breastfeeding welcome here

Good for mums, babies and your business

welcome here

Breastfeeding

Good for baby. Good for mum

Breastfeeding welcome here

The **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme is an initiative which aims to make it easier for mums to recognise places where they can breastfeed their baby when they are out and about. The scheme is supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA).

Breastfeeding is really important to the health of both mother and baby, yet Northern Ireland has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Europe. While half of all new mums here start breastfeeding, many quickly stop. This is often because they feel there is a lack of support, particularly when they want to feed their baby outside the home.

If local businesses can make it clear that they are supportive of breastfeeding mothers, by displaying their membership of the **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme, many new mums will be more confident about breastfeeding and will be likely to continue breastfeeding for longer. This will benefit both their health and their baby's (see page 7 for more information on the health benefits of breastfeeding).

Good for mums, babies and your business

Every business knows the value of repeat customers and word-ofmouth. Mothers with small babies tend to be part of a range of informal networks, like postnatal support groups, local mother and toddler groups and so on.

Breastfeeding mums who feel that they and their babies have been made welcome while they have a cup of coffee, a meal or go shopping, will come back to your business and will also tell their family and friends. Your customers will see your business as one that is interested in their health and welfare, not just their cash.

All businesses that are part of the **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme will be given recognition through ongoing promotion and awareness raising. The PHA maintains a database on the breastfeeding website www.breastfedbabies.org which will allow mums to look for businesses that are members of the scheme.

Who is eligible for membership?

Any business which is open to the general public is eligible to join the scheme, for example coffee shops, restaurants, shops, supermarkets and hairdressers. In order to join, businesses must fulfil the membership criteria below.

Membership criteria

- Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of your business premises that are open to the general public.
- A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of your business premises open to the general public will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding.
- The public are made aware that you are a member of the scheme and support breastfeeding through the display of the scheme's window sticker and certificate on your business premises.
- All staff members are made aware that your business is a member of the scheme and are therefore supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mums.

Joining the scheme

Joining the scheme is straightforward:

1. A senior member of your business will be asked to sign a written agreement which states that the business will adhere to the membership criteria **(the written agreement is at the back of this booklet)**.

2. The signed agreement should be returned to the PHA by the business.

3. The PHA will issue the **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme certificate and window sticker once the signed agreement is received.

4. The name of your business will be added to a list of premises participating in the scheme and published online on the website www.breastfedbabies.org

5. PHA will confirm membership with businesses by email and telephone. Ongoing monitoring will then be undertaken by the PHA.

Businesses which fail to adhere to the criteria will be notified and may have their membership revoked.

Staff awareness training

To ensure that your business has a consistent approach to supporting mums who breastfeed on your premises and that the criteria for membership of the **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme continue to be fulfilled, it is recommended that all your staff are made aware of membership of the scheme and its criteria.

Staff should be briefed about the scheme, including issues such as how to explain to members of the public, including breastfeeding mums, what the scheme is all about and why your business has joined, for example, the health benefits for babies and mums.

They should be aware that breastfeeding mums should not be asked to move to accommodate other patrons.

It's also a good idea to let them know if you will be including information about your membership of the scheme on your business literature.

Health benefits of breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has really important health benefits for babies and mums. Babies who are breastfed are at less risk of developing:

- diarrhoea, tummy upsets and gastroenteritis
- coughs and colds
- ear and chest infections
- urinary tract infections
- allergies, asthma and eczema
- childhood diabetes and obesity

Mothers who breastfeed are at less risk of serious illnesses, such as:

- breast cancer
- ovarian cancer
- osteoporosis (bone thinning)

The longer a baby is breastfed, the stronger the protection against illness for both mother and baby. It is recommended that babies are breastfed for the first six months and then start solid foods at around six months with breastfeeding continuing until the age of a year or more.

Breastfeeding mothers need everybody's support and you can play a part in improving health by being supportive and welcoming breastfeeding families.

For more information about the health benefits of breastfeeding, please visit www.breastfedbabies.org

The Breastfeeding welcome here scheme agreement

Please complete, cut out and post the scheme agreement on the next page. You could also scan and return by email to alison.mccusker@hscni.net

The PHA will issue your **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme certificate and window sticker once the signed agreement is received.

Please retain the other copy of the completed agreement for your own records.

The **Breastfeeding welcome here** scheme is supported by the PHA.

The Breastfeeding welcome here scheme agreement

On behalf of _____ I agree that:

- Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of our business premises that are open to the general public.
- A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of our business premises open to the general public will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding.
- The public will be made aware of our membership of the scheme and that we support breastfeeding through the display of the scheme's window sticker and certificate on our business premises.
- All our staff members will be made aware that our business is a member of the scheme and will be supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mums.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please print name _____

Job title _____

Business name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Type of business _____

Please complete and return to the PHA

Please affix stamp here

Alison McCusker
Breastfeeding Welcome Here Scheme
Public Health Agency
9th Floor Linum Chambers
Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES

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Signed _____ Date _____

Please print name _____

Job title _____

Business name _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Type of business _____

www.breastfedbabies.org

Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:

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