

PAT/08/036

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**Val Finigan (centre) launching the book with Joanne Keast and her son Lewis (aged 17 months), and Rob Vale, who is displaying one of the original embroidered pieces of artwork specially commissioned for the book**

**SAGGY BOOBS? BREASTFEEDING BALDERDASH – AND THAT’S OFFICIAL, ACCORDING TO PIONEERING GREATER MANCHESTER MIDWIFE**

Pioneering breastfeeding expert Val Finigan, the infant feeding co-ordinator for Pennine Acute Trust, is launching a cartoon-style book called “Saggy Boobs (And Other Breastfeeding Myths)”.

The event is taking place as part of the National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2008, which runs from 12 May.

The book was developed with mothers who are part of the Baby Bistro breastfeeding support network, which involves dozens of groups from across the North East of Greater Manchester.

Val, along with Trust arts co-ordinator Rob Vale and artist Lou Gardiner, discussed the women's experiences. Lou then used embroidery to create stunning cartoon-style illustrations for the final book, which de-bunks common myths about breastfeeding.

Three of the top myths include:

- Breastfeeding causes saggy breasts;
- Breastfeeding ties mothers to the house;
- Bottle-fed babies sleep better than breast-fed babies.

The book, supported by a £5,575 Awards for All National Lottery Fund grant, will be distributed to breastfeeding support groups and health professionals for use with new mothers across Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and North Manchester.

Following interest from health professionals, plans are now being drawn up for a national launch of the book later this year.

Val said: "I hope this book helps mothers to separate fact from fiction so that they are encouraged not only to initiate breastfeeding but to continue breastfeeding for longer.

"This is the first complete book I've written and I'm delighted with the finished product, which looks so richly colourful and appealing. I see this as the start of a series of books on infant feeding and parenting.

"I'm thrilled with the work of artist Lou Gardiner, who has created such impressive images, and I would also like to thank Rob Vale for his help in bringing this project to fruition.

"I'd also like to express my gratitude to all the mums across the area who have been involved in putting the myths together."

Joanne Keast, one of the mothers who assisted with the book, said: "It's important that mums have the right information and support about breastfeeding their baby.

"You hear people saying it's better to bottle feed so you can have more freedom but there are options when you are breastfeeding. Breastfeeding certainly worked in our case."

The launch is the latest breastfeeding support initiative from Val, who received a MBE in the New Year's Honours list. Two of Pennine Acute Trust's hospitals have full UNICEF Baby Friendly initiative accreditation, with the other two working towards it. The results have seen UNICEF describe the Trust as "one of the most baby-friendly in the country".

## **Notes to editors**

1. For further information please contact Richard Toms, communications officer, Pennine Acute Trust, on tel: 0161 918 4285.
2. Pennine Acute Trust runs Bury's Fairfield General Hospital, North Manchester General Hospital, The Royal Oldham Hospital, Rochdale Infirmary and also has services at Birch Hill Hospital.
3. All Pennine Acute press notices and other media information is available from:  
[www.pat.nhs.uk/media](http://www.pat.nhs.uk/media)