

# Maternal Wellbeing Infant Feeding and Return to Paid Work

## Technical Report 5: HR and Line Manager Surveys

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# Acknowledgements

*We would like to thank the Nuffield Foundation for funding the study (grant WEL/23247). <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/maternal-wellbeing-infant-feeding-return-to-work>*



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# 1. Survey Questions and Samples

To capture the 'employer' / organisational perspective we run a HR survey and line manager survey.

## 1.1 HR Survey

Our HR Survey was conducted by YouGov Plc as part of their weekly HR Decision Maker panel survey. 508 adults completed our survey. Fieldwork was undertaken between 21st - 26th March 2024. The survey was carried out online. Respondents included 130 from large firms (250+ employers), 126 from medium enterprises (50-249 employees) and 252 from small medium enterprises (1-49 employees), and covered a range of industries: manufacturing (69), construction (58), retail(34), finance and accounting (47), hospitality and leisure (20), legal(11), IT & Telecoms (86), Media, marketing, advertising, PR & Sales (30), medical and health services (35), education (17), transport and distribution (20) real estate (11), other (70). 31% of respondents were female, 25% were aged under 35, 28% aged 35-44, 19% aged 45-54, and 28% aged 55+. Questions asked in the YouGov survey can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Since YouGov's Decision Maker panel does not cover the public sector, we supplemented the survey with one undertaken on the online research platform Prolific<sup>1</sup>. We selected from the Prolific sample who had listed Human resources as part of the function in their organisation and had listed as working in one of the following industries: public administration and defence (government and public administration, police, military), education (College University and Adult Education, Primary/Secondary (K12) education, Other Education), Health and Social Work (Health Care and Social Assistance, Non-profit/Social Services). We included education and health as we know from our UKHLS and mother survey a reasonable proportion work in these industries, and given most in these sectors are not in the private sector, we wanted to supplement those provided in the YouGov survey.

We targeted 150 responses and received 144 useable responses (we had 157 responses with 13 reporting industries in our survey outside are target industries, see Appendix 1.2): 52 from health and social work, 48 from education and 44 from public administration and defence. 105 were from large organisations, 29 from medium and 105 from large organisations. Note the survey conducted via Prolific asked the same core questions as those in the YouGov survey except we replace the word 'business' with 'organisation' in questions (see Appendix 1 for details about the survey questions asked in the Prolific survey).

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<sup>1</sup> Prolific is an online research platform that connects researchers with research participants, from among Prolific's pool of potential participants. Researchers can select participants based on characteristics or select a representative sample (based on sex, age and ethnicity). For more information about Prolific see, <https://www.prolific.com/researchers>

### *Definition of Business/Organisation Characteristics*

YouGov provided some standard characteristics of the business (see Appendix 1.2) including organisation size, industry and main region of business. For consistency across other datasets in this study (see the UKHLS Technical Appendix) we grouped the industries provided by YouGov into industry sectors. Table 1.1 outlines the industries used and how we grouped the YouGov industry groups (it was not possible to combine the 'Other' category with another so this was left as a separate category and excluded when interested in differences by industry sector). As discussed in Appendix 1.2 in the Prolific survey eligible industries included Public Administration, Education, and Health and Social Work, and were divided into their categories based on the derived 2007 standard industrial classification (SIC) – see Table 1.3 for more details as we used the same method to categorise industries in the Line Manager Survey,

Table 1.1: Industry Definitions, HR Survey

Short Name	Full Name	YouGov Categories
<b>Primary and Secondary Industries</b>	Manufacturing, construction and primary industries	Manufacturing Construction
<b>Transport and Communication</b>	Transport, information and communication	Transportation & distribution IT & telecoms
<b>Business and Professional Service</b>	Finance, business and professional services	Finance and Accounting Real Estate Legal Media/marketing/advertising/PR & Sales
<b>Other Services</b>	Retail, accommodation and food; other services	Retail Hospitality & leisure
<b>Public Administration</b>	Public Administration and Defence	Not included in the YouGov panel
<b>Education</b>	Education	Education
<b>Health and Social Work</b>	Health and Social Work Activities	Medical & health services

Due to some regions having small cell sizes, the region the business/organisation was based was grouped into the same reduced categories that YouGov used for the region the respondent mainly works (as opposed to the region of the business):

- North (combining North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Midlands (combining East Midlands and West Midlands)
- East
- London

- South (South West and South East)
- Wales
- Scotland
- Elsewhere (i.e. outside of Great Britain)

In some cases, this did still lead to small cell sizes, as it was not always possible to combine categories.

