



June 2015

Important update on the Penrice Breastfeeding Peer Support Group service...

Until recently we were very lucky to have not only experienced breastfeeding peer supporters at the Penrice Friday group, but midwives too. This meant that the clinic was guaranteed to be able to provide specialist support.

Unfortunately, due to staffing issues, this has changed and for the last few months the clinic has been running as a peer-led group with occasional midwife support.

The change in provision means that there is a potential risk, that mums attending the group may not be able to receive the specialist support they require or are expecting!

Penrice have been clear with RBM that they intend on planning the midwife rota, so there is always a midwife available. They will try to ensure that the midwife will be able to diagnose and treat issues such as tongue tie.

As volunteers based all over the county, we must understand that these midwives will be on call/shift at the midwife led unit. If they are busy supporting a birthing mother, sadly for us, they will not be able to attend the clinic.

It has been acknowledged that this is far from ideal, and that midwife support is a very important part of the provision at Penrice. The midwives are hugely valued by mums and by the breastfeeding peer supporters who volunteer at the session.

So **it is vitally important** that, as volunteers, we consider why we are referring a mum to the Penrice group. If it is **for more than** peer support guidance, then a phone call ahead to check and ensure, that a specialist midwife has been placed on the rota is... essential. We also need to be clear with mums that are referred, that there is still a possibility that no midwife will be available.

There is such a huge value to this particular group. The peer supporters who attend are both incredibly experienced and have been volunteering for a minimum of six months before they begin at the sessions. The group is also the only one in the county that runs each week from 10.30 until 3.00, therefore giving mums a real opportunity to spend considerable time with a volunteer. This also allows volunteers to watch two or even three feeds over the session – which can be very helpful when watching for and diagnosing possible issues!

If, bearing the above in mind, you wish to refer a mum to the Penrice group, please call ahead on 01726 873079