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Support for campaign to boost breastfeeding

A new campaign to encourage more new mothers to breastfeed and to do so for longer has been welcomed by health workers in SouthTyneside.

Start4Life, Public Health England's parenting advice service, has launched the initiative to help women feel more comfortable when breastfeeding in public by offering tips from mums and experts. There are also some new, short films sharing real-life experiences of mothers breastfeeding in public to help break down the barriers and stigma that prevent it.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has already introduced additional volunteer breastfeeding peer support workers to help to increase breastfeeding rates among mums in the borough. Last year, the first group completed the training course, which was specially developed by health visitor Jen Menzies and public health midwife Jane Harker, and a new group of 12 mums who have experience of breastfeeding have just enrolled for the training. They will work with the Trust's community health professionals, such as midwives, health visitors and a breastfeeding support worker team, who run ante-natal infant feeding workshops and breastfeeding support groups at Children's Centres.

Mrs Menzies said: "A Start4Life poll showed that many new mothers feel uncomfortable about breastfeeding in public, despite broad public support. New mothers need to feel comfortable in feeding their babies wherever and whenever they need to and, hopefully, this latest campaign will help us to reinforce that message.

Current rates in South Tyneside for beginning breastfeeding and continuing at six weeks are improving but remain below the national average. The huge array of health benefits to both baby and mother make it a priority to improve these rates."

For more information on breastfeeding go to the Start4Life website www.nhs.uk/start4life. The new videos will be shared via the Start4Life Facebook page.

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Pictured above: Health visitor Jen Menzies

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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