Table 1.2 reports the characteristics of the HR Survey, also including a split by the YouGov and Prolific surveys. The difference in the organisation and respondent characteristics between the two surveys reflect that the Prolific focused on industries more in the public/other sector (although some in the Education and Health and Social Work industries may be in the private sector). where organisations are typically large organisations, and employees are more likely to be female. The difference in age likely reflects that Prolific users are typically, on average, younger.

Table 1.2: Characteristics of HR Survey Sample

	All (%)	YouGov (%)	Prolific (%)
<b>Organisation Size</b>			
Small (10 to 49 employees)	40.2	49.6	6.9
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	23.8	24.8	20.1
Large (250+ employees)	36.0	25.6	72.9
<b>Industry</b>			
Primary and Secondary Industries	19.5	25.0	0.0
Transport and communication	16.3	20.9	0.0
Business and Professional services	15.2	19.5	0.0
Other Services	8.3	10.6	0.0
Public Administration	6.8	0.0	30.6
Education	10.0	3.4	33.3
Health and Social Work	13.3	6.9	36.1
Other	10.7	13.8	0.0
<b>Region</b>			
North	15.6	13.6	22.9
Midlands	14.1	12.6	19.4
East	4.5	4.7	3.5
London	34.5	38.0	22.2
South	19.9	20.5	18.1

Wales	3.8	3.7	4.2
Scotland	6.8	6.3	8.3
Elsewhere (i.e. outside of GB)	0.8	0.6	1.4
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	58.4	68.9	21.5
Female	41.6	31.1	78.5
<b>Age Group</b>			
Under 35	28.5	25.2	40.3
35 - 44	29.5	28.2	34.0
45 - 54	18.1	19.1	14.6
55+	23.9	27.6	11.1
<b>Observations</b>	652	508	144

## 1.2 Line Manager Survey

To understand the line manager perspective we conducted a separate more detailed line manager survey. The full set of questions asked can be found in Appendix 2. We shared the survey through our networks but only received 28 responses. We therefore supplemented responses by running the survey through Prolific (as we did for the HR Decision Maker survey see Section 1.1), receiving a further 451 responses and increasing responses to 479. Respondents on Prolific (from among the pool of UK panellists) were eligible if, among Prolific's screening questions,' they had reported they had at least 1 subordinate and had management experience (both if they have ever had management experience and provided a response to years of management experience).

### *Definition of Organisation Characteristics*

In our line manager survey we asked via a free text question 'What does your organisation makes or do'. We used the information to provide an industry code using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes<sup>2</sup> and collapsed these to the industry section level, we then grouped industry section to the industry sector, following those categories used for the HR Decision Maker Survey and other datasets in the study. Table 1.3 displays how the industry section relates to the industry definitions used in the study. In some analysis, where the sample size was too small, we combined some industries into an 'Other' group

**Table 1.3: Line Manager Industry Definitions**

Industry Group	Industry UK SIC Sections
<b>Primary and secondary industries</b>	A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing B: Mining and quarrying C: Manufacturing D: Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities F: Construction
<b>Transport and communication</b>	H: Transportation and storage J: Information and communication
<b>Business and Professional Service</b>	K: Financial and insurance activities L: Real estate activities M: Professional, scientific and technical activities N: Administrative and support service activities
<b>Other services</b>	G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles I: Accommodation and food service activities

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<sup>2</sup> See

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/ukstandardindustrialclassificationofeconomicactivities/uksic2007>

	R: Arts, entertainment and recreation S: Other service activities T: Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods-and services-producing activities of households for own use U: Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies
<b>Public Administration</b>	O: Public administration and defence, compulsory social security
<b>Education</b>	P: Education
<b>Health and Social Work</b>	Q: Human health and social work activities

Notes: Industry sections were based on those from the [UK 2007 Standard Industrial classification](#).

