

Dear Employer

Increasing numbers of women are choosing to breastfeed their babies, as an employer there are sound business reasons for supporting employees to continue to breastfeed when they return to work. These include:

- Lower absenteeism, breastfeeding protects the health of babies, which include fewer ear and chest infections, and fewer tummy bugs. Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast cancer in women.
- Increased morale and loyalty. Many women experience complex feelings of guilt and ambivalence when leaving a young baby to return to work. Continuing to breastfeed tends to help women to overcome these feelings as they experience a positive sense of still doing what is best for their child.
- Family friendly reputation, being known as a family friendly employer is not only good for corporate relations, but also for recruitment.
- Improved staff retention, your employee is more likely to return to her job after maternity leave if she knows she will come back to a supportive environment. You avoid losing her skills and incurring recruitment costs.

In the UK breastfeeding women have legal protection under Equality Act (2010). The Health and Safety Executive says that it is good practice for employers to provide suitable facilities such as a private room, washing facilities and clean fridge or section of fridge for expressing and storing milk. The toilets are not regarded as a suitable place. Useful websites include:

www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5271>

By supporting your employee to breastfeed you are making a bigger contribution to the health improvement of people in the North East of England and changing community attitudes, culture and conversations around breastfeeding. If your organisation is not already working towards a Better Health at Work Award please do sign up at www.betterhealthatworkne.org to be accredited for your support and benefit from several free resources.

Yours faithfully

Becca Scott

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