

GUIDELINES ON BREASTFEEDING

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1. **Aim**

This guide has been prepared to inform staff and line managers of employment rights relating to Breastfeeding in the Workplace. This document is based upon the Pregnant Workers Directive 92/85/EEC.

Thames Valley Police recognise the value of breastfeeding and the major health benefits that the mother and baby receive from breastfeeding. Thames Valley Police take a positive attitude to mothers breastfeeding and expressing breast milk.

The term “staff” is used in this guidance to mean all female members of Thames Valley Police including civilian staff, police officers and Special Constabulary.

2. **Breastfeeding in the Workplace**

If work affects a member of staff’s ability to breastfeed, Thames Valley Police will alter that member of staff’s working conditions and/or hours or give alternative work to protect her rights to breastfeed. The staff member must notify her Department Manager in writing, giving 21 days notice, that she is breastfeeding if she wishes to make use of this protection.

3. **Who Qualifies for this Right?**

Any female member of staff qualifies for this right providing she has notified the employer in writing that she is breastfeeding. The regulations do not place a time limit on how long an individual should breastfeed their child. It is for a woman to decide how long she wishes to do so. Weaning and the Weaning Diet Department of Health COMA Report 45, HMSO 1994, recommends that mothers exclusively breastfeed for between 4 and 6 months.

4. **Breastfeeding During Working Hours**

Line managers must be flexible with regard to the working patterns of breastfeeding mothers. Staff should not be required to attend training sessions, meetings or shifts that involve excessively long days that would be detrimental to breastfeeding/expressing milk. Time spent breastfeeding and expressing milk will be paid during working hours and is a separate break from work in addition to the normal breaks e.g. lunch break. If the mother is breastfeeding rather than expressing milk, the mother should make arrangements for her baby to be brought to her place of work.

5. **Facilities for Expressing Milk and Breastfeeding**

The Line Manager will make arrangements for the use of a lockable room e.g. an office, which will be clean and warm with a comfortable chair. Under no circumstances will a member of staff be expected to use a toilet facility for this purpose. Hand washing facilities will be close by although not necessarily in the same room and there will be an electric point for an electric pump. There will be facilities available e.g. a refrigerator dedicated for the storing of breastmilk and a clean area for the storing of sterilising equipment. The line manager will make arrangements with HQ stores for the provision of a refrigerator.

6. **Risk Assessment**

Whilst a member of staff is breastfeeding, Thames Valley Police has a duty to consider the working conditions and whether there is a risk to the health of the mother or the health of her baby. It is the responsibility of the member of staff's supervisor to ensure that risk assessments have been conducted and that it is safe for her to perform her current role. If a risk is identified, Thames Valley Police will do all that is reasonable to reduce the risk, including temporarily changing hours or conditions. If the risk cannot be avoided then suitable alternative work with similar terms and conditions will be found for her.

Further guidance with regard to breastfeeding / expressing milk can be sought from your Personnel Manager or the Diversity Manager.