Table 1.4 provides an overview of the characteristics of the respondents to our Line Manager Survey and separates out the 101 respondents who reported they had managed at least one breastfeeding employee. It is worth noting, that those who had managed a breastfeeding employee are slightly more likely to be a woman, are older, more likely to have children (that were breastfed).

Table 1:4 Characteristics of Line Manager Survey Respondents

	All (%)	Managed breastfeeding employee(s) (%)
<b>Female</b>	48.7	52.0
<b>White</b>	83.1	76.2
<b>Age group</b>		
<b>Under 35</b>	32.6	26.7
<b>35-44</b>	37.6	33.7
<b>45-54</b>	18.8	23.8
<b>55+</b>	11.1	15.9
<b>Have a degree</b>	68.4	75
<b>Age of youngest child</b>		
<b>Under 5</b>	26.1	24.8
<b>Aged 5-18</b>	26.7	33.7
<b>Aged over 18</b>	14.4	15.8
<b>No children</b>	32.8	25.7
<b>Any children who were breastfed</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	55.4	64.36
<b>Region</b>		
<b>North</b>	25.1	34.7
<b>Midlands</b>	15.9	16.8



<b>East</b>	6.5	7.9
<b>London</b>	16.7	12.9
<b>South</b>	20.5	11.9
<b>Wales</b>	4.8	9.9
<b>Scotland</b>	7.5	5.9
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	3.1	0.0
<b>Observations</b>	479	101

Table 1.5 provides an overview of the organisation characteristics of our Line Manager Survey respondents, including managerial experience. Table 1.5 shows we have a range of responses, across sector, industry, organisation size and managerial experience.

Table 1:5 Organisation Characteristics of Line Manager Survey Respondents

	All (%)	Managed breastfeeding employee(s) (%)
<b>Sector</b>		
Private sector	57.6	61.4
Public sector	31.9	31.7
Other sector	10.4	6.9
<b>Organisation Size</b>		
Large (250+ employees)	57.4	56.4
<b>Industry</b>		
Primary and Secondary Industries	9.0	7.9
Communication and Information	10.7	15.8
Business and Professional Services	19.6	14.9
Other Services	18.6	18.8
Public Administration	11.3	8.9
Education	13.4	14.9
Human and Social Work	17.5	18.8
No HR department	13.8	6.9
<b>Current Line manager</b>		
Yes	82.1	90.1
In last 3 years	13.6	9.9
Not in last 3 years	4.4	
<b>Employees managed in last 3 years*</b>		
1-2 employees	14.4	7.9
3-5 employees	27.5	17.8

<b>6-9 employees</b>	24.0	23.8
<b>10+ employees</b>	34.1	50.5
<b>Years of managerial experience*</b>		
<b>Under 3 years</b>	25.6	16.8
<b>2-6 years</b>	26.2	23.8
<b>6-10 years</b>	17.0	23.8
<b>10+ years</b>	31.2	35.6
<b>Managed employees returning from maternity leave**</b>	42.4	85.2
<b>Employees managed returning from maternity leave**</b>		
<b>1-2 employees</b>	58.3	57.0
<b>3-4 employees</b>	27.8	29.1
<b>5+ employees</b>	13.9	14.0
<b>Managed breastfeeding employee(s)</b>	22.1	100.0
<b>N</b>	479	101
<b>*Questions were only asked to those with line manager experience in the last 3 years (n=458 respondents and 101 for those with experience of managing breastfeeding employees)</b>		
<b>**Question asked to those who had managed employees returning from maternity leave (n=194 respondents and 86 for those with experience of managing breastfeeding employees)</b>		

## 1.3 Line Manager Interviews

To obtain further insight into the line manager experience we undertook interviews with 5 line managers. Line managers were recruited through our line manager survey, Interviews took place in October 2024 via MS Teams and were recorded for transcription purposes. Recordings were destroyed once transcription had taken place and interviews were fully anonymised and participants were given a pseudonym. See Appendix 2 for details of the interviews and the core questions asked.

