

Business Charter



Supporting breastfeeding in Doncaster



Doncaster
Council



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Part 1

Introduction

What is We Support Our Mums?

We Support Our Mums is a scheme that supports mums who are breastfeeding their babies. We know mums have the legal right to breastfeed anywhere (Equality Act 2010) but many do not feel confident in doing so. Our scheme aims to make it easier for breastfeeding mums to recognise where they will be welcomed to breastfeed their babies whilst out and about in Doncaster. These are places where mums can be assured that staff will be supportive of breastfeeding.

By becoming a member of the scheme, you will be showing that your business cares about its customers and the local community. Every business knows the value of repeat customers and understands the importance of word-of-mouth. Breastfeeding mums who feel that they and their babies have been welcomed and supported, are sure to return and use your business again. They are also more likely to tell their family and friends.

This charter contains everything you need to know about We Support Our Mums and what you need to do to sign up. It has been developed using guidance provided by the National Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme.



Part 2

Why sign up?

What's in it for you?

There are many benefits to signing up to We Support Our Mums.

- It makes a real improvement to customer/client service – training staff to be welcoming and helpful to a breastfeeding mum encourages them to be more welcoming, supportive and considerate to all customers. The boost to customer satisfaction and loyalty this creates can only be good for business.
- It can attract a new customer/client base – new mums will make special efforts to get to know other women in their situation. When they find a place that welcomes them to feed their babies, they pass on the good news and customer numbers grow as a result. Not only that, but their visits tend to coincide with the quieter times of the day, so they could potentially bring new custom.
- It can improve your image and get you free publicity – when venues choose to welcome breastfeeding mums, they are making a positive contribution to public health, as well as demonstrating they are not motivated solely by profit. Businesses that sign up to We Support Our Mums will get publicity from being listed in our directory, and also from word of mouth recommendations between families.
- It's free to sign up to and you can get these benefits without having to spend a lot of money – the two most important factors mums appreciate most when breastfeeding out and about are a welcoming atmosphere and supportive staff. Other changes you may make, for example rearranging furniture to provide a little privacy or writing a policy for staff to follow will cost very little.

More information about how easy it is to sign up to the We Support Our Mums business charter can be found in Part Three.

What's in it for babies?

Breastmilk is the perfect food for human babies. Experts, including the World Health Organisation, strongly recommend that babies be fed exclusively on breastmilk for at least the first six months of life. Among many other health-giving properties, breastmilk contains nutrients that promote the healthy growth of nerves, brains and gut – nutrients that are not found in any other type of milk.

But breastmilk is much more than just food. In addition to providing the best nutrition for a baby, breastmilk supplies the factors needed to ensure the development of a strong immune system to protect babies against disease in later life. Babies who are NOT breastfed have an increased chance of:

- Gastrointestinal, ear and chest infections
- Being constipated
- Developing eczema
- Becoming obese, which means they are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes and other illnesses later in life

And if all of that wasn't enough, breastfeeding is a great way for mums and babies to get closer, physically and emotionally. So while babies are feeding, the bond between baby and mum grows.

What's in it for mums?

Most mums stop breastfeeding before they want or intend to and there are many reasons for this. For example, mums return to work and find it difficult to maintain breastfeeding, or they don't receive enough accurate information, help and support to establish or continue breastfeeding successfully.

To establish and continue breastfeeding, mums need the support and understanding not just of their partners and families, but also of the wider community. Breastfed babies need to be fed little and often and mums should not feel they must stay at home all the time in case their baby needs feeding. The more often we see mums breastfeeding in public places, the more commonplace and unremarkable it will become for everyone.

Even though polls reveal that seeing a breastfeeding mum does not bother the majority of adults, mums still report they have been on the receiving end of unsupportive comments or behaviour when breastfeeding in a public place.

Mums also report finding it hard to know whether they would be welcome to breastfeed in some places, and say they go places they know they will be welcome to avoid the embarrassment of being asked to leave or being subjected to negative comments.

