Corby Borough Council - Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance

Breastfeeding has been identified as a priority in the County Health and Well-Being Strategy. This policy will provide guidance for Corby Borough Council, guide members of the public in relation to the benefits of breastfeeding and agree designated rooms for breastfeeding within Council premises. A promotional and awareness campaign will be implemented to support the policy adoption.

1. Relevant Background Details

The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. 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 be in breach of its legal obligations.

Pregnancy and maternity is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed a baby and important health benefits are now known to exist for both the mother and her child.

There is separate legislation in place protecting new and expectant mothers in the workplace. Employees of the Council who are breastfeeding 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).

2. Report

The Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance has been written to support the Northants Health and Well-Being Strategy 2014-2016, where increasing rates of breastfeeding is identified as a priority for the County. The Public Health England: Health Profile for Corby (8 July 2014) shows that whilst breastfeeding initiation rates are not significantly different from the England average, continuation of breastfeeding beyond the initial 6-8 weeks is below the national average.

This policy and guidance is intended to ensure a consistent approach is in place to welcome mothers who wish to breastfeed when accessing our services. It will increase general awareness, identify the benefits of breastfeeding, identify where designated rooms can be utilised for those requiring more privacy and enable the council to meet legislative requirements.

Breastfeeding should be permitted and welcomed in all public areas of Council premises during opening hours. Although public areas should generally be acceptable in some instances mothers may enquire as to the use of designated rooms. These rooms would be available at:-

Corby East Midlands International Pool - Crèche
East Carlton Countryside Park - room next to café
Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centre - Main Hall or Youth Club (subject to bookings / availability)
Lodge Park Sports Centre - Crèche
The Corby Cube - One-Stop Shop Interview Rooms (subject to bookings / availability)
West Glebe Pavilion - Community Room (subject to bookings / availability).

Devolved facilities would be encouraged to comply with the Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. The full policy is attached as Appendix 1.

3. Options to be considered (if any)
   (i) Agree the Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance to be implemented throughout Corby Borough Council premises.
   (ii) Do not agree the proposed breastfeeding policy. The Council would be at risk of causing difficulties for mothers who wish to breastfeed whilst in Council premises.

4. Issues to be taken into account:-

   Policy Priorities
   Well-being is one of the key priorities within the Corporate Plan.

   Financial
   There are no direct financial implications.

   Risk
   Should a Council service be perceived not to be accessible to breastfeeding mothers it could be in breach of its legal obligations.

   Legal
   The report sets out the legislative obligations.

   Performance Information
   The continuation of breastfeeding beyond the initial 6-8 week period (target of 50% of mothers still breastfeeding by the end of 2016).

   Best Value
   No specific implications in this report

   Human Rights
   All mothers have the right to receive clear and impartial information to enable them to make a fully informed choice as to how they feed and care for their babies.

   Equalities
   The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. 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. Pregnancy and maternity is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

   Sustainability
   No specific implications in this report

   Community Safety
   No specific implications in this report
5. Conclusion
This report provides a positive way forward in which the Council can welcome mothers who wish to breastfeed in public areas within Council premises. Increasing the awareness of the benefits for both the baby and the mother will contribute to the County Health and Well-Being Strategy priority for the continuation of breastfeeding beyond the initial 6-8 week period (target of 50% of mothers still breastfeeding by the end of 2016).

6. Recommendation
i) Approve the Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance, to be implemented throughout Corby Borough Council premises.

External Consultations:
Public Health Northants
Corby Clinical Commissioning Group
NHS Start4Life
National Breastfeeding Helpline

Internal Consultations:
Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity)
Human Resources

List of Appendices:
Corby Borough Council - Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance

Officer to Contact:
Liz Hudson, Leisure Manager - Healthier Lifestyles (01536) 464687
Corby Borough Council - Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance

1.0 Introduction

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way for a woman to feed her baby and important health benefits are now known to exist for both the mother and her child. If producing adequate breast milk, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for around the first six months.

All mothers have the right to receive clear and impartial information to enable them to make a fully informed choice as to how they feed and care for their babies.

Corby Borough 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.

This policy and guidance is intended to ensure a consistent approach is in place to welcome mothers who wish to breastfeed when accessing our services.