## 1.4 Industry Profiles

Given our interest in exploring differences by industry and organisation size it is useful to understand how industries vary in terms of their characteristics. We used the second quarter of the 2024 UK Labour Force Survey<sup>3</sup> to obtain some basic characteristics of the industry sectors we used in this study. This quarter corresponded to the period that the HR and Line Manager surveys took place. As shown in Table 1.6 it is worth noting that the Education, and Health and Social Work industries are female dominated, whilst the Primary and Secondary Industries and Transport and Communication are

<sup>3</sup> For information about the UK Labour Force Survey see <https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurvey>. We obtained the data for the UK Data Service, see <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=2000026>

male dominated. Education, followed by Business and Professional Services has the greatest proportion of highly educated (has a university degree) workers, with Other Services having the lowest proportion.

**Table 1.6: Industry Profiles, UK Labour Force Survey**

	% Women	% Highly Educated	Mean Age	% White	% Flexible working	% Mainly WFH
<b>Organisation Size</b>						
Small (< 50 employees)	59.1	39.5	47.5	89.4	23.4	22.6
Medium (50-249 employees)	54.5	48.1	46.0	88.0	23.4	18.8
Large (250+ employees)	53.7	59.3	44.7	84.7	33.7	31.5
<b>Industry Sector</b>						
Primary and Secondary Industries	32.4	37.4	46.7	90.5	24.8	22.0
Transport and Communication	30.8	46.5	45.3	83.4	24.9	39.3
Business and Professional services	50.4	55.7	44.7	87.2	28.6	41.0
Other services	56.3	30.7	46.4	87.9	17.6	11.7
Public administration	58.4	52.4	46.5	90.6	52.5	39.6
Education	73.1	63.4	47.3	90.5	19.2	11.5
Health and Social Work	80.8	52.8	46.4	82.6	25.7	13.9
All	56.2	48.2	46.2	87.4	26.7	24.5

*Source: 2024 UK labour force Survey quarter 2 (this corresponds to the same quarter as the HR and Line Manager Surveys were undertaken). Includes 10,849 employees. Flexible working refers to those with a flexible working arrangement. WFH refers to working from home.*

Industries also vary according to the proportion who are working flexibly and/or working from home. Education and Other Services. have the lowest proportion of

workers with flexible working arrangements, with Public Administration having the highest proportion of workers with one. Working from home is less common among those working in Education, Other Services and Health and Social Work, and more common in Business and Professional Services and Transport and Communication. Large organisations tend to have a lower proportion of women, a higher number who are highly educated, and have higher rates of flexible working arrangements and working from home than small and medium organisations.

It is difficult to know what a UK representative sample of line manager would look like but we explored average characteristics of line managers (Table 1.6) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 2024 UK Labour Force survey, as used above to explore industry profiles. In general, line managers are more likely than the average employee (non-managers) to be: male; older; more educated; white, and to have children (partly reflective of managers being older).

**Table 1.6: Characteristics of Line Managers in the UK Labour Force Survey**

	% Male	% with a degree	% white	Mean Age	% Age 45+	% Have child
<b>Managers</b>	51.0	62.6	89.5	46.9	57.2	41.8
<b>Non-managers</b>	41.0	42.6	86.5	45.9	52.6	35.4
<b>Industry (managers only)</b>						
<b>Primary and Secondary industries</b>	71.4	53.3	91.4	48.3	61.7	37.7
<b>Transport and Communication</b>	68.5	62.7	82.5	45.4	53.4	42.8
<b>Business and Professional Services</b>	54.7	65.8	89.7	45.8	52.4	43.0
<b>Other Services</b>	55.0	44.8	90.3	46.6	53.8	40.8
<b>Public Administration</b>	44.9	66.2	91.1	47.0	60.1	42.4
<b>Education</b>	35.3	78.6	91.0	47.1	57.9	47.1
<b>Health and social work</b>	24.5	70.0	88.5	48.3	62.8	40.5

*Source: 2024 UK labour force Survey quarter 2 (this corresponds to the same quarter as the HR and Line Manager Surveys were undertaken). Includes 3,049 managers and 7,815 non-managers.*

