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## **In Communities and By Communities Life-Changing Programmes Delivered by Local Parents**

### **What We Do**

Parents 1<sup>st</sup> is a grass roots social enterprise dedicated to enhancing community development and sustainability through nationally acclaimed peer support programmes. Our passion is building the strengths and skills of parents living in less advantaged communities. Community ownership is at the heart of our work.

We operate on both a national and local level. Some local examples of delivery in Thurrock are antenatal parent craft sessions, fitness classes for mums-to-be, addressing the needs of fathers-to-be, as well as the programme outlined below.

### **Local Parents Supporting Local Parents-to-be**

We have been funded by NHS South West Essex and Thurrock Council to develop a pregnancy peer support and doula (birth partner) programme across South West Essex. We will recruit and train experienced local parents who will provide support to other parents during pregnancy, childbirth and up to 6 weeks post birth as:

- Pregnancy Peer Support Workers (Pregnancy Pals)
- Doulas (Birth Buddies)



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The Pregnancy Pals will be a more universal service whereas Birth Buddies will be particularly focused on parents who are considered to be vulnerable.

The first group of 16 volunteers has already completed an 8 week taster course and has also embarked on the introductory training programme which will provide City and Guilds accreditation. This training programme will give the volunteers the skills they need to begin delivering support to parents-to-be. It includes principles and values, the postnatal role, the antenatal role, active birth, breastfeeding, child safeguarding, providing information and signposting. We hope to be in a position to accept referrals and begin offering this service to parents-to-be towards the end of July 2010, and aim to recruit a second set of volunteers to undertake training in the autumn.

### **Please contact us for more information**

We would especially like to hear from:

- Organisations or agencies that might refer parents-to-be to the programme
- Organisations or agencies that might signpost volunteers to the programme
- Individuals who would like information about volunteering as a Pregnancy Pal or Birth Buddy
- Pregnant mums or expectant dads who feel they would benefit from a Pregnancy Pal or Birth Buddy

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