



We're
**Breastfeeding
Friendly**
Louth



We're Breastfeeding Friendly

Where everyone enjoys positive wellbeing supported by every level of society and by working together.



Healthy Ireland

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

Many of the factors that influence a person's health and wellbeing, such as their early years, education level, income, housing and work conditions are determined by social, environmental and economic policies beyond the direct responsibility of the health sector.

A key focus of Healthy Ireland is on building relationships and strengthening partnerships between government departments, local authorities, Children & Young peoples Services Committee (CYPSC), Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), education providers and the wider business, voluntary, community and statutory sectors. Louth's **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** is an exciting example of such partnership working.

We're Breastfeeding Friendly is funded by Healthy Ireland

The partners on this initiative:



Healthy
Louth



mychild.ie



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The Healthy Ireland Fund supported by the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Department of Rural and Community Development

We're Breastfeeding Friendly

We're Breastfeeding Friendly aims to help improve the health and wellbeing of breastfeeding mothers, babies and their families through the development and promotion of breastfeeding friendly businesses, organisations and communities.

Together, we will:

1. Support business, community and public service settings to welcome breastfeeding mothers and families;
2. Support breastfeeding mothers and families to be active in the community;
3. Support parents during the key life transition of becoming a parent;
4. Support a strong culture of connectedness - between agencies and within communities (and of course, between mother, family, baby and community).

Generally, mothers who breastfeed their babies out and about do so with ease. Some mothers say they feel a little self-conscious breastfeeding out and about the first time, particularly when latching baby on. More often than not, a mother will breastfeed her baby and other people around her will not take notice. A key part of successful breastfeeding is feeding baby when baby wants to be fed ("feeding on demand"). Research tells us the two things that make mothers feel comfortable when breastfeeding out and about are:

- A welcoming, helpful attitude from staff;
- Other patrons knowing and accepting that babies may be breastfed there (The Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition and National Childbirth Trust, 2018).

We're Breastfeeding Friendly (Continued)

By signing up to **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**, private, community and statutory organisations across Louth can show they welcome and support breastfeeding mothers and families by some easy and no-cost actions.



Who can join **We're Breastfeeding Friendly?**

Any business, community group or organisation that has premises open to the general public is eligible to join, for example customer services, hotels, community centres, sports and recreation facilities, restaurants, libraries or health centres. In order to join, a business, group or organisation must fulfil the criteria below. Businesses, community groups or organisations can choose to sign up individually or across a number of premises.

Criteria to join

1. Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of your premises open to the public;
2. All staff members are made aware that your business, community group or organisation is participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and is therefore supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mothers;
3. A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of your premises open to the public will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding;
4. The public are made aware that you are participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and support breastfeeding through the display of a **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** window sticker and/or poster.

It is not a requirement that your premises be adapted in any way. Many mothers are comfortable breastfeeding anywhere when out and about. Some mothers may choose to have a little privacy, but the careful positioning of chairs may be enough. Research tells us the most important issues for mothers are:

- easy access for, and safe place to park, a buggy;
- easy access to a clean place to change their baby's nappy;
- a comfortable chair with a back for support.

(The Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition and National Childbirth Trust, 2018)



Joining **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**

1. Management of your business, group or organisation will inform themselves on **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** by reading this booklet or contacting healthylouth@louthcoco.ie for more information;
2. A senior member of your business, group or organisation will sign a written agreement which states that your business, group or organisation will adhere to the 4 criteria (the written agreement is at the back of this booklet);
3. The signed agreement should be returned to healthylouth@louthcoco.ie;
4. A **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** window sticker (and a poster, where required) will be issued once the signed agreement is received;
5. The name and address of your business, group or organisation's premises will be added to a list of premises participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**. This will be published on www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/communities/programmes/healthy-ireland with links to it on partners' websites.

Feedback on your experience of participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** is welcome at any time.

Simply email healthylouth@louthcoco.ie

Staff Awareness

It is recommended that all your staff are made aware of your business, group or organisation's participation in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and its criteria as well as the content of this booklet.

Staff should know the following:

- The Equal Status Act (2000) protects breastfeeding mothers in public so it is against the law to ask a mother to move or ask her to stop breastfeeding;
- Your business, group or organisation is participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**;
- Why your business, group or organisation is participating.

Breastfeeding: Good for your business, community and organisation

1. Families go to public places that are welcoming and supportive of families and breastfeeding mothers;
2. Welcoming and supporting breastfeeding mothers and families is easy and no-cost to implement;
3. Your business, group or organisation gets recognition through ongoing promotion through various media;
4. Your customers and patrons will see your business, group or organisation as one that is interested in their health and welfare;
5. Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly and is a natural use of resources, with no waste to dispose of (The Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition and National Childbirth Trust, 2018).

Breastfeeding: Good for Baby and Mother

Every single drop of breastmilk is important for your baby's healthy growth and development and it protects their digestive system. It contains antibodies to protect your baby from illness and build their immune system. Breastfeeding is also important for your baby's brain development. We know that even after decades of research, formula milks cannot match the uniqueness and benefits of breastmilk.

