



**Cognni Limited**  
**POL108 – Breastfeeding Policy**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Cognni is committed to providing employees with the ability to balance their working lives with their personal lives, including supporting employees with childcare responsibilities. Cognni recognises the health benefits to both mother and child that breastfeeding provides and is committed to making provision for female employees who wish to continue breastfeeding after their return to work following maternity leave.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this policy is to provide the support that is necessary to enable female employees returning to work following maternity leave to continue breastfeeding for as long as they deem appropriate. Cognni believes that by ensuring appropriate provisions are in place, both the employee and the company will benefit. These benefits may include reduced parental absence throughout the organisation, higher rates of women returning to work after giving birth, lower recruitment and training costs, improved employee continuity, more people being attracted to employment within Cognni and increased morale and employee loyalty, enabling employees to make important choices for their families. Cognni has a duty to consider whether or not the mother's working conditions are a risk to her health or the health of her baby.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all female employees who make a request in writing to their line manager to provide support/facilities to enable her to continue breastfeeding upon her return to work. It is the duty of the line manager to decide what the practical arrangements will be in agreement with the employee. This will depend on hours worked, service provision, the ability to use flexible working/home working, and where the baby is being cared for. This policy may be used along with other policies and procedures.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Directors and Heads of Service**

- Support requests and supply the necessary facilities where reasonably possible.
- Ensure managers and employees are aware of the policy. Line Managers Ensure female employees are aware of the policy before starting maternity leave.
- Discuss breastfeeding arrangements with the employee before their return to work, once the employee has confirmed in writing their intention to breastfeed. This could be by phone, letter, email, or face to face. Arrangements could include reasonable breaks to express milk or use of the Flexible Working Policy to allow home visits for feeding purposes. Carry out a risk assessment to identify any particular risks that need to be considered in relation to the arrangements put in place for the mother to continue breastfeeding. Some of these risks may include exposure to chemicals or lead or lead derivatives, infectious diseases, extremes of cold and heat, excessive physical or mental pressure, shocks/vibration, manual handling, etc. All options should be considered to accommodate both the employee and service provision.
- Explore all possible options to alter the work pattern or tasks to eliminate any identified risk. If after all possible consideration has been given to altering the work pattern, no alternative can be found, redeployment should be considered for a temporary period to facilitate breastfeeding arrangements. People Operations must be consulted in this instance. It should be noted that there is no legal requirement to allow breastfeeding mothers to return home during the working day to feed their baby and any agreement to such requests would take

into account circumstances such as distance to the employee's home address. However, in terms of best practice line managers can consider such requests using flexible working/home working options to accommodate any request where possible. It is, however, recognised that facilities must be provided to allow mothers to express milk at work.

## **Employees**

- The employee should inform her line manager in writing that she intends to continue breastfeeding upon her return to work. This should be done as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Discuss any breastfeeding arrangements with her line manager prior to returning to work. This could be by phone, letter, email, or face to face.
- Take reasonable care to ensure her own health and safety and not to put others at risk from her actions, e.g. keep the breastfeeding area clean and tidy after use, storing breast milk appropriately, keeping to the arrangements agreed with the line manager.

## **PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Cognni recognises that all women and children are different and require different arrangements to meet their needs. The length of time that a mother breastfeeds is based on her own personal choice and therefore there is no time limit on breastfeeding arrangements. There is a wide range of flexible working arrangements available to help mothers continue breastfeeding while at work. This may involve a temporary change to the duties the employee carries out in her daily work for health and safety reasons, or a temporary change to the routine of the working day. The line manager and employee should complete a risk assessment and discuss the practical arrangements before the employee returns to work. Areas for discussion will include working time, flexible working hours, times and arrangements for breaks for feeding/expressing milk, facilities etc. While it is the employee's own decision as to how long she will breastfeed, it is important also to agree a review date at this meeting to evaluate the practical implications and if necessary, amend the previously agreed arrangements. Reasonable time will be allowed during working hours to express milk. This in practice could mean agreeing extended lunch and/or other breaks, starting slightly later in the morning or leaving early in the evening, depending on service provision and within the context of the flexible working options. Where an employee wishes to express milk at work the Cognni ideally should provide the following facilities:

- A warm clean room
- A low comfortable chair
- A lock or privacy sign for that room
- Electric sockets
- Hand-washing facilities in the room or near by
- A hygienic place to clean pumps and store sterilising equipment
- A fridge for storing milk at the appropriate temperature
- Where working time or duties are amended whilst the employee is breastfeeding, this will have no effect on the employee's salary.