

## **Breastfeeding Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out how Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will support expectant and new mothers and their partners to feed and care for their baby in ways which support optimal health and well-being.

This policy has been developed in light of good practice guidelines and information from:

- the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSE);
- Public Health Agency;
- the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland (DHSSPS); Ten Year Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland 2013-2023;
- Northern Ireland programme for Government (PfG) Framework 2016-2021;
- UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative standard; and
- data from the Northern Ireland Child Health System (CHS).

The policy recognises the value of breastfeeding for mothers and babies.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council understand their role and responsibilities in supporting expectant and new mothers, whether they are colleagues, visitors or customers. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recognise the major importance of early relationships to future health and well-being and the significant contribution which breastfeeding makes to good physical and emotional health outcomes for children and mothers.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council supports the Department of Health's recommendation for mothers to exclusively breastfeed for six months and to continue breastfeeding for at least a year.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council encourages and supports breastfeeding employees in continuing to breastfeed their infants following their return to work. Breastfeeding includes expressing milk and employees who wish to express milk to give to their baby will have the same rights under this policy.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council acknowledges that supporting breastfeeding has benefits to the organisation such as a reduction in absenteeism and staff turnover and important health benefits to mother and baby.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will not discriminate against any women in her chosen method of infant feeding and will fully support her in the decision she has made.

### **3. Scope**

This policy is intended for staff, visitors and customers of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council venues, who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding.

This policy is in addition to the legislation in place to protect new and expectant mothers in the workplace. This includes the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 (as amended by the Employment Relations (NI) Order 1999).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council supports the Health and Safety Executive guidance for new and expectant mothers, more information can be found on the Health and Safety Executive website <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/new-and-expectant-mothers>

### **4. Aims**

To ensure all Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council public areas and venues provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.

To inform and support managers and staff to facilitate women to continue breastfeeding for as long as they want to.

To adopt a breastfeeding culture throughout our Council area.

To support women who choose to breastfeed for longer.

### **5. Objectives**

To develop a culture where breastfeeding is seen as the normal method of feeding babies and young children whereby mothers feel supported to do so.

To encourage and support more women to breastfeed; for as long as they want.

To ensure any mother choosing to breastfeed feels confident, comfortable and supported to do so whether working; living in, or visiting the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Area.

### **6. Communicating the breastfeeding policy**

This policy is to be recognised and adhered to by all staff; any discrimination or harassment of breastfeeding mothers in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The policy will be communicated effectively to customers and visitors.

Information is available at [www.breastfedbabies.org](http://www.breastfedbabies.org) and leaflets can be viewed at <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications>.

All work colleagues and line managers are expected to be supportive and sensitive to the needs of breastfeeding mothers returning to work.

## **7. Support for breastfeeding / expressing in the workplace**

All employees will be informed of the rights and responsibilities provided under this policy as part of equality and / or related training and within the Councils Induction Programme in order to foster a positive attitude towards breastfeeding.

Line managers and HR staff are responsible for alerting pregnant and breastfeeding employees about the policy. Line managers should negotiate reasonable breaks and practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals.

### **7.1 ODHR, line manager and work colleagues' responsibilities**

The ODHR Department will signpost pregnant employees and returning employees to available information and support on breastfeeding and returning to work.

In order to reduce the risks to new and expectant mothers all services must carry out a risk assessment. The individual's line manager must undertake a risk assessment, in relation to all pregnant employees and those who plan to continue breastfeeding after their maternity leave, for more information see Appendix A.

Managers are required to review the risk assessments at regular intervals for new and expectant mothers and breastfeeding mothers. The frequency of reviews should be agreed at the first assessment, 4 weekly is suggested as a guide.

If necessary, and in consultation with new and expectant mothers and breastfeeding mothers, line managers will agree actions to ensure any risks are reduced or removed.

It is expected that line managers and work colleagues will assist in providing a supportive and understanding approach to facilitating breastfeeding employees.

### **7.2 Employee responsibilities**

It is the employees responsibility to give written notice to her supervisor (at least 4 weeks to enable any necessary arrangements to be made) of her intention to

continue breastfeeding or expressing milk on her return to work. If the employee is working KIT (keeping in touch) days while on maternity leave arrangements will need to be made prior their return to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing.

