



Workforce

Breastfeeding Policy

Aim

This policy aims to:

- support and encourage employees who wish to continue to breastfeed in the workplace
- support employees to express milk in the workplace, including milk to be donated

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are:

- breastfeeding or chestfeeding
- producing milk for a baby

NHSScotland recognises that breastfeeding does not exclusively apply to employees who identify as women. For some, descriptors such as chestfeeding may be more appropriate, and in such cases, this policy applies.

It also applies to workers, including bank, agency, and sessional workers. References to employees should be taken to apply to such workers unless otherwise stated.

This policy complies with current legislation and meets the aims of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) of the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Definitions

Donated milk is when an employee expresses milk for a baby, not within their own household.

Expressing milk means extracting milk from the breast so it can be stored or fed to a baby. Mothers and birthing parents can express milk by hand or using an electric or manual pump.

Roles and responsibilities

There is a range of standard expectations which underpin all policies. [Read more about standard roles and responsibilities](#). In addition, the following specific responsibilities apply to this policy.

Employer

The employer should create a positive culture supporting breastfeeding in the workplace. They should also:

- make supportive and flexible arrangements so employees can breastfeed
- provide suitable facilities for breastfeeding employees to rest
- provide adequate rest and meal breaks
- provide appropriate facilities so employees can express milk and store it
- raise awareness of facilities available across the organisation

Manager

The manager should promote a supportive culture for breastfeeding in the workplace.

Before the employee starts maternity leave, the manager should make sure the employee is aware of the facilities and support available at work for:

- breastfeeding
- expressing and storing milk

When the employee returns to work from maternity leave, the manager should:

- review the pregnant workers and new mothers risk assessment for the individual
- advise the employee on the supportive and flexible arrangements for breastfeeding
- inform the employee about the facilities available for expressing milk and its safe storage in the workplace
- make sure time for breastfeeding and expressing milk is protected and undisturbed
- regularly review the arrangement to make sure it meets the needs of the employee and the service

Employee

The employee should:

- consider what their needs may be to support breastfeeding on their return to work for discussion with their manager
- regularly review the arrangement with their manager to make sure it meets their needs and the needs of the service

Procedure

Preparing to return to work

Employees should meet their manager at least 4 weeks before their planned return or start date. At the meeting, they must discuss working arrangements that allow the individual to continue breastfeeding and to express and safely store milk.

Risk assessment

On the employee's return to work, the manager should review the pregnant worker and new mothers risk assessment for the individual. A risk assessment should also be completed for any new employees who are breastfeeding.

The risk assessment should include a section for employees currently breastfeeding and expressing milk. It should also provide information on the location of breastfeeding facilities and other health and safety considerations. For example, lone working and night work.

If the employee's risk assessment or an appropriate health professional confirms that the employee's normal duties would prevent them from safely breastfeeding or expressing milk, the manager should first consider:

- making reasonable alterations to the employee's working conditions, including hours, to remove the relevant risk
- if changes cannot be reasonably made, then temporary redeployment, with the consent of the employee, should be considered

Where temporary redeployment is not possible, the employee should be placed on leave and paid as if at work for as long as is necessary to avoid the risks to the employee's health and safety.

Time for breastfeeding

The manager and employee should discuss and agree on a plan for the time required for breastfeeding or expressing milk during working hours. There may be occasions when additional time is needed. The manager and employee should be flexible when creating the plan to make sure it meets both the individual's needs and the needs of the service.

Facilities

The following facilities for breastfeeding mothers and birthing parents are recommended by the Health and Safety Executive.

Areas for rest and expressing milk should be clean and warm with the following:

- a low, comfortable chair and the facility to lie down
- a lock or an arrangement to ensure privacy
- handwashing facilities nearby
- an electric point for an electric pump

Facilities for storing expressed milk must provide the following:

- a clean area to store sterilising equipment
- a dedicated and secure space for storing expressed milk at 2–4°C until the employee takes it home

Resolution of disagreements

Should a disagreement arise, the employee has the right to raise matters under the [Grievance Policy](#). It may be appropriate for either party to seek advice on resolving the matter from HR colleagues or a trade union representative. They should seek early resolution wherever possible.

Related policies

The following policies are related to the Adoption, Fostering and Kinship Policy:

- [Maternity Policy](#)