



Breastfeeding **Friendly**

Let's Get Started!

Your support guide to establishing a
Breastfeeding Friendly premises

Helpful tips and advice to help you embed some easy and simple changes to make your venue breastfeeding friendly.

Introduction

This guide has been developed by the Infant Feeding Strategy Group to support our Breastfeeding Friendly Pledge and is designed to help a wide range of organisations provide a more welcoming premises for breastfeeding patrons and our communities. This initiative has been created by the Peterborough Infant Feeding Strategy Group, which is made up of representatives from Peterborough City Council, North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and the National Childbirth Trust, with support from local Children's Centre Providers.

Whether you are a small business, a franchise, or a community venue such as Children's Centre, Library or GP practice, this guide provides helpful tips and advice to help you embed some easy and simple changes to make your venue breastfeeding friendly.

The Evidence

It is widely recognised that breastmilk is best form of nutrition a woman can provide to her baby. Recommendations from the World Health Organisation, UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative and Public Health England state babies should be exclusively breastfed for at least the first 6 months of life and suggest breastfeeding, complemented with food, until 2 years old or beyond.

Breastmilk has been associated with a number of health benefits such as a reduction in the risk of infections, obesity and diabetes in the infant, as well as a reduced risk of ovarian/breast cancer in the mother. Breastfeeding also has a positive impact on building a strong mother and infant attachment.

Saying that, breastfeeding a child can be time consuming. A newborn baby needs to be approximately nursed 9-12 times a day for 30-40 minutes; from 6 weeks the average reduces to 7-8 times per day for a 15-20 minute period. Naturally, this means a lot of time is taken up feeding and feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable breastfeeding in public can create barriers for new mothers, which may include struggling to leave the home and could cause isolation from the community.

“...Many women report feeling embarrassed or fear stigmatisation breastfeeding in front of people they don't know...”

Many women report feeling embarrassed or fear stigmatisation breastfeeding in front of people they don't know.

By law, in England and Wales, a business cannot discriminate against mothers who are breastfeeding a child of any age, as outlined in The Equality Act 2010.

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Why take the pledge?

In Peterborough around 70% of mothers initiate breastfeeding. By the time the child is 6-8 weeks old, this reduces to about 45%. Breastfeeding mums need all the support they can get and are more likely to frequent businesses where they feel comfortable.

Through demonstrating your support, businesses will be supporting Peterborough City Council's commitment to encouraging more women to breastfeed their babies and support them to sustain breastfeeding for a longer period. You will also be promoting breastfeeding awareness which will help our communities to view breastfeeding as normal, accepted and welcomed.

“...businesses will be supporting Peterborough City Council's commitment to encouraging more women to breastfeed their babies...”

By taking the Breastfeeding Friendly Peterborough pledge, businesses agree to provide a welcoming environment where mothers who breastfeed are able to sit anywhere whilst breastfeeding and receive a warm welcome from staff, management and other customers.

Through signing up to this initiative, mothers can be assured of public locations where they breastfeed with ease, knowing they are welcomed and free from judgement or discrimination. Embracing and normalising breastfeeding will also improve the overall health of our population, helping to create a better, healthier Peterborough.

How do I sign up?:

Step 1 Policy

The first step to becoming Breastfeeding Friendly starts in the workplace. Businesses and organisations need to ensure that there is a written organisational policy on 'breastfeeding friendly'; which shows a welcoming attitude towards breastfeeding, this will help communication between staff and customers.

“...Businesses and organisations need to ensure that there is a written organisational policy on 'breastfeeding friendly...'”

The policy can be stand alone or embedded into existing written policies such as Health and Safety, Equality or Customer Care. A sample policy that can be adapted to your business is available on the Healthy Peterborough website www.healthypeterborough.org.uk

Step 2 Staff

Once the policy is in place, you need to ensure that all staff members are aware of the policy and this is embedded into the induction processes of any new starter. You should be confident in being able to

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answer any questions staff may have about this. Staff training is key to implementing breastfeeding feeding friendly measures effectively.

Existing training and induction programmes can be easily adapted to make sure staff are familiar with the policy, aware of more private areas of the venue if requested and are able to manage any common scenarios (see FAQ for more details).

You may also wish to ensure that your own staff are supported if they are breastfeeding upon their return to work. Often misunderstandings around feeding and returning to work can be a significant factor for mothers giving up breastfeeding before they were ready to.

Increasing workplace support for breastfeeding mothers is important when creating breastfeeding friendly communities.

It is a good idea to speak with employees who are pregnant or have had a child and returning to work to see what support can be offered to help them return and continue breastfeeding. Please let us know if you would like any support with how to facilitate these discussions.

Step 3 Facilities

Every mother is different. Businesses will need to identify areas with more privacy for mothers who may wish to breastfeed privately and make sure these locations are known to staff.

