



# Breastfeeding Friendly

## The Breastfeeding Network Breastfeeding Friendly scheme - Information for staff and volunteers

The BfN Breastfeeding Friendly scheme aims to-

- Support and empower families to feel confident breastfeeding out and about
- Be a way that communities and businesses can show they welcome and support breastfeeding
- Raise awareness about the benefits and barriers to breastfeeding
- Support businesses and organisations to be more breastfeeding friendly

### Why do we need the scheme?

Breastfeeding is good for mums, babies and the environment and the law says that women have a right to breastfeed in any public place, but many women feel nervous about breastfeeding out and about. This can mean that women end up staying at home when their baby is born, which can make them feel lonely and isolated or that they choose not to breastfeed or stop feeding before they want to. This scheme is a way that businesses, organisations and communities can show that they welcome breastfeeding women to help them feel more comfortable feeding out and about.

### What do I need to do to support a breastfeeding mum?

As someone who works (or volunteers) in a 'Breastfeeding Friendly' premises you should know a little bit about the scheme, the legislation that protects breastfeeding mums and how you personally can help a breastfeeding mum feel welcome.

Here are a few things you could do to help a breastfeeding mum feel comfortable:

- **Make eye contact and smile**
- **Try and help mum find a seat where she feels comfortable**
- **If possible, offer a glass of water**
- **Act normally and don't stare**
- **Don't get embarrassed or ignore the mum**

It isn't just breastfeeding mums who might appreciate a friendly smile, any mum with a new baby would probably welcome a glass of water and help to find a seat, especially if her baby is hungry!

If someone approaches you to complain about a breastfeeding mum or to ask you to move or stop a mum from breastfeeding her baby you should let them know that this is against the law and that your premises is part of the Breastfeeding Friendly scheme. You could show them some of the scheme information if they are interested to know more about the legislation or about why breastfeeding is important.

### What does the law say about breastfeeding in public?

- In England and Wales breastfeeding mothers are protected by the Equality Act 2010, a law which bans unfair treatment. The Equality Act states that it is sex discrimination to treat a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding. This means it is illegal for anyone to ask a breastfeeding woman to leave a public place, such as a cafe, shop or public transport.

**To speak to a Mum who knows about breastfeeding call National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212**

*Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package*

*The Breastfeeding Network is a Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland Company No. 330639  
Registered office Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants, 38 Cadogan Street, Glasgow, G2 7HF  
The Breastfeeding Network is a Registered Scottish Charity No SC027007*



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- In Scotland there is also a specific law protecting the right of a mother to breastfeed in public. This is called the Breastfeeding etc (Scotland) Act 2005. This act makes it illegal to stop a mum feeding her child (breastfeeding or bottle feeding) in any premises where the public have general access. (including in a licensed premises if the baby is lawfully permitted to be there) The act says that any person who deliberately stops, or attempts to stop a person from feeding a child under the age of two years, will be guilty of an offence, which may lead to a conviction.

**It is important to remember that most mums feed happily outside their home without any problems. You may have heard about mums being challenged for feeding their baby in public but most mums never have a negative experience. But the publicity it sometimes generates can give the false impression it happens all the time. Breastfeeding in public can help communities see this is the normal way to feed a baby.**

## **Why is breastfeeding important?**

Breastmilk is the best nutrition for babies. The recommendation from the NHS is that babies should receive nothing but breastmilk until they are six months old and then that breastfeeding should continue, alongside other foods, for up to 2 years of age and beyond if the mum wishes. Breastfeeding is recognised as being one of the most important interventions in improving children's health and is considered key to reducing inequalities in health. Breastfeeding offers protection against numerous childhood illnesses including chest, stomach and ear infections, diabetes and childhood obesity. Mothers who breastfeed also gain health benefits, as they lower their risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and hip fractures in later life. The longer a mum breastfeeds, the more advantages both she and her baby will receive.

Mums can't always predict when they will next need to feed their baby and the NHS recommends that a baby is breastfed whenever they show that they are hungry, so mums need to be able to feed their baby wherever they are – including when they are out and about. A huge advantage of breastfeeding is that breastmilk is always ready and just at the right temperature so there are no worries about carrying sterilised bottles, milk powder or bottle warmers.

**Remember that no one should ever be made to feel uncomfortable about breastfeeding in public and a mum should never be expected to feed in a toilet, changing room or asked to stop feeding and move somewhere else. Mums don't always know when their baby will need to be fed and they will often be out and about when their baby gets hungry. This might be the first time this mum has felt brave enough to breastfeed in public and the support she gets today might help her feel more confident next time.**

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