Healthy Ireland

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

A place where everyone feels comfortable breastfeeding and is supported by the whole community.

The partners on this initiative are:

Healthy Kerry

HSE

Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Healthy Ireland

Cuidiú
Caring Support for Parenthood

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www.kerrylibrary.ie
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We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

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MAX/Bf Maximising Breastfeeding with People & Populations

CYPSC
Children & Young People's Services Committees
Kerry

mychild.ie

Coiste Forbartha Pobail Áitiúil Chiarraí
Kerry Local Community Development Committee

MTU
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University

University Hospital Kerry

La Leche League of Ireland
Breastfeeding Help & Information

ALCI Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland

pobal
government supporting communities

The term woman/mother has been used throughout the document. This should be taken to include people who do not identify as women but are pregnant or have given birth. Similarly, where the term parent/family is used this should be taken to include anyone who has a main responsibility for caring for a baby.

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We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry aims to support and welcome breastfeeding moms when out and about in their community and when they return to work.

It does this by encouraging businesses, workplaces, and community places to show and display their welcome and support of breastfeeding.

It also gives helpful advice to employers so they can support mothers who are coming back to work and want to continue breastfeeding.

Why breastfeeding is important

Breastfeeding helps babies and young children grow and keep healthy.

The World Health Organisation says it is best to feed babies only breastmilk for the first 6 months. After that, you can give solid food as well as breastmilk until the child is 2 years old or more.[1,2]

Breastmilk has everything a baby needs to grow. It also helps protect babies from getting sick and supports their brain development.[4]

New research shows that breastmilk helps to build a healthy tummy (gut), which can protect children from illness later in life.[5]

Breastfeeding is good for mothers too. It is linked to lowering the risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer. It also helps mothers return to a healthy weight after having a baby and may lower the chance of getting obesity or diabetes later.

The longer a mother breastfeeds, the more health benefits there are for both baby and mother.[3,4]

Breastfeeding is free for families.

Why supporting breastfeeding is good for workplaces

When workplaces support mothers coming back to work, it helps them feel better and makes the change easier. This helps mothers to keep breastfeeding for longer, which is good for their babies and themselves.

Workplaces also benefit. Babies who are breastfed usually get sick less often. This means parents may need to take fewer days off work.[6]

Customers also like to support businesses that care about people and the community. Helping breastfeeding mothers shows that your business is caring and responsible. This can make customers more loyal and may bring in new ones.

Supporting breastfeeding doesn't cost much and is easy to do.

If your business or group joins the We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry campaign, you will be promoted on different websites and social media.

This can help more people know about your business and see you as a family-friendly and caring place.

"They say it takes a village.
From breastfeeding groups and making mom friends to lactation consultants and postnatal hubs, mental health groups and so many specialists support, I have found just that, a village in Kerry."

Rowena

How breastfeeding helps the whole community

Breastfeeding helps babies and mothers stay healthier. This means fewer visits to the doctor and fewer health problems. Because of this, it helps to reduce pressure on the health system.[3,4,5,8]

Breastfeeding is also good for the environment. It creates no waste and supports a more sustainable way of living.

When a community supports breastfeeding, it becomes more family friendly. Mothers feel welcome and more comfortable to breastfeed in public. This helps make breastfeeding a normal and positive part of life.

Four in every five (86%) mothers in Kerry were breastfeeding at the time of the first public health nurse visit in 2023 — one of the highest rates in Ireland. We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry aims to build on that success. It will support mothers to continue breastfeeding for longer when returning to work or out and about.

What we know helps moms feel comfortable when breastfeeding in public:[7]

- **Supportive network**
- **Quiet private suitable environment**
- **Comfortable seating**
- **Understanding and acceptance of others**
- **Seeing other mothers breastfeed**
- **Breastfeeding is openly welcomed**
- **Awareness of mother's and children's rights**

Breastfeeding: the law

The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018)[9]

The law protects breastfeeding parents from being treated unfairly. This means that mothers have the right to breastfeed in public places like shops, cafés, or parks. No one is allowed to ask a mother to stop, cover up, move or leave while she is breastfeeding.

The law also protects breastfeeding mothers from being treated unfairly at work or in other places because they are feeding their baby. Mothers must be treated with respect and fairness, just like everyone else.

The Work Life Balance Bill and Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2023)[10]

If a mother returns to work before her baby turns 2, she has the right to take breastfeeding breaks during the workday. She will still get her full pay during these breaks. This applies to both public and private jobs. If you work an 8-hour day, you can take:

- **one 60-minute break**
- **or two 30-minute breaks**
- **or three 20-minute breaks**

You and your boss should agree together on the best way to take these breaks. If you work part-time, you can still get breaks, just in shorter amounts to match your hours.

Your boss can give you two choices:

1. **You can breastfeed or express milk at work if there is a clean, private space.**
2. **If there is no space, your working hours can be shortened (with no pay cut) so you can breastfeed somewhere else.**

This law helps mothers return to work more easily, knowing they will be supported to keep giving breastmilk to their baby.

Who can take part in We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry?

Any business, community group, or organisation that has a place open to the public can take part.

This includes places like:

- Hotels
- Community centres
- Sports or leisure centres
- Restaurants and cafés
- Libraries
- Health centres or clinics

Employers who want help to make their workplace breastfeeding friendly for staff can also join.

