provided by LPT include:

- Dedicated infant feeding website pages (www.leicspart.nhs.uk/infantfeeding)
- Our free 'Meals on Heels' breast feeding support mobile app, co-designed with local mums. The app lists breast-feeding-friendly locations around the region and enables mums to rate venues and upload their own suggestions. They can also search for peer support groups near them and find answers to common breastfeeding questions.



ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of

one million, has a budget in excess of £267 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk.

- For more information on LPT's health visiting service, please visit <http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/OurServices-HealthVisiting.aspx>.
- The Breast Friends Melton Mowbray group can be contacted via their Facebook page.
- Meals on Heels can be downloaded from the App store. It is also available for android phones.
- **For further information contact:** Rosie Huckle, Communications Specialist, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tel: 0116 295 0802, Email: rosie.huckle@leicspart.nhs.uk