

# News release

22 December 2009

## **Boost for Breastfeeding Support in Sunderland**

Support for Sunderland's nursing mothers received a boost this month as 12 new mums graduated from their breastfeeding peer counselling course.

The mums, who have successfully completed the Sunderland Children's Centres' Bosom Buddies training course, are now able to provide support and advice as qualified volunteers at the centres' breastfeeding support groups.

The 10-week course provides mums who have successfully nursed their own children with the opportunity to help encourage other mothers to consider breastfeeding. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) says peer support is one of the most effective ways of helping new mums to succeed in breastfeeding.

The event, which was held at the Tansy Centre in South Hylton, saw the graduates receive their accreditations from Marian Jones of La Leche League – the international organisation responsible for the peer counsellor training course – during a special graduation ceremony.

Alongside the ceremony the Bosom Buddies also enjoyed a series of workshops where they shared their knowledge and expertise.

Councillor Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City within Sunderland City Council, said: "The Bosom Buddies Graduation was a wonderful way to mark the achievements of these mums who have seen the advantages that breastfeeding can bring to families and who wanted to help other mums and their babies enjoy similar positive experiences.

"Breastfeeding isn't always the easiest thing in the world, however with the right advice and a little perseverance it can be much more enjoyable, offering an enormous number of benefits for both mother and child, both in terms of health and emotional well-being."

Midwife Gillian Lund, Breastfeeding Coordinator for Sunderland, added: “The new Bosom Buddies have done really well. They’re all looking forward to working with other mums and passing on their knowledge.”

The Bosom Buddies support groups run across the city’s 17 Children’s Centres and are open to all expectant and new mums wanting to breastfeed their children. The groups are friendly and informal and newcomers are very welcome to join.

The groups allow volunteers who have completed the training to provide peer support, giving mums the chance to make new friends and chat with trained volunteers who have faced similar situations.

For more information around breastfeeding support parents should call into any of the 17 Sunderland Children’s Centre or call the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5505.