



# Guidance: Camden Can Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme

## Guidance: The Camden Can Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme

Many new mums in Camden start out breastfeeding but find themselves stopping before they want to. This can be because they don't get the right support and feel anxious or uncomfortable breastfeeding out and about.

The Camden Can Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme has been set up to help local businesses and community venues make mums feel welcomed to breastfeed when they are out and about. By working together and sharing responsibility to create a supportive environment, we can help mums and babies in Camden to breastfeed for as long as they would like.

## Why do we need to support breastfeeding?

The UK has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world and we know that 90% of women stop breastfeeding before they want to. Breastfeeding helps supports brain development and bonding between a mum and her baby. It also provides important health benefits for both mums and babies:

### Health benefits of breastfeeding for babies:

- Reduced risk of gastrointestinal, ear and respiratory infections
- Reduced risk of developing allergic diseases such as asthma and eczema and childhood cancers
- Protects against obesity, diabetes and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

### Health benefits for mothers:

- Reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Better bone mineral density in later life
- Easier to return to pre-pregnancy weight

## Isn't formula milk the same?

Formula milk provides suitable nutrition for babies but lacks the protective factors that provide health benefits such as antibodies. Therefore formula feeding mums also need support and information about safe and responsive formula feeding. In Camden there is information and support available for all types of infant feeding including breastfeeding, formula feeding and mixed feeding. For further information visit [cnwl.nhs.uk/service/camden-baby-feeding-team/](http://cnwl.nhs.uk/service/camden-baby-feeding-team/)

[camden.gov.uk/camdencanbf](http://camden.gov.uk/camdencanbf)

## **What is your responsibility?**

It is important to make sure all employees and volunteers working at your venue are aware of their responsibility not to discriminate against mothers who are breastfeeding a child of any age and to allow breastfeeding on your premises. The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for a business to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. Employees should be aware that a woman cannot be asked to stop breastfeeding, or breastfeed somewhere more private or leave because she is breastfeeding. Babies have very tiny stomachs and breastmilk is easily digested so they cannot wait for feeds when hungry. Breastfeeding works best when mum and baby are relaxed. Hungry or upset babies will generally be helped to calm and quieten down when breastfeeding. This is also good for customers and visitors.

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 has specifically clarified that it is unlawful for a business to discriminate against a woman because she is breastfeeding a child. A business may ask a breastfeeding woman to leave their premises if the reason for this request is not due to her breastfeeding. However, if the woman later claims that discrimination occurred because she was breastfeeding, the business will have to prove that there was in fact no discrimination.

## **How does the Camden Can Breastfeeding Welcome scheme help?**

Many businesses and venues have an open attitude to breastfeeding, but women have no way of knowing this. Registering for the scheme and putting up the sign and logo in a prominent place will let them know that they are welcome and supported to feed at your venue. Mums are more likely to meet other mums in places where they feel relaxed and welcome to breastfeed and this is also important for reducing isolation and loneliness that new parents can sometimes feel as well as being good for business. The more places that a mum feels comfortable to feed in her community, the more likely she is to continue breastfeeding longer term which is beneficial for her and her baby's health and wellbeing.

## **Who can sign up to the scheme?**

Restaurants /cafes  
Schools /nurseries  
Children centres  
Leisure centres  
Libraries  
Community centres  
Health centres / GP practices  
hairdressers /opticians/ dentists  
High street shops

## **Do we need to provide a secluded area to feed in?**

No, not necessarily. If a mother asks you if there is somewhere more private she can feed, you can point her to wherever you think she may be comfortable, but most women will find the most appropriate place for themselves. Women should be supported to breastfeed wherever and however they feel most comfortable and should not be asked to 'cover up'.

## **What if another customer/ visitor complains?**

The 2010 Equality act protects the rights of breastfeeding women. If other customers /visitors complain about a woman feeding her baby in your venue you can explain that you want all mothers to feel welcome and that she is legally entitled to breastfeed anywhere. You can also clarify that your staff policy is to support breastfeeding and if appropriate offer alternative seating to the complainant. Junior staff should refer customers /visitors to senior management if a situation cannot be resolved readily.

## **Is there anything else we can do?**

- Register to join the scheme at [camden.gov.uk/camdencanbf](https://camden.gov.uk/camdencanbf)
- Display your sign prominently
- Ensure that new and existing employees and volunteers are aware you have signed up to the scheme and are supportive of breastfeeding mums.
- Look for the most comfortable places in your venue for women to feed their babies in case she asks for somewhere more private to feed (never ask mums to use the toilet).
- Ensure that employees know that breastfeeding customers should not be asked to move if another customer complains.
- Once you have signed up to the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme you can use this to sign up to the Camden Can Pledge [camden.gov.uk/camdencanpledge](https://camden.gov.uk/camdencanpledge)