2.0 The Benefits of Breastfeeding

- Breast milk is natural food designed for the baby.
- Breastfeeding protects the baby from infections and diseases.
- Breast milk provides health benefits for the baby.
- Breastfeeding provides health benefits for the mother.
- It’s free.
- It’s available whenever and wherever your baby needs a feed.
- It’s the right temperature.
- It can build a strong physical and emotional bond between mother and baby.

2.1 Health Benefits for the Baby

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed a baby. If producing adequate breast milk, exclusive breastfeeding (giving the baby breast milk only) is recommended for around the first six months (26 weeks) of the baby's life. After that, giving the baby breast milk alongside other food will help them continue to grow and develop.

Breastfeeding is good for babies and reduces the risk of cot-death. Breastfed babies have:

- less chance of diarrhoea and vomiting and having to go to hospital as a result
- less chance of being constipated
- less likelihood of becoming obese and therefore developing type 2 diabetes and other illnesses later in life
- less chance of developing eczema

Breast milk adapts to meet the baby's changing needs and any amount of breastfeeding has a positive effect. The longer breastfeeding is undertaken, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits.
2.2 Health Benefits for the Mother

Breastfeeding doesn’t only benefit the baby. It benefits the mother’s health too. Breastfeeding is good for mothers as it:

- lowers their risk of getting breast and ovarian cancer
- naturally uses up to 500 calories a day
- saves money – infant formula, the sterilising equipment and feeding equipment can be costly
- can help to build a strong bond between mother and baby

3.0 Legislative Obligations and Information

The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. 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 be in breach of its legal obligations.

Pregnancy and maternity is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

There is separate legislation in place protecting new and expectant mothers in the workplace. Employees of the Council who are breastfeeding 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).

Information, advice and assistance for Managers and employees on safe working arrangements for new, expectant and nursing mothers is available in the North Northamptonshire Safety and Resilience Partnership document ‘Arrangement for New and Expectant and Breastfeeding Mothers at Work’. This has been implemented by Corby Borough Council and gives specific guidance for managers in relation to risk assessment and storage facilities for expressed breast milk.

4.0 Where is Breastfeeding Allowed in Council Premises?

Breastfeeding is permitted and welcomed in all public areas of Council premises during opening hours. Public areas should generally be acceptable however in some instances mothers may enquire as to the use of designated rooms. These rooms are available at:

- Corby East Midlands International Pool - Crèche
- East Carlton Countryside Park - room next to café
- Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centre - Main Hall or Youth Club (subject to bookings / availability)
- Lodge Park Sports Centre - Crèche
- The Corby Cube - One-Stop Shop Interview Rooms (subject to bookings / availability)
- West Glebe Pavilion - Community Room (subject to bookings / availability).

NB: Toilets or changing rooms should not be offered as designated rooms for feeding babies.

Devolved facilities would be encouraged to comply with the Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance.
5.0 Guidance for Staff

- Corby Borough Council premises will display posters and information which show that breastfeeding is welcome.
- Council employees should be aware of the Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance and make themselves aware of the facilities available within their service to support breastfeeding mothers.

5.1 Objections to Breastfeeding

If a member of the public objects to somebody breastfeeding on the premises tactfully and politely explain that the Council supports and encourages breastfeeding on the premises. You may wish to suggest the complainant moves to an area where they are no longer able to ‘view’ the mother and if they continue to object you could suggest to the customer that they come back at a later time. Under no circumstances should you ask the breastfeeding mother to move, cover up or stop feeding her baby.

6.0 Additional Information

There are a number of services and organisations that offer advice and guidance about breastfeeding including:

- Their Health Visitor or Midwife
- NHS Start4Life: [http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/Pages/healthy-pregnancy-baby-advice.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/Pages/healthy-pregnancy-baby-advice.aspx); or telephone 0300 123 1021
- National Breastfeeding Helpline: telephone 0300 100 0212 or visit [www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.nhs.uk/breastfeeding)
- Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Alliance: [www.northantsbreastfeedingalliance.weebly.com](http://www.northantsbreastfeedingalliance.weebly.com)
- Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Support Service [http://www.breastfeeding.see.nhs.uk/](http://www.breastfeeding.see.nhs.uk/) and by telephone Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, on 07795 110109
- The National Childbirth Trust - Breastfeeding Line - 0300 330 0771 open 8am to 10pm.