## 2. Analysis of qualitative responses provided by the surveyed line managers

### 2.1 Introduction

This part of the analysis summarises the dominant opinions and reasons provided by line managers to Q4 and Q37/Q43. Q6 focused on respondents' beliefs and opinions regarding the importance of supporting breastfeeding employees at work, while Q37/Q43 aimed to elicit what kind of training they as line managers would like to receive to support breastfeeding mothers (Q37 was asked to those who had managed a breastfeeding employee, and Q43 to those who had not). Qualitative textual responses obtained were uploaded onto Sketch Engine as two separate corpora and analysed focusing on the most frequent nouns, as this part of speech is most likely to highlight the reasons that the respondents provided. As in the analyses of employees' qualitative responses, we examined nouns with the minimum frequency of 10 in responses to Q4 (larger amount of textual data) and the minimum frequency of 3 in response to Q37/Q43 (small amount of textual data) to ensure that we highlight dominant and shared views and matters. In order to expand on the meanings provided, we performed a collocational analysis of some of the most frequent nouns, which allowed us to zoom into the relevant answers and explore those for more qualitative details.

### 2.2 Why is it important to support breastfeeding employees? Line Manager views and attitudes

4. Please expand on why you think it is important/unimportant for your organisation to support breastfeeding employees

Most of the line managers said that it was important to offer support to breastfeeding mothers, with only 25 responses disagreeing. We focus first on the reasons why line managers thought the support was needed.

Table 2.1 shows the most frequent nouns in the line managers' responses to Q4. There were in total 50 nouns, of which the most frequent were 'mother', 'employee' and 'child'.

Table 2.1: The most frequent nouns (minimum frequency 10) in responses to Q4

Noun	Freq.	Norm. Freq.	Noun	Freq.	Norm. Freq.	Noun	Freq.	Norm. Freq.
Mother	243	15754	life	26	1686	equality	13	843
employee	154	9984	maternity	25	1621	workforce	12	778
Child	132	8558	company	25	1621	business	12	778
Work	119	7715	parent	24	1556	process	12	778
Baby	97	6288	choice	22	1426	duty	11	713
Woman	88	5705	benefit	20	1297	order	10	648
workplace	61	3955	people	19	1232	space	10	648
Milk	56	3630	family	18	1167	barrier	10	648
employer	53	3436	break	18	1167	office	10	648
organisation	48	3112	return	17	1102	role	10	648
Breast	45	2917	leave	17	1102			
Right	40	2593	environment	16	1037			
Health	40	2593	job	15	972			
Support	34	2204	wellbeing	15	972			
Time	34	2204	issue	15	972			
Feeding	33	2139	opportunity	14	908			
Place	33	2139	reason	13	843			
Need	28	1815	day	13	843			
Staff	27	1750	everyone	13	843			
Way	27	1750	policy	13	843			

This suggests that employers in our survey focused predominantly on employees and the benefits to them. The most frequent collocates of 'mother' (see Figure 2.1) show that indeed, most liner managers felt that it is important to support mothers as this have an enabling function as demonstrated by frequent verbal collocates such as 'allow', 'enable', 'encourage' and 'give'. All these verbs are used with 'mother' as an object in the sentence, positioning mother as a receiver of the actions.

1. I think it's important as it helps **mothers** to get back into the workplace after having children and it's one less thing for a breastfeeding mum to worry about
2. I think it is important that employees do everything necessary to allow **mothers** to breastfeed in the workplace because that put mothers in a position to feel more comfortable and understood in the workplace
3. Breastfeeding supports the best health for **mother** and baby and helping and supporting a parent to return to work and continue breastfeeding will result in better emotional and physical health for that parent.
4. Breastfeeding is a right of all parents and with current costs of baby formula it's even more important that **mothers** are allowed to feed their babies or express as formula might not even be a viable option for them.
5. A **mother's** ability to breastfeed and/or express breastmilk is very important for the babies health and development and it should be supported by our organisation

While most respondents were congruent in the view that breastfeeding mothers need to be supported because it is important for their wellbeing, most responses highlighted wider benefits of this support for the organisation and work environment. Some respondents emphasized that this might help mothers return to work earlier and thus contribute to mothers' career and benefit company's productivity and talent retention, while others highlighted positive outcomes for creating a more inclusive and family friendly work environment and becoming more of a caring organisation. Thus, there was a strong recognition that this kind of support is in fact a win-win situation:

6. Supporting a **mother** provides for both a satisfied employee and a supportive work environment and all are conducive to positive outcomes
7. I think it is important to support this as it encourages a happy workforce and enables **mothers** to return to work with a young baby, assuming the facilities are in place for the baby to actually be in the workplace.
8. Because it allows **mothers** to continue working, is inclusive and reduces disruption to the work force.
9. Supports the **mother's** wellbeing and motivation to return to work.
10. It is very important for employers to support **mothers** who wish to continue to breastfeed or express breastmilk upon return to work so that they can have full concentration at work and also believe they are getting full support from their employers at the time of need.
11. his will enhance motivation and retention and by doing this small thing will have a big impact in a **mother** returning to work.

