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Wales

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## **BREASTFEEDING GUIDELINES**

### **Introduction and Aim**

These guidelines aim to ensure there is a consistent approach in place that welcomes mothers who wish to breastfeed or express in the workplace.

### **Linked Policies, Procedures and Written Control Documents**

Maternity, Adoption, Paternity/Maternity Support, Shared Parental Leave and IVF Policy

Procedures for Pay and Leave – Maternity, Adoption, Paternity/Maternity Support, Shared Parental Leave and IVF Treatment

### **Scope**

These guidelines apply to all employees of Public Health Wales wishing to breastfeed or express in the workplace.

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### **Disclaimer**

**If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the [Corporate Governance](#).**

<b>Summary of reviews/amendments</b>				
<b>Version number</b>	<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>	<b>Date published</b>	<b>Summary of Amendments</b>

## **1. Introduction**

Public Health Wales aims to provide a workplace environment that supports breastfeeding employees in continuing to breastfeed their infants following their return to work and develop a culture that supports breastfeeding as an accepted part of work-life balance. Public Health Wales welcomes mothers who wish to breastfeed and will maximise opportunities for breastfeeding in public areas of the premises and provide private areas.

These guidelines have been developed in light of good practice guidelines, recognising the value and health benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies as well as the organisation.

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

### **2.1 Employee's Responsibilities**

Employees who wish to breastfeed or express milk after their return to work should keep managers informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the workplace.

Staff should also make themselves aware of the facilities available within their service to support breastfeeding mothers.

### **2.2 Organisation's Responsibilities**

Public Health Wales acknowledges that providing support for breastfeeding has benefits to the organisation, such as a reduction in absenteeism and staff turnover, and important health benefits to mother and baby. The organisation will ensure all employees will have access to consistent support.

Line managers are responsible for alerting pregnant and breastfeeding employees about the breastfeeding guidance and for negotiating breaks and practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals. It is expected that line managers and work colleagues will assist in providing a supportive and understanding approach to facilitating breastfeeding employees.

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

Line managers will signpost pregnant employees and returning employees to available information and support on breastfeeding and returning to work.

The People and Organisational Development directorate will support line managers and employees with signposting to information and promoting a supportive environment.

### **3. Process**

#### **3.1 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 for at the least the first year after childbirth and flexibly thereafter) 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.

#### **3.2 A Private Place to Express Milk**

A private room (not a toilet) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. Some Public Health Wales locations have dedicated spaces for this and can be identified by line managers. The room will be private, lockable, warm and clean, ideally located near a sink 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 manager.

Employees are responsible for leaving the designated areas clean and tidy.

If more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated expressing room, employees need to work together to facilitate a schedule which is most convenient or best meets their needs.

### **3.3 Milk Storage**

Expressed milk should be stored in a suitable refrigerator, ideally in a dedicated refrigerator. If a refrigerator is not available, breast milk can be stored at room temperature or in a cool bag for 6 hours. Each employee is responsible for proper storage and transportation of her own milk. 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.

### **3.4 Complaints/Objections**

If an employee receives an objection to somebody breastfeeding on the premises, they should not ask the breastfeeding mother to move, cover up or stop feeding her baby. They should tactfully and politely explain to the individual with the objection that the organisation supports and encourages breastfeeding on the premises and propose that they move to an alternative area where they are no longer able to 'view' the mother. Employees are not expected to place themselves at risk by getting into conflict with an individual. If an employee does not feel comfortable dealing with the situation, please inform a manager or HR of the situation.

Public Health Wales encourages employees and management to have a positive, accepting attitude toward working women who are breastfeeding and discrimination and harassment of breastfeeding mothers in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

If an employee believes they are being unfairly treated as a result of breastfeeding/expressing milk in the workplace, they can contact the HR Department and/or Trade Union Representative.

### **3.5 Legislation**

There is separate legislation in place protecting new and expectant mothers in the workplace. Those wishing to breastfeed are covered under these regulations, namely; the management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999).

The Equality Act 2010 has clarified that it is unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child.

### **3.6 Breastfeeding Information**

There are a number of services that offer advice and guidance about breastfeeding. Listed below are a few contacts:

- National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0844 209 0920 or [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)
- The National Childbirth Trust on 0870 444 8708 or [www.nct.org.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.nct.org.uk/breastfeeding)
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers – Counselling Hotline 0844 412 2949 or [www.abm.me.uk](http://www.abm.me.uk)
- The Breastfeeding Network Supporter Line on 0844 412 4664
- La Leche League on 0845 456 1855
- Breast Start app available for iPhone and android (N.B. café and meeting information is specific to Wirral area)

### **4. Training requirements**

There are no training requirements identified. HR will provide advice as and when required to managers on specific situations.

### **5. Monitoring compliance**

The guidelines will be reviewed alongside the review process for the Maternity, Adoption, Paternity/Maternity Support, Shared Parental Leave and IVF Policy.