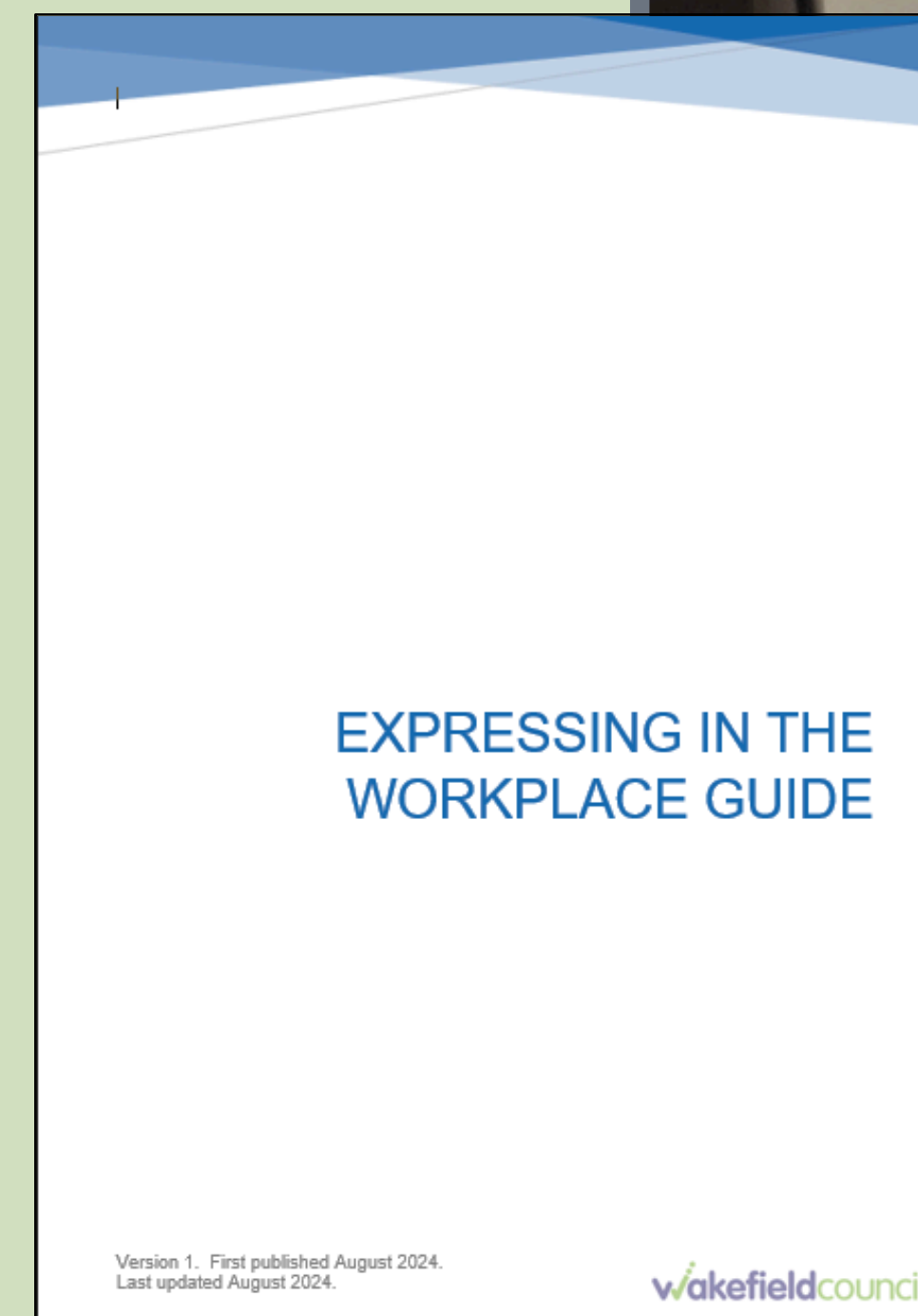


'Breastfeeding Friendly Employer'

Wakefield Council's initiative was created to better support colleagues **returning from maternity leave**. Staff told us they often struggled to find a private, safe and suitable **space to express milk**, with some having to use toilets or inappropriate rooms. In response, teams from HR, Public Health, Property, Facilities and Health and Safety worked together to create the Council's first dedicated **Expressing Room** at Wakefield One.

The space is equipped with comfortable seating, power outlets, and a fridge, alongside privacy screens to ensure a supportive and discreet environment. It also features artwork celebrating local breastfeeding women and includes a suggestion box to support continuous improvement. In addition, clear **guidance** has been developed to assist managers in supporting parents returning to work.

Since the launch of the Expressing Room, employees have reported **reduced stress, smoother transitions** back to work, and feeling **valued** by the organisation. Feedback has been very positive...



"What a brilliant improvement this is. I had my children 20 years ago while I worked for the NHS and this would've made my transition back to full-time work after maternity leave much easier and less stressful. I'm glad that Wakefield Council is helping mothers to continue breastfeeding for as long as they want to."

"Such a great addition to Wakefield One. Had this been in place when I returned to work back in 2022, this would have been much-used! Thanks for going the extra mile."

"Just to share that I love that Wakefield Council has introduced a dedicated space for expressing. It is something more workplaces should introduce, as I feel that it can be a barrier for women returning to work and trying to balance work and parenthood. Well done."



The Infant Feeding Steering Group (IFSG) is committed to creating **healthier working environments** and **improving perinatal mental health**, ensuring that **parents feel supported** throughout their breastfeeding journey and their return to work. This approach works to **strengthen positive working relationships** and **reduce staff absences**.

Promoting the **'Breastfeeding Friendly Employer'** award showcases the positive impact of supporting expectant and returning parents as they transition back into a welcoming and accommodating workplace. By providing **safe and accessible spaces** to express breastmilk during working hours, employers help parents continue giving their child the best start in life. During the antenatal period, employees can openly discuss their return to work, confident that they will be supported through a significant life event, helping to reduce additional stress or anxiety.

Wakefield Council's Infant Feeding Steering Group submitted four nominations to the **Yorkshire & Humber Infant Feeding Awards** in January 2026; three of those nominations were shortlisted.

We were very proud to say that we had two winning nominations for:

**Breastfeeding Friendly Employer
&
Breastfeeding in Adversity**



For further information or queries, contact janetwilson@wakefield.gov.uk