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## Breastfeeding mums know best

A group of South Tyneside mums are ready to help other mothers to successfully breastfeed. Ten local women are the latest to graduate from South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's breastfeeding peer support worker training course. They will now work with the Trust's community health professionals - midwives, health visitors and the breastfeeding support worker team, who run ante-natal infant feeding workshops and breastfeeding support groups at Children's Centres - to help to increase breastfeeding rates in the borough.

The course was developed by public health midwife Jane Harker and health visitor Jen Menzies and 25 women have now completed it since it was introduced last year.

Mrs Harker said: "These women have all had really positive experiences of breastfeeding themselves and want to pass on their knowledge to encourage more mums not only to breastfeed but to do so for longer."

Mrs Menzies added: "Current rates in South Tyneside for beginning breastfeeding and continuing at six weeks are improving but remain below the national average. We need to improve these rates further because there are many benefits associated with breastfeeding, such as reducing the risk of babies becoming ill and of later childhood disease, and protecting the mother's health."

**ends**

*Pictured above: Mums with their babies at the graduation ceremony for breastfeeding peer support workers, with Clinical Business Manager Derek Curry, who presented their certificates, public health midwife Jane Harker (back row, first left) and health visitor Jen Menzies (back row, fourth from right).*

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

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