



## Antenatal Classes in Northern Ireland with Sure Start.

**Sure Start in Northern Ireland** offer a range of services and programmes to families from the antenatal stage up until the child turns 4 years of age.

Due to an increase in antenatal registrations, and subsequent demand for antenatal information, programmes and support, projects have adapted their services to meet these needs. Many projects, like **Beechmount Sure Start**, employ a Midwife and an Antenatal Support Worker.

Beechmount Sure Start wanted to source antenatal training for their Antenatal Support Workers, to ensure a consistent, informative and professional approach to facilitating antenatal education

In **August 2020, organised by Penny Ambrose of Beechmount Sure Start, an initial 20 staff, representing 13 Projects**, attended a series of 4 day virtual training course with the **Real Birth Company**. Participants included Antenatal Support Workers, Health Visitors, Midwives and Perinatal Mental Health support workers.

The sessions are in the process of being implemented in the community at present, using a virtual platform and each of the **Sure Start Projects**, who have undertaken the training, have also received access to the Real Birth Company's antenatal **digital course** to share with the women in their areas, available in English and other languages.

 <p>Staff development is core to ensuring we provide relevant, consistent and up to date information to all of our parents. Therefore we were delighted to access this training for our Antenatal Support Worker, and Midwife.. The 4-days were intensive for all involved - new learning for support staff, refresher training for Midwives. However, the feedback was impressive – increased knowledge, skills, understanding the importance of choice, and of positive language. This investment in time and money, will benefit the many antenatal families that we work with – including families who do not have English as a first language. The follow up support from the Real Birth Company is extremely valuable to staff.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <b>Penny Ambrose, Beechmount Sure Start</b></p>	 <p>It's fantastic to work with so many wonderful and passionate people within the Sure Start Projects. The 4 days of virtual training works really well and everyone enjoys the breakout sessions. Everyone who has attended the course has implemented the training and the feedback has shown how this helps support the community with birth preparation. Working with Sure Start has been a very positive and rewarding experience, we look forward to continuing this partnership.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <b>Zoe Wright, Midwife and Founder</b></p>
 <p>The programme was the first time I've done online training and I felt it was brilliant. I never thought online training could have been as good as in person but it was thanks to you both. I met other lovely people too and we are keeping in touch and supporting each other via Whatsap. I'll also link into the Facebook hub which will be great.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <b>Lousie McGeary, Blossom Sure Start</b></p>	 <p>I've been so enthusiastic about it and so excited to deliver it. Plus it has already given me so much more confidence in working with antenatal mums. I just love the ethos of informing and empowering antenatal women in knowing how their body works, positive language and choices. Three women I am working with have birthed since the course and from the learning I received, I was able to pass to them, they had a more positive birthing experience and made choices they would not have done</p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <b>Liz Davis, South Belfast Sure Start.</b></p>