

Supporting Breastfeeding in the Workplace – A Quick Guide

Why is breastfeeding important?

Breastfeeding not only has long-term health benefits for baby - such as a **boosted immune system** and reduced risk of **obesity** and **cardiovascular disease** - but also for mum, including reduced risk of **breast** and **ovarian cancers**, and **osteoporosis**.

However, research by the CDC shows that one of the primary reasons for early breastfeeding cessation is lack of proper workplace support.

Your legal responsibilities

In the UK, both **health & safety** and **anti-discrimination laws** cover certain employer responsibilities regarding supporting breastfeeding mothers & parents at work. These legal guidelines should form the basis of your breastfeeding support policy.

Employers have a legal duty to:

- Carry out risk assessments for pregnant and/or breastfeeding employees and implement reasonable adjustments
- Consider flexible working arrangements for employees
- Offer space to rest & lie down
- Thoroughly monitor discrimination concerns



Best practices for a supportive workplace environment

Below, we've included some ideas on best practices for building a safe, inclusive environment to support breastfeeding employees on their return to work from maternity leave.

Offer a safe place to express

Make sure that your breastfeeding employees have a secure, sanitary location - *a toilet or bathroom is not suitable* - in which to express with privacy and minimal distraction.

Provide a clean fridge

Ensure that a clean, secure refrigerator is provided for breastfeeding employees to safely store expressed milk.

Reasonable adjustments

Consider potential adjustments that could be made for your employees' comfort and security. These may include travel arrangements, uniform adjustments, or reviewing workload and type.

Offer additional breaks

Work with your employee to accommodate regularly scheduled breaks to nurse or express, where possible.

Flexible & hybrid working

All employees have a right to request flexible working by law - work with your employee to come up with a plan for flexible, remote, or hybrid working that allows them to continue nursing.

Enhance maternity policy

Updating or enhancing your existing maternity procedure with a specific lactation/breastfeeding policy can not only help to encourage consistency for all employees, but help you put your employees' needs first.

Helpful sources:

(Click on the logos below to view more)