Several respondents placed the matter within wider organisational policy context and strives towards greater equality and inclusion especially when it comes to women and support for their career progression. The noun 'equality' was in fact mentioned in 13 responses:

12. Its important to promote **equality** and support new mothers.
13. Important for gender **equality** in enabling women to continue breastfeeding without it affecting their careers
14. I think it is important as it is incredibly hard to return to work after having a child anyway without making feeding your child more difficult It sends a very good message promoting **equality**

11 respondents included the noun 'duty' highlighting that it is mostly the responsibility of the organisation to offer support and care:

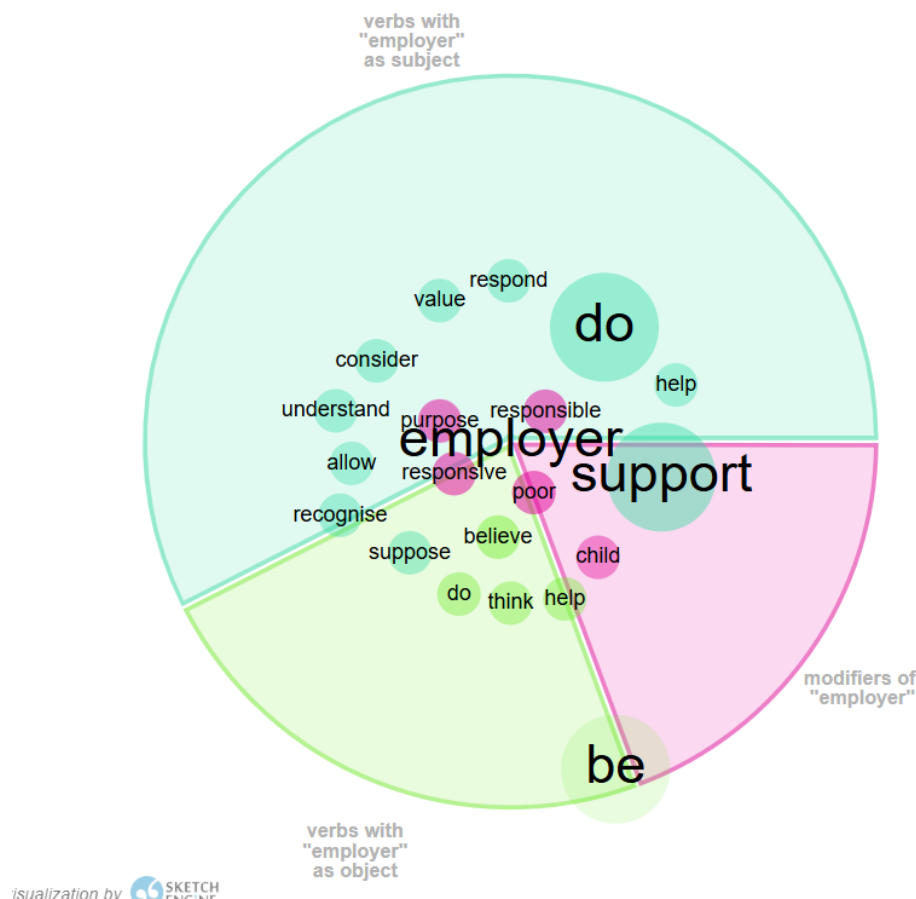
15. We have a **duty** of care for our staff and this is a need they have as a mother.
16. An employer has a **duty** of care for their employees.
17. As employers we have a **duty** of care to employees, and should provide a level playing field for all

This was strongly evidenced in instances in which the noun employer was used (53 responses). Figure 2.2 lists the most frequent collocates of the noun 'employer'. As it



is clear from the responses, the employers should ‘understand’, ‘consider’, ‘allow’, ‘recognise’, ‘respond’, ‘help’ and ‘support’ breastfeeding mothers.

