

Bosom Buddies – Promoting Breastfeeding

Gateshead Council

A local breast-feeding support group, Bosom Buddies, was set up via Sure Start in 2002 by Gateshead Health Foundation Trust and Gateshead Council and runs groups in a number of Gateshead children's centres.

The scheme runs by training up mums who have been through the breast-feeding experience as peer supporters. They are then available to help new breast-feeding mums at the informal drop-in groups. They aim to provide a friendly environment for mums, offering play for their tots as well as information and support for pregnant and breast-feeding mums.

'Bosom Buddies' are trained by professionals and La Leche League of Great Britain and health visitors and hospital midwives promote and support the groups. Breast pumps and nursing bras are for sale at reduced rates at these groups and there is also a phone line for breastfeeding support and information.

There are now around 50 active Bosom Buddies in Gateshead (a total of around 60 have been trained) - some of whom will hold their own groups, visit mother and baby clinics or even visit mums on post natal wards in hospitals to tell them about the scheme.

Between January and March 2006 over half of mothers giving birth at Queen Elizabeth Hospital had initiated breast feeding within 48 hours or by discharge; this is the highest level since collection of this data started. In 2003 - 2004, there were around 25% of Gateshead mothers breast feeding by their six to eight week check up, and by 2005 - 2006 this figure had risen to just over 33%.

For more information, please contact:

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<http://www.bosombuddiesgateshead.org.uk/>