Your body will produce all the milk your baby needs for the first 6 months. No water or other fluids are needed. From 6 months you can start your baby on solid foods. You can continue to breastfeed until your baby is 2 years or older, or until your baby chooses to wean.

Breastfeeding is important for mothers' health too as it protects against ovarian and breast cancer. It also helps to reach and maintain a healthy post pregnancy weight. Breastfeeding is cost free and convenient for you and your baby, and it means milk for your baby is always at the right temperature.

While breastfeeding is the most natural way to feed your baby, it is a skill that you and your baby develop over the first days and weeks. With the right help, support and information most mothers can start breastfeeding and continue for as long as they want to.

At the HSE's dedicated website - mychild.ie - there are a range of supports available for breastfeeding mothers and their families, including details of local support groups in your area and the free Ask our Expert live chat service provided by Lactation Consultants.

mychild.ie

Useful links

www.mychild.ie

www.healthyireland.ie

References:

- Department of Health (2013) Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025, Government Publications, Dublin.
<http://www.healthyireland.ie/>
- Health Service Executive (2016) Breastfeeding in a Healthy Ireland Health Service Breastfeeding Action Plan 2016-2021, HSE, Dublin.
- Louth County Council (2016), Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021,
<https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/economic-development/plans-strategies/2023-2029-local-economic-community-plan-lecp-/>
- Public Health Agency, Breastfeeding Welcome Here: Good for mums, babies and your business, Public Health Agency, Belfast,
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/breastfeeding-welcome-here-good-mums-babies-and-your-business>
- The Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition and National Childbirth Trust Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme, A Scheme developed by the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition and is run by NCT (National Childbirth Trust), London,
<https://www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk/about>
- The Breastfeeding Network, BfN Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme, The Breastfeeding Network,
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/bfn-breastfeeding-friendly-scheme/>
- WHO, (2003), Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, WHO, Geneva.

To Contact

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth

The Healthy Louth Coordinator, Community Section, Louth County Council, Millennium Centre, County Hall, Dundalk, Co Louth A91 KFW6
Email: healthylouth@louthcoco.ie; Phone: (042) 9335457
www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/communities/programmes/healthy-ireland

Withdrawing from

We're Breastfeeding Friendly

If your business, organisation or group decides to withdraw from **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**, simply:

1. Email healthylouth@louthcoco.ie to state you are withdrawing. It would be helpful if you would share your reason(s);
2. Remove **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** or related resources from your premises.

In the unlikely event that it is deemed necessary, the oversight group for **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** reserves the right to remove your business, group or organisation from the participants' list for **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and ask you to remove related resources from your premises.



We wish to acknowledge:

Healthy Limerick, who created this campaign and made it available to Healthy Ireland and the Healthy counties and cities network.

www.limerick.ie/council/services/community-and-leisure/community-development/were-breastfeeding-friendly-limerick

Disclaimer

- **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** is intended to help a business, group or organisation show it is interested in supporting breastfeeding mothers and families when they are out and about. The organisers and funders of **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** do not take responsibility for guaranteeing a specific standard or customer experience with any participating business, group or organisation, and are not responsible for any participating premises, its staff or its patrons. Where we receive any feedback, positive or negative, about a participating business, group or organisation, we will endeavour to share this with the relevant party. Where feedback is negative, a course of action to improve things will be suggested. Changes, however, cannot be imposed.
- Every effort has been made to ensure the content of this booklet is accurate and up to date, but the organisers and funders of **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** do not accept liability for damage or loss caused by any error or omission.



We're Breastfeeding Friendly Agreement

1. Please complete and email the agreement on the next page. You can scan/clearly photograph a signed copy and email it as an attachment.
Email to healthylouth@louthcoco.ie;
2. You will receive a window sticker (and a poster, where required) once the signed agreement is received;
3. You may choose to use social media to let everyone know that your business, group or organisation is now saying **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**. If using Twitter, do tag @HealthyLouth, @Louthcoco and @healthyireland;
4. Send healthylouth@louthcoco a photo(s) of your business, group or organisation signing up to **We're Breastfeeding Friendly**. **Photos will be used for promotional purposes, such as on** www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/communities/programmes/healthy-ireland;
5. Please retain a copy of the completed agreement for your own records.

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Agreement

On behalf of I agree that:

1. Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of our premises that are open to the general public;
2. All staff members will be made aware that our business, community group or organisation is participating in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and will therefore be supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mothers;
3. A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of our premises open to the general public will not be asked to move to another area or stop breastfeeding;
4. The public will be made aware of our participation in **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** and that we support breastfeeding through the display of a **We're Breastfeeding Friendly** window sticker and/or poster.

Signed

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Date

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Please print name

.....

Role in business, group or organisation

.....

Business/group/organisation name

.....

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

.....

Telephone

.....

Email

.....

Twitter handle, if any

.....

Facebook address, if any

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Type of business, group or organisation:

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Number of participating premises:

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Website address:

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Address(s) of each participating premises:

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Please complete and return to: healthylouth@louthcoco.ie

Or

**The Healthy Louth Coordinator, Community Section,
Louth County Council, Millennium Centre, County Hall,
Dundalk, Co Louth A91 KFW6**



Báúil le
Cothú Cíche
Lú



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland