

La Leche League Edinburgh celebrates a year of virtual breastfeeding groups

Online breastfeeding support for families in covid lockdown reaches one year of providing vital support. Mothers say the groups have made their lives richer in tough circumstances for new parents.

La Leche League Edinburgh moved its meetings online at the start of the pandemic and has now clocked up 9090 minutes of online breastfeeding groups.

The group meets every Friday at 10.30am and 8pm and has done so every week since the 27th March 2020. Only allowing themselves to take Christmas Day and New Year's Day morning off.

La Leche League, which is run by volunteers, offers mother to mother, parent to parent, breastfeeding support to all those who are pregnant or have experience breastfeeding. Every meeting is facilitated by skilled breastfeeding counsellors (LLL Leaders) who are internationally accredited with La Leche League International.

10-20 parents have attended each session during the year, totalling over 350 families that have been supported.

The anniversary of the first online meeting will be celebrated with guest speaker Helen Lloyd, Chair of Council of Directors, LLLGB and the parents will prepare their own favourite treats to eat during the zoom meeting.

Sarah Denniston, LLL Leader (breastfeeding counsellor) said "For many parents, what they need is to see breastfeeding happening, and to have accurate and up to date information available. In LLL Edinburgh our volunteer-run organisation has been providing a space for this support to continue virtually. While not the same as face to face, it has had its own benefits, one of which is the creation of a group that has supported each other from pregnancy to starting solids and beyond during a time of global crisis."

Megan McPherson, a mother of two who attends regularly said "These women I have never met, with babies I have barely seen on screen, but they are my tribe. I have seen them overcome so much and watched their bravery and determination grow them from anxious, floundering new mothers into absolute bosses and breastfeeding heroes. Their advice, solidarity and the security of their presence have made my life richer. I am so fiercely proud of us all!"

Breastfeeding is the normal, natural way to feed and care for a baby and babies are born expecting to breastfeed. Breastmilk has everything a growing baby needs in exactly the right amounts and is easy to digest. Research shows that a baby who is not breastfed is more likely to suffer from health problems, both as a child and throughout adulthood. The Scottish Government has recognised the need for increasing breastfeeding support and

awareness with an increase in funding for breastfeeding support in 2018. (See <https://www.gov.scot/news/gbp-2-million-more-for-breastfeeding-support/>)

Although breastfeeding is normal and natural, it isn't without its challenges. The World Health Organisation, Unicef and continuing research have shown that women who are supported during their breastfeeding journey are more likely to reach their breastfeeding goals.

For parents interested in joining a breastfeeding group, please see our local website for meeting information: www.lledinburgh.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

LLLGB's aims are:

- To help mothers to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education.
- To promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and the mother.
- We are committed to serving everyone – mothers, parents, families – regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental ability, socio-economic status, political views, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, cultural values and beliefs.

About LLL:

- La Leche League was started in 1956 in Illinois, USA and came to Great Britain in the early 1970s.
- La Leche League Great Britain became a registered charity in 1981.
- La Leche League International now has over 5,000 Leaders in over 75 countries around the world.
- In GB we have around 235 Leaders and 80 Groups which meet regularly throughout GB and the Isle of Man.
- LLL accredited Leaders are volunteers, (who have all breastfed a baby for at least 12 months and undertaken a Leader Accreditation course) working from their homes around the needs of their own families.
- We are partners in the UK World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) and a member of the Baby Feeding Law Group. LLLGB is an Affiliate of La Leche League International, who is a partner with the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), and works with Unicef and the World Health Organization as part of the Global Feeding Collective.

What LLL does:

- LLLGB believes that mothering through breastfeeding is the most natural and effective way of understanding and satisfying the needs of the baby.
- We provide mother to mother, parent to parent, breastfeeding support at meet-ups across Great Britain. The core of our work is our network of local mother-to-mother support groups, facilitated by our trained breastfeeding counsellors (known as LLL Leaders), who have all breastfed their own babies.
- LLL Leaders (accredited breastfeeding counsellors) are volunteers who provide a network of support options including local calls, a national Helpline, emails and social media.
- Our Leaders' support, combined with opportunities for those at meetings to receive encouragement from other breastfeeding mothers and parents, allows us to reach families at every stage of their breastfeeding relationship, in ways that work best for them.
- La Leche League GB is passionate about providing breastfeeding support and information which is accurate and available to all, both directly and via social media.

Funding:

- LLL Scotland receives funding from the Scottish Government (2018-2021) and relies on support from members, voluntary contributions and fundraising by local groups.

Public Contact details:

- Website (<https://llledinburgh.co.uk/>)
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/breastfeedinglllgb/>)
- Twitter (@LLLGB, <http://twitter.com/lllgb>)
- Instagram (@lalecheleague_gb https://www.instagram.com/lalecheleague_gb/)
- Pinterest (@lalecheleaguegb <https://uk.pinterest.com/lalecheleaguegb/>)
- YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgjuvTjjOwWV0lu7up-WcOg>)

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