Please note that for many women privacy is not an issue and women should be encouraged to breastfeed in a location comfortable to them. If a woman has not asked for private space, do not offer it as it could appear that she is being asked to 'hide away'.

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There are lots of ways to adapt spaces to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding mothers who wish to have privacy, such as moving furniture or plants - a small screen could guarantee privacy even in the busiest of places!

Other small adaptations that could enhance your business in being breastfeeding friendly include:

- Easy access for and safe place to park a pram
- Easy access to clean changing facilities for both mothers and fathers
- Review any signage that uses images of bottles - consider other general 'baby friendly' pictures to use
- Consider a small 'play' area or crayons/paper/activities to help keep older children occupied and entertained whilst a mother is feeding her baby
- A statement on your website, premises and/or social media accounts showing your support; for example ***“We are proud to be a feeding friendly venue and welcome breastfeeding in public areas of our premises. Should you wish a more private area, please ask a member of staff who will be able to help you.”***

Step 4 Display the Breastfeeding Friendly logo

When you sign up to this initiative, you will receive a Breastfeeding Friendly window sticker to put up in the window of your premises. **Through displaying this logo, mothers can be assured of public locations where they breastfeed with ease, knowing they are welcomed and free from judgement or discrimination.**

“...you will receive a Feeding Friendly window sticker to put up in the window of your premise...”

Embracing and normalising breastfeeding will also improve the overall health of our population, helping to create a better, healthier Peterborough.

You are encouraged to publicise your commitment to this pledge through your companies social media presence using the hashtag **#BreastfeedingFriendlyPeterborough**

Are you there? CHECKLIST

Below is a short list of basic things any business or venue needs to be more welcoming to breastfeeding mothers:

- Infants can be breastfed in any public area in our venue
- We have adopted the breastfeeding friendly policy as minimum standard
- Our staff are aware how to implement our breastfeeding policy
- We will clearly display a sticker that tells customers/visitors we are breastfeeding friendly
- We are positive towards employees returning to work who wish to continue to breastfeed

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: “Do I have to allow women to breastfeed on my premises?”

A: Yes. According to the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against mothers who are breastfeeding a child of any age in an area open to the general public - this includes shops, cafes and restaurants, libraries and public transportation.

Being able to feed on cue is extremely important for mums as not only does it provide nutrition and calm a hungry or upset baby but milk production works off supply and demand - feeding on cue will allow a mother to increase and sustain milk production for her growing baby.

“...Being able to feed on cue is extremely important for mums...”

“...Most breastfeeding mothers simply want an environment that makes them feel comfortable...”

Q: “Will becoming Breastfeeding Friendly incur a cost?”

A: There are no direct financial implications to making your premises Breastfeeding Friendly. Most breastfeeding mothers simply want an environment that makes them feel comfortable - a welcoming and supportive attitude is what mums are looking for.

Developing a breastfeeding friendly policy will help you achieve this. The Breastfeeding Friendly Initiative is completely free of charge for your business/organisation to sign up to.

Q: “How should I respond to any customer complaints about a breastfeeding woman?”

A: Through taking the pledge, a business agrees to increase awareness among it’s workforce and the wider community on the importance of breastfeeding. Whilst it is important to educate customers who may challenge this, an employee should be understanding of alternative viewpoints.

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Some women may feel uncomfortable about breastfeeding in public, even if they want and/or need to - the more our communities are educated about the importance of feeding, the more it will be seen as normal.

A typical response could be:

“Whilst I acknowledge your concerns, our business adheres to the law which protects a mother’s right to breastfeed wherever and whenever she may need to. We are a breastfeeding friendly establishment and do not ask women to leave or cover up. I could move you to another table if it would make you feel more comfortable?”

Q: “How will this make a difference?”

A: There are lots of reasons and barriers preventing women from meeting their individual breastfeeding goals. Whilst some are biological or physiological, others are environmental and/or cultural. Research has indicated that mothers are more successful with breastfeeding when they are surrounded by a supportive and accepting network (family, friends and wider community).

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By demonstrating a business is dedicated to offering a welcoming and shame-free environment for breastfeeding mothers means families are more able to enjoy the ability to leave the home and enjoy the city in which they live. This will help support our economy as well as individual businesses.

Q: “What can I do to create a more welcoming environment?”

A: Whilst nothing is more effective than a smile and friendly welcome, these little tips and tricks will go a long way in making a breastfeeding mother feel comfortable and at ease:

- Offer free tap-water - breastfeeding mothers need to keep well hydrated.
- Support with settling down - often a new mother will be carrying around a lot of baggage. Floor staff can offer support in finding space to park a buggy or carrying a tray to the table.
- Educating the whole workforce on the importance of breastfeeding.
- Be accommodating to individual needs - some mothers will be happy to feed publicly, whilst others would prefer somewhere more private. Ask mothers where they would prefer to be seated.