

Breastfeeding Policy

We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non-written format.

Introduction

Wheatley Care has developed this policy to support mothers to combine breastfeeding their baby and returning to work, in line with the Organisations commitment to Healthy Working Lives.

The World Health Organisation states that the maximum health benefits to both mother and baby will be incurred if exclusive breastfeeding takes place for the first 6 months and if breastfeeding continues into the baby's second year of life.

Wheatley Care will endeavour to meet the individual needs of each woman using the policy.

Examples of how this may be achieved are outlined below:

- A warm, comfortable, private room will be available to all mothers with access to a fridge and access to hand washing facilities.
- Additional unpaid breaks which will allow a mother time to express breast milk (expressing milk can take between 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours) will be agreed with line management.
- Additional unpaid breaks to allow the mother to breastfeed her baby. This could be when the baby is being cared for nearby or if the baby is brought into the workplace.
- Flexible working hours, may be requested, especially in the early weeks after maternity leave. Please refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

Responsibilities of Line Managers:

It is the responsibility of each line manager to ensure that all pregnant employees are made aware of this policy.

Prior to returning from maternity leave, all women wishing to combine breastfeeding with returning to work should be offered the opportunity to discuss their specific requirements relating to breastfeeding. Prior to returning to work employees who have indicated they wish to combine breastfeeding with returning to work should be asked to provide written notification to their line manager that they are breastfeeding.

Line managers will conduct a new and expectant mothers risk assessment with each breastfeeding employee.

Responsibilities of the Health and Safety Coordinator

The Health and Safety Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring any changes in legislation are incorporated into the policy and will conduct a 2 yearly review to ensure that the uptake and use of the policy is satisfactory.

Guidelines for Managers

Benefits to the workplace

Supporting employees who want to combine work and breastfeeding makes good business sense.

- Lower absenteeism: babies who are breastfed are on average healthier and this can often mean employees having less time off work to care for a sick child.
- Higher rates of return from leave: if an employer offers a supportive, flexible environment, the mother may be more likely to return to work earlier. This retains valuable skills and avoids staff replacement costs.
- Equal Opportunities: support for breastfeeding is crucial to enable mothers to combine work and family and should be a key part of an equal opportunities strategy.
- Recruitment Incentive: the organisation will be recognised as a family friendly employer, which is good for corporate and public relations, recruitment and retention of staff.

Wheatley Care's legal obligations

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) outline the requirement to protect new and expectant mothers from hazards in the workplace. It is therefore the responsibility of the workplace to carry out a new and expectant mothers risk assessment of the mother's work situation before her return to work.

The Health and Safety Executive guide for employers on new and expectant mothers at work says, "Although there is no legal requirement to do so, you will want to consider providing a safe and healthy environment for workers who are breastfeeding to express and store milk".

There is however, a legal obligation to provide rest facilities for new and expectant mothers at work.

Further Information

Any queries relating to this policy or the implementation of it should be directed to line management or to the Employee Relations Team.