



## **Leicester City Leicestershire County and Rutland**

### **News Release**

Thursday June 16, 2011

### **Take a positive approach to breastfeeding**

Leicestershire mums are to benefit from peer support training courses held by NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland in partnership with NHS Leicestershire Partnership Trust and Leicester City Council to support mums with breastfeeding as part of Breastfeeding Awareness Week (June 19-25).

Five peer support training courses have been launched in the city, four of which will graduate during Breastfeeding Awareness Week. On graduating, participants, who are mums themselves, will have contact with pregnant women prior to giving birth, to discuss the benefits of breastfeeding. They will be equipped with the skills to follow up and support the women in the early postnatal period continuing as necessary for the duration of their breastfeeding experience.

Health professionals encourage mothers to breastfeed babies on demand responding to their babies needs. This ensures babies are breastfed when they are hungry usually between 8-12 times in 24 hours. Frequent breastfeeding ensures mum's breastmilk supply remains plentiful.

The peer supporters are trained to reassure and motivate other mums so they can start and continue to breastfeed with confidence. They will offer support in a variety of ways including group support, telephone support and one-to-one sessions.

Sam Nash, infant feeding coordinator speaking on behalf of all trusts, said: "Modern lifestyles can make breastfeeding more challenging for mothers and babies and this may reduce breastmilk. There are not only long-term benefits for the child but breastfeeding has many benefits for the mother. It can strengthen bones, lower the risk of getting ovarian and breast cancer and help mums get their pre-pregnancy figure back.

"Support from health professionals within the community is important, for all breastfeeding mothers as each baby and breastfeeding experience can be different. Mothers who cannot or choose not to breastfeed should contact their midwife or health visitor to get the support and information they need to make sure their baby gets the right nutrition."

Breast milk is proven to be the best form of nutrition for infants. It protects babies from diarrhoea, ear and chest infections. It also reduces the risk of developing diabetes and skin conditions such as eczema. Breastfeeding can also reduce the risk of Sudden infant death syndrome by up to 50 per cent.

Cath Pritchard, consultant in public health at NHS Leicester City, said: "The peer supporters that are graduating will support the work we are doing in partnership with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, local authorities and the University in working towards UNICEF's Baby

Friendly standard which recognises organisations where breastfeeding is encouraged and supported.”

These new sessions are the latest in a host of groups and breastfeeding cafes already set up across the city and county.

Cath added: “All our health visitors and nursery nurses across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland have breast feeding training to BFI standards. It’s important to remember that these support systems are not just about problem solving but support in general. We would encourage pregnant women to attend to see how babies breastfeed and discuss breastfeeding with other mothers.”

The PCTs in partnership with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust is working towards UNICEF’s Baby Friendly Initiative which recognises organisations where breastfeeding is protected, promoted and supported. These new sessions are the latest in a host of groups and breastfeeding cafes already set up across the city and county.

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For more information about support for breast feeding mums please visit [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk).

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**For interviews or more information please contact press officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 4123 or [liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk](mailto:liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk) or Caroline Higgs, senior media officer on 0116 295 7663 or [caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk](mailto:caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk)**

Notes to Editors

- Breastfeeding is free, convenient, the right temperature, and easy for the baby to digest and there is no need for sterilising or expensive equipment
- It encourages the mother to sit, relax and enjoy the closeness and bonding with her baby that breastfeeding can provide – in the early days after the birth it can be useful to set aside some time to rest when the baby sleeps
- Breastfeeding can help with weight loss and premenstrual syndrome – studies show that breastfeeding women burn more calories compared to mothers who do not breastfeed.