Many businesses and venues have an open attitude to breastfeeding, but mums have no way of knowing this. Signing up to the We Support Our Mums business charter and pledging your support, alongside displaying the promotional material will let them know that they are welcome.

Part 3

Taking action

Of course, all mothers have the right to breastfeed anywhere. However, by signing up to the We Support Our Mums business charter and completing the simple steps outlined in this section you can make a pledge to support mums and babies when they are visiting your venue. Once you have submitted the information required, and it has been checked and verified, you will receive publicity material to display in your venue and will also be added to a borough-wide directory promoting all breastfeeding friendly venues in the area.

Venue checklist

Your venue must agree to the following points:

- Babies can be breastfed in any public area of the venue
- A breastfeeding mum will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding
- All members of staff will be made aware of the scheme and the breastfeeding policy and are supportive to the needs of breastfeeding mothers
- The public will be made aware that the venue is part of the scheme through clearly displaying the promotional material provided
- The venue must agree to be reviewed by local breastfeeding mums
- The venue understands that some women prefer privacy when feeding and will do all they can to help them
- The venue will respond sensitively if inappropriate comments are made about breastfeeding in their venue
- The venue will ensure their own staff are supported if breastfeeding while in employment

Breastfeeding policy

Having a written policy is an easy way of ensuring that all staff know that their employer or manager supports breastfeeding within the venue. A policy can be either stand alone, or be incorporated into an existing policy. There is an example policy at the end of this document which can be used to suit your needs, but here are a few main things that any policy needs:

- To be in writing
- To state the venue is breastfeeding welcome and committed to the We Support Our Mums pledge
- To state the person responsible for implementing and updating the policy
- To state who complaints should be directed to and the procedure
- To state responsibilities of staff in welcoming mothers to breastfeed
- To state how it will be communicated to staff
- To provide a link to where to find out more information
- To be reviewed annually

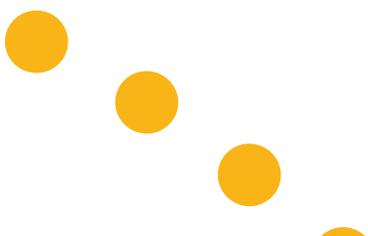
Support and training for staff

By signing up to the We Support Our Mums business charter and pledging your support, your venue will be able to access 'breastfeeding awareness training' for your staff. Any member of staff who accesses the training will become a We Support Our Mums champion for their venue.

However, we acknowledge that it is not always easy for staff to attend or take part in training and there are some simple ways that any member of staff can support breastfeeding mums, including:

If they feel a mum would like it...

- Stop for a brief chat to make it clear that mums are welcome to breastfeed
- Offer a chair if one is available
- Ask if they would like any help with pushchairs, bags etc
- Explain that there is a private place available if she'd like, if this is possible
- Offer her a glass of water if you can
- If you work in a venue that serves food and drink, offer to bring her order over to her, or go to her and take her order once she has settled her baby



Adapting space

You do not need a separate breastfeeding room to sign up to We Support Our Mums and not all venues will have the space, but if you are in a position to make a separate room available, it would give mums a choice and would be appreciated. Many mums will be happy with knowing they can breastfeed in any public area of your venue but if you are able to provide a separate room, it should be:

- In a private area – mums should be able to feed where nobody can see them. Space permitting, there should be room for women to feed either by themselves or with a few other breastfeeding mums, so a room with a few comfortable chairs as well as one chair screened off from the others would be ideal.
- Signposted – using the promotional material provided so mums can easily find the room.
- Clean and comfortable – providing a chair, foot rest and cushion, and if possible access to a basin and water for hand washing.
- Easy to get into – with a buggy or pushchair, and room to bring the buggy inside if possible.
- Near, but not in, an area suitable for changing a baby – dads may wish to use baby changing facilities, and mums may prefer not to be disturbed.
- Near, but not in a toilet.