Recommended facilities to support staff who are breastfeeding or expressing:

- **Suitable room with adequate privacy (an existing room can be repurposed to suit for the required time period)**
- **Supportive chair**
- **Fridge to store expressed breastmilk**
- **A power socket**

If it is not possible to provide these facilities, the employee may be offered to take their breastfeeding break off site in a 1 hour block at an agreed time.

How to support breastfeeding in your business or organisation

Here are some easy ways to show support for breastfeeding parents and help them feel welcome:

- **Put up the 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry' sticker** to show that breastfeeding is welcome in your place.
- **Have a comfortable chair** available for breastfeeding mothers. If possible, offer a quiet or private space if the mother wants it.
- **A separate room** is helpful but not needed. Just placing a chair in a quiet spot is often enough.
- **Offer a kind gesture**, like a glass of water or a cushion, to breastfeeding mothers.
- **Provide small toys**, like blocks, books, or crayons, to keep children busy is helpful but not needed.
- **Make sure all staff read and talk about the 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry' leaflet**, so they understand the law and how to help breastfeeding parents.
- **Share your support on social media**

How to join We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

1. Learn about the campaign

Someone in charge of your business, group, or organisation should read and understand what We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry is all about.

2. Sign the agreement

This person must sign a form (called Appendix 1 in this document) to say you agree to take part.

3. Send the form

Take a photo or scan the signed form and email it to: HealthyKerry@kerrycoco.ie

4. Get your pack

Once they get your form, you'll be sent a pack with:

- a window sticker
- posters
- other useful resources (paper and online)

5. Share the news

You can use social media to tell people you are now part of the campaign. If you use X tag @HealthyKerry, or Facebook tag @HealthyCountyKerry

6. Be listed online

Your name and address will be added to the list of places supporting breastfeeding on the website: https://www.healthykerry.ie/

7. Keep a copy

Save a copy of the signed agreement for your own records.

8. Give feedback anytime

If you want to share how things are going, email: HealthyKerry@kerrycoco.ie

Useful links/resources:

Healthy Kerry website www.healthykerry.ie	The Healthy Kerry website gives information on health and wellbeing projects in Kerry. On the website you can find: • Information on We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry • How to sign up to We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry	Use this QR code to bring you to the We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry page.

My Child website **mychild.ie**	The HSE website **mychild.ie** has lots of support for breastfeeding parents and their families. On the website, you can find: • Information about breastfeeding • Local breastfeeding support groups near you • A free **live chat or email service** where you can ask questions This service is run by trained breastfeeding experts called **Lactation Consultants**	MyChild.ie Use this QR code to bring you directly to 'Ask the Expert' live chat.

My Child Books 	**Free My Child Books from the HSE** The HSE gives out free **My Child** books to parents. These books have helpful advice for you and your baby. They include support and information about breastfeeding, with answers to common questions many parents have.	MyChild Books
Breastfeeding: A good start in life 	**Breastfeeding Your Baby** A Simple Guide for Parents and Families	BF A Good Start in Life

Healthy Habits for Children: https://publuu.com/flip-book/376708/1514740	The Healthy Habits for Children e-booklet provides guidance and support on healthy habits for children for parents/carers in Cork and Kerry	

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We wish to acknowledge

Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland for sharing their Breastfeeding Welcome Here scheme concept and for permission to replicate their resources available at www.breastfedbabies.org/

We would like to acknowledge We're Breastfeeding Friendly Limerick and Louth for sharing their resources.

We would like to acknowledge We're Breastfeeding Friendly Clare and Tom Kent, Regional Literacy Coordinator with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board for sharing their literacy proofed resource.

Disclaimer

Important information about We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry helps businesses, groups, and organisations show support for breastfeeding parents and families. However, the people who run and fund the campaign **are not responsible** for the actions or standards of any place that takes part. They **do not control** how staff or customers behave at those places.

If you give feedback (good or bad) about a business, group, or organisation, it will be passed on to the organisation. If the feedback is negative, some suggestions may be given to help improve the situation but We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry cannot force any changes to be made.

The information in this booklet was carefully checked, but we cannot be held responsible for any mistakes or problems that could happen.

Appendix 1: We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry agreement

On behalf of ..... I agree that:

Our business, community group or organization supports the ethos of '**We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry**', and will endeavor to follow the guidance provided (see page 10) to develop a breastfeeding friendly culture for our staff and customers.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Please print name: .....

Role in business, group or organisation: .....

Business/group/organisation name: .....

Type of business, group or organisation: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

Twitter handle, if any: .....

Facebook address, if any: .....

Instagram address, if any: .....

Website address: .....

Number of participating premises: .....

Address(s) of each participating premises: .....

.....

.....

Please complete and return to HealthyKerry@kerrycoco.ie

BESTIE

Éire Shláintiúil

Báúil le Cothú Cíche Ciarraí

Healthy Ireland

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Kerry

For more details please contact:
The Healthy Kerry Coordinator
T: 066 718 3680 E: HealthyKerry@kerrycoco.ie
W: https://www.healthykerry.ie/
@HealthyCountyKerry @HealthyKerry

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