

Implementing Point Six

Requirements for Point Six

Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families

Mothers should be welcome to breastfeed in all public areas of the service to establish breastfeeding as the norm for infant feeding. Some mothers who may prefer greater privacy should be provided with a quiet clean space and a comfortable chair. However it does not have to be a designated feeding area (although this is ideal). Notices should be displayed advising mothers that they are welcome to breastfeed. These notices should reflect the ethnic mix of the community and be in appropriate languages.

Evidence of consultation with breastfeeding women to ascertain their needs regarding breastfeeding is required. Mechanisms should be in place for mothers using the service to provide feedback and suggestions about the environment they use. Services which do not work from a site need to meet these requirements wherever they deliver their service.

Mothers who are employees should have the opportunity to have their infant(s) brought into the workplace for breastfeeding. Breaks for feeding or the expression of breastmilk should be given and storage facilities for breastmilk provided. Commitment to this should be evident within policies and procedures.

In a Baby Friendly health service, there will be no promotion of infant formula, bottles, teats or dummies. As well, the service will not permit the display or distribution of any form of promotional material for:

- infant formula
- inappropriate for age, baby drinks and foods.
- feeding bottles, teats or dummies.



Mothers should feel able to breastfeed in public places, particularly in a health care service

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Welcoming breastfeeding in a Health Service

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed babies and young children. It should not be considered rude or anti-social and mothers should not be made to feel awkward about breastfeeding in public places. This is especially true where the function of that place is to promote health. Mothers should therefore be permitted to breastfeed in all public areas of the facility and their right to do so should be upheld in the face of any complaint.

The successful implementation of Point Six requires:

- that all members of staff based in, or employed by, the facility, even those not directly connected with breastfeeding, understand this.
- Clear, prominent notices will ensure not only that breastfeeding mothers know that breastfeeding is welcomed but that all other users of the premises know this too.
- A sample Welcome to breastfeed here poster is posted prominently in a highly visible area.

It is crucial that staff not only understand what the policy says in relation to Point 6 but are prepared to support it by sensitive handling of users of the service who may object to it, if necessary by finding that person somewhere to sit away from the breastfeeding mother. A breastfeeding mother should never be asked to move or to stop breastfeeding because someone else has requested this.

Supporting mothers to breastfeed in public places

Many mothers feel concerned about the prospect of breastfeeding when they are out and about, or with other people, until they gain confidence in their ability to do so discreetly and this may contribute to the number of mothers who stop breastfeeding before they want to.

For some mothers, fear or embarrassment about feeding in front of others may extend to the home situation, particularly when the house is shared with the extended family, while other mothers are confident to breastfeed wherever they are. It is important to avoid making assumptions about which mothers will fall into which category and therefore all mothers should be offered the chance to discuss this topic.

The discussion should include tips about clothing that will enable discreet breastfeeding and ways to ensure effective positioning in a variety of settings. It is also helpful to provide mothers with information about places, such as cafes, shops and local authority buildings where staff are known to be welcoming to breastfeeding families.

Clear, prominent notices will ensure that all users of the premises know that breastfeeding is welcome at the service

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Key requirements for the Providing a Welcoming Atmosphere for Breastfeeding Families

1. Breastfeeding is welcome in public areas of the service and is there a sign indicating this.
2. Breastfeeding information for families is displayed and /or available to take home.
3. An area is available for mothers who prefer to breastfeed privately and this is also on the sign.
4. Signage in the relevant languages is on display and materials are reflective of the ethnicity of the clientele.
5. There are mechanisms in place to obtain ongoing feedback about the services environment from the community.
6. The service is free from professional support items sponsored by companies which manufacture and market items covered under The International Code.
7. The service is free from the promotion of artificial baby milks, bottles, teats and dummies.
8. Health workers and volunteers refrain from the distribution of the artificial baby milks and other items that contravene The International Code.
9. The service has a complaint process / protocols in place if a complaint was made about a mother breastfeeding at the service.

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Documentation required for Point Six prior to Assessment

1. Evidence of the complaint process / protocols in place at the service.
2. Copies of the breastfeeding information that are displayed at the service.
3. Evidence of the feedback process in place at the service.