

## 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.



## **Welcoming breastfeeding in a Health Service**

Breastfeeding is the natural 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 'You are 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*

## **Implementing Point Six**

### **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 infant formulas, bottles, teats and dummies.
8. Health workers and volunteers refrain from the distribution of infant formulas 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.

### **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.

## Creating a Mother-Friendly Workplace

The importance of enabling women to continue breastfeeding once they have returned to the workplace has been strengthened with the new Convention on Maternity Protection from the International Labour Organisation. This new convention broadens the scope of maternity coverage found in previous ILO instruments, extends maternity leave and secures paid breastfeeding breaks for mothers who are employed. The ILO, a specialized United Nations agency, promotes social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights. Although it is the responsibility of member states to incorporate the Convention's provisions into law, these standards have strong moral authority around the world.

Information for employers, about supporting breastfeeding employees, is available in the Department of Labour's document '*Breastfeeding in the Workplace: An Employer's Guide to Making it Work*' (2010). It can be downloaded from the website [www.ers.dol.govt.nz](http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz). Employers need to know that it is advantageous to support women who choose to continue breastfeeding. 'The Human Rights Act (section 74) provides that preferential treatment based on pregnancy and childbirth is permitted. Health and Safety regulations also do not prevent employers from allowing a baby to be breastfed in the workplace, provided this can be done under healthy and safe conditions'. Maintaining the breastfeeding relationship may require accommodations to the workload or the hours worked, provision for regular contact for breastfeeding and / or additional rest periods to support lactation. In some situations, this may include time and privacy for breast milk expression.

Employers need to know the importance of developing policies and provisions that are available to all employees in their organisation rather than just a select few.

In New Zealand, legislation on Paid Parental Leave is currently under review (2014). Currently, support is available for eligible families to have access to paid parental leave for fourteen weeks. This leave can encourage the family/whanau to maintain breastfeeding by supporting either the mother to remain at home or the father's care of the infant; in turn, he can support the mother to combine breastfeeding and work.

You can view the document 'Parental Leave: A guide for employees, employers and the self-employed.' (2012) from the website below:

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/holidaysandleave/parentalleave/Parental-Leave-Guide.pdf>

*"For breastfeeding mothers who return to work, workplace support is vital to the successful continuation of breastfeeding"*

## Creating a Mother-Friendly Workplace

1. Ensure that workers are aware of New Zealand's existing maternity and parental leave entitlements under law and whether there are additional company policies including the company's policy for breastfeeding in the workplace.
2. Ensure that women on maternity leave are aware that their position is kept for them for their return, or where this is not possible that the woman has been advised in writing and that she can have preference for a similar position for six months after her leave ends.
3. Support affordable infant and child care at or near the workplace, and provide transportation for mothers to join their babies.
4. Offer flexible work hours to breastfeeding women, such as later starts, part-time schedules and job sharing.
5. Provide daily breaks for breastfeeding or expressing milk. 'ILO recommends at least 90 minutes of paid breastfeeding breaks per working day.'

*'Employers are required, as far as is reasonable and practicable, to provide appropriate breaks and facilities for employees who wish to breastfeed their infants or express milk during work hours.'*

*'Whether the time agreed on is an adjustment to existing breaks (paid or unpaid), or additional paid or unpaid breaks, is a matter you should discuss with your employee. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recommends at least 90 minutes of paid breastfeeding breaks per working day.<sup>5</sup> However the time required to breastfeed (or express breast milk) will vary between different mothers and babies and should be sufficient to ensure the baby is fed adequately.'*

6. Provide comfortable, private facilities for breastfeeding and expressing breast milk and storage for expressed breast milk.
7. Keep the work environment clean and safe from hazardous wastes and chemicals. Another risk assessment may need to be done bearing in mind the particular needs of a breastfeeding woman and her baby (including a risk assessment of any facilities or storage space provided).  
The law requires employers:  
'to protect the health and safety of all workers and any other people (e.g. a baby and the baby's care-giver) who are at work, or in the vicinity of work (s5 Health and Safety in Employment Act) and to 'take all practicable steps' to prevent health and safety risks to employees and others at work or in the vicinity of work' .
8. Encourage co-workers and management to have a positive, accepting attitude toward breastfeeding colleagues.
9. Inform women workers and unions about maternity-leave policy and other rights.
10. Encourage a network of supportive women in worker's groups who can help women to combine breastfeeding and work.