Employees are responsible for leaving the designated milk expression area clean and tidy for the next user.

If more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated expressing room, employees can use a sign-in log provided in the room to negotiate milk expression times that are most convenient or best meet their needs.

### 7.3 Return to work

Employees who wish to continue to breastfeed following return to work shall receive:

- **Breaks for breastfeeding or expressing milk**  
Breastfeeding employees are allowed to breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and as part of additional lactation breaks (usually 20 minutes once or twice a day) as agreed with their line manager. If additional time is needed beyond the agreed set breaks and lactation breaks employees may use personal leave or may make up the time by coming into work earlier or leaving work later as appropriate to the needs of both the workplace and the employee.
- **A private place to express milk**  
A private room (not a toilet) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private, lockable and clean, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts, and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor.
- **Storage and transportation**  
Each employee is responsible for proper storage and transportation of her own milk, it is recommended that expressed milk should be stored in a personal cool bag or if available the cool bag can be placed in a designated refrigerator. Where possible in consultation with the employee's supervisor a specific fridge may be agreed upon. Employees should label all milk expressed with her name and the date collected so that it is not inadvertently confused with another employee's milk. If a refrigerator is not available breastmilk can be stored at room temperature or in a cool bag for 6 hours. (As advised by the Public Health Agency)  
Further information about expressing and safe storage of breastmilk can be found on the NHS Choices website here:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/expressing-storing-breast-milk/#storing-breast-milk>
- **Breastfeeding equipment**  
Each breastfeeding employee is responsible for purchasing and maintaining

all her own breast pump equipment. A location where expressing equipment can be stored will be agreed between the employee and their supervisor.

## **8. Support for breastfeeding families – customers and visitors**

When introducing people to a service, they should be made aware that the service / venue welcomes breastfeeding families and has a breastfeeding policy. The policy is available on the internet and intranet.

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 e.g. unused office, quieter corner of reception. Never suggest that mothers use the toilet as somewhere to feed their baby.

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.

Complaints [and compliments] received in relation to this policy will be dealt with via the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Compliments and Complaints Policy which states that we will endeavour to resolve customer complaints speedily, effectively and fairly.

All information provided for breastfeeding families should be approved by the Head of Policy and Community Planning.

No advertising of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats or dummies is permissible in any part of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council premises. The display of manufacturers' logos on items such as calendars and stationery is also prohibited.

## **9. Legal Considerations**

The Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 states employers must consider adapting working hours/conditions to enable continued breastfeeding.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 (MHSW), as amended by 2006 Regulations, which require employers to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (NI) 1993 which require employers to provide suitable rest facilities.

Council Directive 92/85/EEC (19 October 1992) which introduced measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 Section 75 which provides equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 which requires employers to review suitable alternative work or a leave of absence when pregnant or breastfeeding.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Chief Executive, Directors 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 and expectant mothers are required to be undertaken and monitored locally.

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 and sufficient instruction, awareness and adjustment, and equipment where an assessment deems it necessary.

Employees are required to follow safe systems of work, make proper use of any training or equipment provided for their safety and cooperate with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough 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 take care that their activities do not put themselves or others at risk.

Trade Union Representatives are invited to be engaged in and consulted about proposals for work practice and design that could impact on the new and expectant mother.

## **11. Review of the Procedure**

This policy was approved by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council's xxx. It is the responsibility of the Head of Policy and Community Planning 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.

## **12. Section 75 Equality and Good Relations**

Causeway Coast and Glens Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

### **13. Contact Details**

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Elizabeth Beattie  
Head of Policy and Community Planning

#### **Further information**

If a breastfeeding woman expresses a need for breastfeeding support she should be directed to her Health Visitor. If there are medical concerns she should be directed to her GP.

In addition, there are a number of support services for breastfeeding families listed below:

- Health and Safety Executive NI (2014) A Guide for new and expectant mothers who work. <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/new-and-expectant-mothers>

- Public Health Agency (2014) Promoting breastfeeding for mothers returning to work: a guide for employers.  
<file:///share/Policy%20and%20Community%20Planning/Equality%20and%20Diversity/Breastfeeding/new-and-expectant-mothers-who-work.pdf>

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