

# Warrington Borough Council Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance

## 1. Introduction

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way for a woman to feed her baby and important health benefits are now known to exist for both the mother and her child.

All mothers have the right to receive clear and impartial information to enable them to make a fully informed choice as to how they feed and care for their babies.

Warrington Borough Council welcomes mothers who wish to breastfeed and will maximise opportunities for those who wish to breastfeed in public areas of our premises and provide private areas where available.

This policy is intended to ensure a consistent approach is in place to welcome mothers who wish to breastfeed when accessing services.

## 2. Our Responsibilities as an Employer

There is separate legislation in place protecting new and expectant mothers in the workplace. Employees of Warrington Borough Council who are breastfeeding are covered under these regulations, namely: the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999).

## 3. Legal considerations

There is a legal framework for equality which places both general and specific duties on the council.

The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. The council has a duty to demonstrate it is promoting equality for men and women and also that it is treating men and women fairly in the delivery of its services. Should a council service be perceived not to be accessible to breastfeeding mothers it could be in breach of its legal obligations.

### 3. Where is breastfeeding allowed in council premises?

Breastfeeding is permitted and welcomed in all public areas of council premises except where there are overriding health and safety considerations.

### 4. Guidance for Public Facing Staff

#### ***Does my building have to provide a designated room for breastfeeding mothers?***

- No

#### ***What can I do if a private room is requested?***

- If you do not have a designated room, you could use any suitable empty office or interview room where one is available so long as it is sufficiently private, clean and comfortable;
- Toilets and sick rooms should not be offered as a designated room for feeding babies.

#### ***How can services support breastfeeding mothers?***

- Displaying window stickers / posters which show that breastfeeding is welcome;
- Staff should be aware of the aims and principles of the policy;
- Staff should be trained in general customer care and be familiar with the council's service level standards; and
- Staff should also make themselves aware of the facilities available within their service to support breastfeeding mothers.

#### ***What do I do if a member of the public objects to somebody breastfeeding on the premises?***

- You should not ask the breastfeeding mother to move, cover up or stop feeding her baby;
- You should tactfully and politely explain that the council supports breastfeeding mothers on the premises;
- You could ask the complainant to move to an area where they are no longer able to 'view' the mother; and
- If they continue to object you could suggest to the customer that they come back at a later time.

Please be aware that you are not expected to place yourself at risk by getting into conflict with a customer and you are not obliged to approach a member of the public who is complaining if you do not feel comfortable in doing so. You would however be expected to quietly withdraw and inform your line manager or supervisor of the situation.

## 5. Managing the Return of Staff from Maternity Leave

Warrington Borough Council recognises the benefits of breastfeeding to mothers and infants and therefore will support staff members who choose to breastfeed their babies, including upon their return to work. The term 'Breastfeeding' includes expressing milk and the same rights under this policy will apply to employees who wish to express milk to give to their baby. To this end, the company will:

- Inform all employees of the rights provided under this policy as part of equal opportunities training or the induction programme in order to foster a positive attitude towards breastfeeding.
- Explain to pregnant employees their rights under this policy.
- Inform all pregnant employees they can get information and advice from local breastfeeding professionals (named at the end of this document).
- Perform a risk assessment in relation to all employees who plan to continue breastfeeding after their maternity leave.
- Identify a named manager who will be responsible for performing the risk assessment and who should be given notice of the employee's intention to continue breastfeeding or expressing milk on her return to work.
- If necessary, adjust the working hours and/or conditions of breastfeeding employees, in consultation with each employee.
- Permit breastfeeding employees to take additional breaks of up to one hour per full working day to feed their baby or to express their breast milk. If the employee prefers, this hour can be taken to shorten her working day.
- Make available a private, comfortable and appropriately equipped room for breastfeeding employees to feed their baby or express their milk.
- Specify a fridge where breast milk may be stored securely and specify a location where expressing equipment can be stored.

You have a duty to protect the health and safety of a breastfeeding employee and that of her baby. Preventing an employee from breastfeeding her baby may put the employee's and the baby's health at risk.

You must carry out a specific risk assessment when an employee provides written notification that she is breastfeeding. For more information about carrying out a specific risk assessment for breastfeeding mothers, see [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## 7. Where can I find more information about breastfeeding?

There are a number of support services and organisations that offer advice and guidance about breastfeeding. Listed below are a few key contacts:

- ❖ Warrington Infant Feeding Coordinator – 01925 847825
- ❖ Local Breastfeeding Support groups <http://www.bridgewater-warrington.nhs.uk/healthservices/breastfeedingsupportgroups.html>
- ❖ Bridgewater Warrington Infant Feeding information and advice Web Pages <http://www.bridgewater-warrington.nhs.uk/healthservices/breastfeeding.html>
- ❖ National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0844 209 0920 or [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)
- ❖ Equality and Human Rights Commission on 0808 800 0082 or <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>
- ❖ Warrington Health Promotion and Resource Centre [www.warringtonresources.co.uk](http://www.warringtonresources.co.uk)  
Orford Jubilee Park Health Centre. Tel: 01925 443193.