

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Breastfeeding Policy for Visitors or Members of the Public

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Name of policy author	Karen Herne
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Target audience	Members of the public and public facing staff in LA premises

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Version	Date	Description
1.0	June 2018	New Policy

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title: Breastfeeding Policy

Reference Number: PH-01

1. Operational Summary

1.1. Policy Aim

This policy provides guidance for staff, visitors and members of the public on supporting and promoting breastfeeding choices for new mothers.

1.2. Policy Summary

This policy sets out how Northumberland County Council will support members of the public and visitors who are new mothers and their partners to feed and care for their baby in ways which support optimum health and well-being. It is based on the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standard, relevant National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance and the Healthy Child Programme.

In support of this Policy, with due regard to the Equality Act 2010 General Duty aims, an equality analysis has been undertaken and any outcomes have been considered in the development.

1.3. Consultation Process

The NHS Infant Feeding Co-ordinators and Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers have been consulted on this policy. The policy will be communicated to all relevant existing staff and new employees on induction and will be available on the Human Resources pages of the Intranet.

1.4. Purpose

1.4.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the Council's approach to supporting breastfeeding and to ensure that all staff at Northumberland County Council understand their role and responsibilities in supporting new mothers who visit Northumberland County Council premises. Northumberland County Council recognises the importance of early relationships to future health and well-being and the significant contribution that breastfeeding makes to good physical and emotional health outcomes for children and mothers.

1.4.2. Northumberland County Council supports the Department of Health recommendation for mothers to breastfeed exclusively for six months and to continue breastfeeding for at least a year.

1.4.3. Northumberland County Council will not discriminate against any woman in her chosen method of infant feeding and will fully support her in the decision she has made.

1.5. Scope

1.5.1. This policy is intended for visitors and members of the public attending Northumberland County Council premises who are breastfeeding and their partners; and for public facing staff in Council premises. A separate policy exists for council employees who are breastfeeding.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. **Chief Officers and Heads of Service** are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the service. Creative use of accessible resources should be applied to support effective implementation of the policy. Procedures for assessing and reducing the risk to new mothers are required to be undertaken and monitored locally.

2.2. **Managers and Supervisors** are responsible for ensuring that they implement this policy in areas under their control as detailed in their local arrangements. Staff should be provided with suitable instruction, training and adjustment, and equipment where an assessment deems necessary. The policy will be communicated effectively to employees of Northumberland County Council. This will be highlighted in Corporate Induction and managers should ensure staff are made aware of this through local inductions. The policy will be available for all staff on the Intranet and an e-learning module is available on Learning Together for all staff.

2.3. **Employees** are required to follow safe systems of work, make proper use of any training or equipment provided for their safety and cooperate with Northumberland County Council on health and safety matters. They should inform their manager or supervisor when they become aware of any ill health that could be associated with their work or condition and take care to ensure that their activities do not put themselves or others at risk. This policy is to be recognised by all staff and in order to avoid conflicting advice it is mandatory that all staff adhere to this policy. Any deviation from the policy must be justified. An e-learning module is available for all staff to complete and the policy can be found via the staff Intranet. Staff members who deal with the public will be prioritised for training.

2.4. **Customers/Visitors** This policy will be communicated effectively to customers and visitors. Where a guide is displayed in reception areas, the full policy should be available on request.

3. Aims

3.1. To ensure all Northumberland County Council public areas and venues provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.

3.2. To foster the development of a breastfeeding culture throughout local communities and workplaces.

3.3. To support the increase in the the number of women who choose to breastfeed for longer.

4. Objectives

4.1. To create a culture where breastfeeding is seen as the normal way to feed babies and young children and mothers feel supported to do so.

4.2. Encourage more women to breastfeed, confident in the knowledge that they will be given support to enable them to continue to breastfeed upon returning to work.

4.3. To ensure any mother who chooses to breastfeed feels confident, comfortable and supported to do so when visiting Northumberland County Council premises.

5. Support for Breastfeeding Families - Customers and Visitors

6.1. When introducing people to a service, they should be made aware that the service/venue welcomes breastfeeding families and has a breastfeeding policy. This policy will be available to all staff on the HR Intranet page. Countertop notices will be issued to all public front facing venues and posters to depots and staff only offices. Should a member of the public request further information the full policy will be available on request and is available on the internet.

6.2. If the service/venue has a designated breastfeeding room it should be clearly identified and signposted. If there is no designated room mothers are welcome to feed in the waiting area or reception. If mothers request a more private area this should be accommodated where possible e.g. unused office, quieter corner of reception. Never suggest that mothers use the toilet as somewhere to feed their baby.

6.3. If a member of the public/staff complains about a mother who is breastfeeding it should be explained that the Council has a breastfeeding policy, and that mothers are welcomed and encouraged to breastfeed on Council premises. If the person still objects it should be suggested that they either move to another area or come back at a later time. The mother should never be asked to move.

6.4. All information provided for breastfeeding families should be approved by the Clinical Infant Feeding Leads. No literature provided by infant formula manufacturers is to be displayed.

6.5. No advertising of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats or dummies is permissible in any part of Northumberland County Council premises.

7. Legal Considerations

7.1. The Equality Act 2010 within the pregnancy and maternity section, states that a woman should not be treated less favourably because she is breastfeeding.

7.2. The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty which places both general and specific duties on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. The aim of the

duty is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public bodies so that they tackle unlawful discrimination and inequality.

It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

8. Monitoring and Audit

8.1. The County Council (Public Health) will review this policy on an annual basis and update it in accordance with national guidance. Staff training uptake will be audited on an annual basis.

9. Further Information/Support Services

There are a number of support services for breastfeeding families listed below. If a breastfeeding woman expresses a need for breastfeeding support she should be directed to her Health Visitor. If there is a medical concern she should be directed to her GP.

Local Website: www.breastfeedingnorthumberland.co.uk

Baby Friendly Initiative Website: www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly

Breastfeeding Network (BFN): 0300 100 0210 www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/your-baby-after-birth

HSE Guidance: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf>

National Breastfeeding Helpline: 0300 100 0212

10. Associated documents

Health & Safety Policy
Staff Breastfeeding Policy