



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Public Health Agency 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' Scheme
Date:	4th April 2014
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Head of Environmental Health Service
Contact Officer:	Una Lappin, Health Equity Project Manager (3777)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The ' <i>Breastfeeding welcome here</i> ' scheme aims to make it easier for breastfeeding mothers to recognise places where they can breastfeed their baby when they are out and about. Creating supportive environments for breastfeeding is one of 4 key strategic outcomes of 'Breastfeeding – A Great Start' a Strategy for Northern Ireland (DHSSPS 2013). The scheme is supported and facilitated by the Public Health Agency (PHA).
1.2	Businesses which are open to the general public, for example coffee shops, restaurants, shops, supermarkets, leisure centres and hairdressers, are eligible to join the scheme, provided the business meets the following membership criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of the business premises that are open to the general public.• A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of the business premises open to the general public will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding.• All staff members are made aware that the business is a member of the scheme and are therefore supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mothers.• The public are made aware that the business is a member of the scheme and supports breastfeeding through the display of the scheme's window sticker and certificate on the business premises.
1.3	All businesses that are part of the scheme are given recognition through ongoing promotion and awareness-raising. Businesses in the scheme are listed on www.breastfedbabies.org .

1.4	An Act of the Scottish Parliament was made in 2003 which protects breastfeeding in public. Similar legislation is likely to be proposed in Northern Ireland by 2016.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	The Council's Women's Steering Group has proposed that the Council considers membership of the ' <i>Breastfeeding welcome here</i> ' scheme.
2.2	Joining the scheme would contribute to the council's strategic theme of providing leadership of the City and, specifically to the corporate objective of tackling health inequality.
2.3	<p>In order to join the scheme, the following process must be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A senior member of the Council would be asked to sign a written agreement which states that the Council will adhere to the membership criteria. • The signed agreement is then returned to the Public Health Agency (PHA). • The PHA will issue the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' certificate and window sticker once the signed agreement is received. • After an initial monitoring assessment, post three to four weeks of signing up to the scheme, the Council buildings would be added to a list of businesses participating in the scheme and published online on the www.breastfedbabies.org website • Ongoing monitoring will then be undertaken by the PHA and mothers from local breastfeeding support groups to ensure that businesses which have signed up to the scheme are adhering to the criteria.
2.4	The Women's Steering Group proposes that membership to the scheme could be introduced on a phased basis, initially at City Hall, The Waterfront and Ulster Halls, leisure centres, community centres and the zoo. The introduction of this scheme would be with a view to reviewing the initial implementation of the policy and phasing in the introduction of the scheme to other council locations to which the general public has access. The PHA is supportive of this approach.
2.5	<p>The way forward will be for the Health Equity Project Manager to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with PHA to implement and monitor the scheme. • Liaise with Democratic Services to identify the senior member of Council to sign the agreement. • Liaise with Corporate Communications to ensure that all staff members are made aware that the council is a member of the scheme and are therefore supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mums.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare more specific presentations for the staff of the council premises listed above to engender positive participation in the scheme. • It is envisaged that the scheme will be implemented in the first phase council premises by September 2014. • Roll out the scheme to other council locations as appropriate, and look for opportunities to promote the scheme for example when carrying out advice to small businesses, and when the food safety team are engaged with the businesses in the city.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> None.
3.2	<u>Human Resource</u> The Health Equity Project Manager will coordinate the council involvement with the PHA scheme. Staff will need to be informed of appropriate responses to challenges made to breast feeding mothers. A full communication plan will be developed and implemented to ensure staff are fully informed about the initiative.

4	Equality Implications
4.1	There are no equality issues.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee are asked to approve the council's membership of the PHA 'Breastfeeding welcome here' Scheme.

6	Decision Tracking
7	Documents Attached
	None