

News Release

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Service Awarded for Innovation in Improving Breastfeeding Rates and User Involvement in Service Development

The Western Health and Social Care Trust's Breastfeeding Service based at Altnagelvin Hospital has won the Award for Innovation in Improving Breastfeeding at the NCT (formerly National Childbirth Trust) Northern Ireland Maternity & Family Awards, held at Stormont on 3 December 2009.

On receiving the award for innovation in Breastfeeding, Audrey Moore, Western Trust Senior Lactation Midwife based at Altnagelvin said: "We are delighted to receive this award on behalf of our staff and breastfeeding peer support mothers. It is a culmination of over 10 years hard work developing our services within the hospital and community with the aim to provide the best support for all our mothers and babies"

'Mothers Voice', the local Maternity Liaison Service Committee also won the NCT Award for User Involvement in Service Development, Design and Evaluation. Co-chair Jennie Shiels said: "Receiving this award on behalf of Mothers' Voice means a great deal to the past and present group members who have voluntarily dedicated time over the last 12 years, to develop services and ensure support is available to mothers on very sensitive issues including peri-natal depression and miscarriages." Maria Herron, co-chair added "this award will hopefully highlight our positive collaboration with health professionals to improve the experience of child birth in the Western Trust – and is often based on direct feedback from new mothers."

Talking about the recognition of Maternity Services in the Western Trust, Assistant Director Kate McDaid said: "The NCT Maternity & Family Awards celebrates best practice in the work of statutory maternity and family support services so we were delighted to receive an award on behalf of the Breastfeeding Team Initiative and for

our partnership with 'Mothers Voice' to ensure that users have a say in how maternity services are developed."

Chairman of the Western Trust, Mr Gerard Guckian congratulated both initiatives on their success: "Receiving an NCT Maternity & Family Award is welcome recognition of joint midwifery and health promotion teamwork and the partnership developed with Mother's Voice to improve services. The NCT campaigns vigorously to improve maternity care and ensure better services and facilities for new parents, so the fact that they've chosen to award the Western Trust for our work is a great accolade."

Speaking at the event Martin Bradley, Chief Nursing Officer for Northern Ireland, said: "The NCT Maternity and Family Awards provide an excellent opportunity to recognise good practice in this field. I offer my congratulations to all of the winners and those who were highly commended, as their work shows the professionalism and dedication of those involved in providing maternity and family services in Northern Ireland."

ENDS...

Notes to Editor:

- *Photo captions:*



Pictured receiving the NCT Award for Innovation in Improving Breastfeeding are (L-R): Gail Werkmeister President of NCT; Avril Morrow, Health Promotion Officer for Breastfeeding; Deirdre Gill, Western Trust Senior Lactation / Parentcraft Midwife; Maureen Miller, Lead Midwife, Altnagelvin Hospital; Kate McDaid, Western Trust Assistant Director of Health Care; Audrey Moore, Western Trust Senior Lactation Midwife; Anne Marie McGurk, Western Trust Head of Maternity Services; and Geraldine Gurney, peer support mother (at front).



Pictured receiving the Award NCT Award for User Involvement in Service Development, Design and Evaluation are (L-R): Gail Werkmeister President of NCT; Jennie Shiels, Mothers Voice; Maria Herron, Mothers Voice; Kate Mc Daid, Western Trust Assistant Director of Health Care; Margaret Kelly, Health and Social Care Board; Audrey Moore, Western Trust Senior Lactation Midwife; Deirdre Gill, Western Trust Senior Lactation / Parentcraft Midwife; Anne Marie McGurk, Western Trust Head of Maternity Services; Maureen Miller, Lead Midwife, Altnagelvin Hospital.

- *Interviews can be facilitated on request with representatives of the Western Trust Breastfeeding Team Initiative or Mothers' Voice. Please contact the Communications Office.*
- The NCT (formerly the National Childbirth Trust) is a charity and membership organisation with over 100,000 members across the UK. The dedication of NCT volunteers work through networks of branches to provide support to local services, training and evidence-based information for parents, families and health professionals.

The NCT offers information and support in order to give every parent the chance to make informed choices and wants to ensure universal access to our services and activities. In addition to our service provision NCT campaign vigorously to improve maternity care and ensure better services and facilities for new parents.

- Northern Ireland – key demographics (Source: NISRA (2007) BIRTHS IN NORTHERN IRELAND)
 - In total 24,500 births were recorded in Northern Ireland in 2007, 1,200 (5%) more than in 2006. This is the biggest annual increase since 1979 and the fifth annual increase in a row. The 24,500 babies last year compares with a low of 21,400 babies in 2002, but is below the 1980s when 27,000 babies were born each year.

- It is estimated that with the current pattern of fertility the “average” woman will have 2.01 children in her lifetime. This is an increase of 4% on the 2006 figure (1.94) and a 15% recovery from a record low of 1.75 children in 2000, but still well below the recent highest level of 2.82 children in 1979;
- A total of 10,383 births (42%) were to first time mothers in 2007, while second time mothers had 8,022 babies (33%) and third time mothers had 3,917 babies (16%). Only nine per cent became mothers for at least the fourth time;
- Half of all births registered in 2007 were to mothers aged 30 or over. In 2007 the average age of mother was 29.8 years, compared with 29.0 years in 1997, 27.6 years in 1987, and 27.4 years in 1977. The average age of first time mothers was 27.4 years last year compared with 24.4 years in 1977;
- There were 138,960 children aged 0-2 in Northern Ireland in June 2007.

Provided by Western Trust Communication Department t: 028 71611188 / 028 82835197