

Corporate Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance

1. Statement of intent

Leeds City 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.

2. Why we have a policy

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

3. Scope

This policy is concerned solely with service provision and delivery and applies to all customers and visitors to Leeds City Council premises.

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

4. Where is breastfeeding allowed in council premises?

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

5. Staff Guidance

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

- No, you do not have to provide a designated room.
- If you do not have a designated room your waiting or reception area should be fine for mothers to breastfeed in.
- If there is a designated room available it needs to be clearly identified and signposted.

What can I do if a private room is requested?

- If you do not have a designated room you could use any empty office or interview room where one is available so long as it is sufficiently private, clean and comfortable.

Please note: toilets should not be used as a designated room for feeding babies as they are not hygienic.

How can services support breastfeeding mothers?

Examples of things to consider:

- When introducing people to your service, let them know the service welcomes breastfeeding mothers.
- You could let people know that breastfeeding is welcome on any publicity leaflets that are produced.
- If you provide information leaflets about other services you could also include information about breastfeeding.
- Displaying the UNICEF breastfeeding welcome posters. These are available through their website www.babyfriendly.org.uk
- The National Childbirth Trust provides stickers which you can obtain from www.nctsales.co.uk .
- You could sign up to the Breast Buddies database. Breast Buddies is a community group that aims to promote breastfeeding in Leeds; they have a database of places in Leeds where breastfeeding mothers are welcome. You can find out further information and sign up by going to their website: www.breastbuddies.org.

How should staff support the Corporate Breastfeeding Policy?

- Staff should be aware of the aims and principles of the policy and know where they can access the guidance material.
- Staff should be trained in general customer care and be familiar with the council's service level standards.
- Staff should also make themselves aware of the facilities available within their service to support breastfeeding mothers.

Ideally the above points should be included in the member of staff's induction programme.

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

- If a member of the public approaches you and complains about a mother who is breastfeeding you should tactfully and politely explain that the council supports and encourages breastfeeding on the premises.
- You could ask the complainant to move to an area where they are no longer able to 'view' the mother.
- 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, supervisor or Civic Attendant of the situation. If your line manager works at a different site to you then you should follow the procedure that is in place for dealing with incidents.

6. Legal considerations

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

The Gender Equality Duty 2007 states that 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 potentially be open to a legal challenge under this legislation.

7. Publicity

This policy is available on the internet and intranet and targeted publicity where appropriate may be considered.

8. Customer compliments and complaints

We welcome the views of all customers and this is reflected in our core value of 'putting customers first'. Compliments and complaints received in relation to this policy will be dealt with via the Leeds City Council's Compliments and Complaints Policy which states that we will endeavour to resolve customer complaints speedily, effectively and fairly.

9. Responsibility for reviewing this document

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer – Customer Services to formally review this policy and procedure after one year. Thereafter it should be reviewed every three years, although reviews at other times may be necessary in the light of changes to legislation and council policy.

10. 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:

- National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0844 209 0920 or www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk
- The National Childbirth Trust on 0870 444 8708 or www.nct.org.uk/breastfeeding
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers – Counselling Hotline 0844 412 2949 or www.abm.me.uk
- www.thebabycafe.co.uk
- The Breastfeeding Network Supporter Line on 0844 412 4664
- La Leche League on 0845 456 1855

➤ Armley Public Health Resource Centre on 0113 295 3081