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## **GREENWICH BREASTFEEDING POLICY STATEMENT, GUIDANCE AND CHECKLIST FOR MANAGERS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

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Breastfeeding has many health benefits for infants and mothers. Breastfeeding provides all that a baby needs to develop and thrive for the first six months of life. There is a great deal of evidence that shows breastfeeding improves the health of babies. It provides a baby with a boost to their immune system. It gives some protection against gastroenteritis, respiratory infections, urinary infections, insulin-dependent diabetes, eczema, asthma and obesity. There is also evidence that breastfeeding is linked with higher cognitive ability in babies and improved bonding between mother and baby. The health benefits of breastfeeding stay with a breastfed baby throughout life.

Evidence shows that breastfeeding is also good for mothers. It helps protect against postnatal depression and certain forms of cancers and increases the likelihood that body fat deposited during pregnancy will be used up.

In Greenwich, there has been significant investment over the past several years to encourage and support more mothers to breastfeed and help increase local breastfeeding rates. The Royal Borough of Greenwich, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust and the University of Greenwich have been working together to ensure all health practitioners, public bodies and private businesses in the borough are well informed and supportive of breastfeeding. These organisations are working in partnership to achieve and/or maintain the World Health Organisation's UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

This updated policy statement contributes to the on-going maintenance of this goal and to the implementation of the Greenwich Breastfeeding Implementation Plan 2014-15.

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### **GREENWICH BREASTFEEDING POLICY STATEMENT**

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“The Royal Borough of Greenwich supports breastfeeding as the best way to feed a baby. Royal Greenwich welcomes mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies in Royal Greenwich premises“

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### **GUIDANCE TO MANAGERS**

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Managers have a role to play in getting a message across to the public that Royal Greenwich supports breastfeeding as an important matter of public health.

Managers have a responsibility to provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding service users. In Royal Greenwich premises, a clear message should be given that breastfeeding families are welcome. The Breastfeeding Policy Statement is for display in clear view of clients using Royal Borough reception areas.

The Equality Act came into force in October 2010. The law says that it is sex discrimination to treat a woman unfavourably, including harassment and victimisation, because she is breastfeeding. It applies to most public places and organisations that deal directly with the public, including local authorities.

Women are protected to breastfeed in public and should not be expected to hide the fact that they are breastfeeding. On the other hand, not all mothers may wish to breastfeed overtly. Some women may wish to have privacy for breastfeeding. Wherever possible, a clean, private space should be made available for breastfeeding.

It is important that staff respond appropriately to any requests made by women who wish to breastfeed. Breastfeeding mothers should be supported in their choice of where to breastfeed.

Complaints may sometimes be expressed by members of the public who view breastfeeding in public as inappropriate behaviour. In such circumstances staff should refer to Royal Greenwich's Breastfeeding Policy Statement.

If a woman is prevented from breastfeeding, she is within her rights to make an official complaint to the organisation that discriminated against her. If the matter cannot be resolved internally, it can be taken to a county court.

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#### **CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS**

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- Display the Breastfeeding Policy Statement where it can be seen by clients in public reception areas.
- Check staff are aware of this statement and Royal Greenwich's support for breastfeeding as a measure that improves public health.
- If possible provide a clean, private space for breastfeeding. Use appropriate signage for indicating the location of the mother and baby room, where one is available. Front line staff should never suggest to a breastfeeding mother that she should feed her baby in the toilets.
- If a breastfeeding mother is in your reception area, offer a chair if one is available; offer a glass of water, if appropriate.
- If customers object to discreet breastfeeding in a public reception area, they should be told that Royal Greenwich supports breastfeeding as the best way of feeding a baby. The person who is uncomfortable seeing breastfeeding can be asked to move, not the breastfeeding family. If a situation cannot be resolved readily, front line staff should refer clients to senior management.

Update May 2014.