In addition, there are lots of ways you can adapt space to make it more welcoming for breastfeeding mums. Simply moving plants or furniture around or adding a screen can add a bit of privacy even in busy venues. Breastfeeding mums can be directed to these areas without feeling isolated.





Signing up

So to recap, to sign up to the We Support Our Mums business charter, your venue must complete the We Support Our Mums pledge e-form which can be found at www.doncaster.gov.uk/wsom and agree to:

- Meet the criteria on the venue checklist
- Implement a breastfeeding policy
- Display the promotional materials provided (once your venue has been approved)

Once you are signed up, your venue will be added to our venue directory. In addition to the three points above, if any of your staff access the breastfeeding awareness training they will become We Support Our Mums champions and will be recognised within our directory.

Keeping your status

All venues signed up to We Support Our Mums will be contacted every three years to review their status. Venues will be informed of training dates as and when they are scheduled, should any employees wish to attend. The We Support Our Mums project team will regular monitor any reviews mums make of venues. Positive reviews can be celebrated and promoted and any concerns/issues raised will not be published but will be addressed and suggestions of actions to rectify issues will be made.

Part 4

Further information

We Support Our Mums

For more information about We Support Our Mums please get in touch by email at WeSupportOurMums@doncaster.gov.uk or visit our webpage www.doncaster.gov.uk/wsom

Local breastfeeding information

There is lots of local support out there for breastfeeding mums. They can:

- Contact a local Health Visitor on 01302 566776 or find support and advice on the RDaSH website at: <http://healthvisitors.rdash.nhs.uk/breastfeeding/>
- Contact their local Family Hub, details are online at: www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/family-hubs-and-services
- Contact the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Maternity Team, details are online at: www.dbth.nhs.uk/services/maternity

National breastfeeding information

There are some national telephone helpline which can offer also offer support to breastfeeding mums. The following helplines are answered by trained volunteers working in their own homes. Calls cost the same as calls to any phone number starting with 01 and 02 and price plans which offer inclusive minutes will include 0300 numbers. This applies to calls made from mobile phones and landlines.

National Breastfeeding Helpline:	0300 100 0212
NCT Breastfeeding Line:	0300 330 0700
Breastfeeding Network Supporter Line:	0300 100 0210
Breastfeeding support in Bengali/Sylheti:	0300 456 2421
La Leche League:	0845 120 2918

If you would like some more information on breastfeeding, here are a few useful websites:

NHS Start 4 Life:	www.nhs.uk/start4life
UNICEF Baby Friendly:	www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly
NCT Breastfeeding Welcome:	www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk
La Leche League:	www.laleche.org.uk

We Support Our Mums Breastfeeding Policy

This venue welcomes babies to be breastfed in any public area of these premises

How we will make this happen

All our staff will support the needs and rights of mums breastfeeding. If another customer/ visitor to the premises objects to breastfeeding, they should be told management supports breastfeeding. If the situation cannot be resolved readily, junior staff should refer customers/ visitors to senior management.

A copy of this policy should be issued to all new staff members and a copy should be displayed in _____

Distributing and updating this policy annually is the responsibility of _____ who will be glad to hear comments and reports of any incidents.

If a member of staff feels they need more guidance on this they should speak to _____

Our staff will:

- Display stickers and appropriate signage
- Make mums and babies welcome
- Display the We Support Our Mums charter

We are breastfeeding welcome:

- To support the needs of customers, visitors or clients and be more family friendly
- Babies need feeding when they ask for it. Their stomachs are very small and breastmilk is digested very quickly.
- Breastfeeding works best when mum and baby are both relaxed
- Hungry, upset babies will generally be helped to calm down and become quiet when breastfeeding. This is good for all our customers, visitors or clients.

For more information visit www.doncaster.gov.uk/wsom

For more information about

We Support Our Mums

please get in touch by email at

WeSupportOurMums@doncaster.gov.uk

or visit our webpage

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