Figure 2.2: The most frequent collocations of ‘employer’ in responses to Q4



10 respondents recognise a lack of support specifically as a barrier for both women’s career progression but also for organisation which might lose talent otherwise:

18. Our organisation wants to retain our talent, and as such any **barriers** or reasons for someone to leave should be removed.
19. There should be no intrinsic **barriers** to progression in the workplace, breastfeeding mothers deserve support and understanding
20. We want their knowledge and expertise back in the business and breastfeeding shouldn’t be a **barrier** to that

Very similar opinions and attitudes were reported when talking about employees in more general terms as ‘staff’ and ‘workforce’. The noun ‘staff’ was used in 28 responses; line managers emphasize the need to get staff back to work, to maintain staff retention and avoid a high turnover of staff, but also to ensure the duty of care to create an inclusive, healthy and supportive work environment for everyone. The statements below show some exemplary responses:

21. I see supporting breastfeeding as being an investment in your organisation, in **staff** retention, and in improving morale
22. Breastfeeding is a natural process for women who have children, and a workplace needs to accommodate to its staff to create a healthy working environment and avoid high **staff** turnover rates
23. Breastfeeding supports the mental and physical wellbeing of breastfeeding employees, reduces **staff** absence because of child sickness and sends a clear message about holiday support of employees
24. I think it's important to accommodate breastfeeding mothers returning to the workplace because in many instances they are returning to their roles before maternity leave and have all the experience, knowledge and expertise of that role and rapport with existing **staff** that cannot be replaced.
25. The workplace should be inclusive and welcoming otherwise **staff** won't want to stay.

While most respondents saw support for breastfeeding mothers as positive and essential, a few line managers highlighted some concerns or reservations. Two respondents highlighted that it might be difficult in their sector or industry to accommodate breastfeeding mothers:

26. It's especially **difficult** in my industry with emergencies, shift work and lack of private space.
27. As I work in an educational establishment, the reality of a mother who wishes to continue to breastfeed is very **difficult**.

Only 10 respondents did not share the overall positive stance. Some suggested that breastfeeding is a personal choice and a private matter and as such the responsibility to manage feeding and work commitments lies solely with the mother.

28. Everyone has their own issues, requirements, illnesses etc, you just have to manage them the best you can and ensure your work doesn't suffer.
29. Of course it's important to break down the stigma regarding breastfeeding but at the same time I think it's important to focus on work related **issues** and aspects of someone's personal life and I think breastfeeding fits into the latter.
30. I just don't know if it that important many mothers will work this situation out for themselves.
31. Difficult to accommodate. Should consider when is the right time to return to work
32. It can be done before leaving for work in the morning. If additional breaks are provided for this, other employees would also want extra breaks

2 said that they did not consider it an important matter or was something they thought about:

33. I don't think it is a widescale issue.
34. As a male it is not something I have ever thought about.

3 respondents expressed outright negative and event discriminatory views:

35. it is unimportant, if you breastfeeding don't come to work
36. New mums should stay at home!
37. We would not employ people who are breastfeeding - mothers would not be able to bring babies to work.

Although responses that considered support for breastfeeding mothers difficult or not necessary were in absolute minority, they still show that in some workplaces there might be serious reservations and even discriminatory attitudes towards breastfeeding mothers.

## 2.3 Summary

The analysis of qualitative responses to Q4 indicates a predominantly positive attitude by line managers towards supporting breastfeeding mothers at work. The majority of line managers recognised the importance of supporting breastfeeding mothers, emphasising the positive impact on both the mothers' and children's wellbeing. Line managers noted advantages such as improved staff retention, increased employee satisfaction, and enhanced workplace inclusivity, and mostly view this kind of support as a win-win for both the employee and organizational outcomes. The notion of equality, inclusion and rights were frequently mentioned, with line managers recognizing their role in promoting gender equality and reducing career barriers for women. Additionally, many viewed support for breastfeeding as part of their overall duty of care, emphasising ethical responsibilities towards employees. Negative views were in absolute minority.

## 2.4 Line Manager Training

If any, please state [further] training/guidance you would like to receive in relation to managing breastfeeding employees

Line managers were asked if they would like to receive any [further] training or guidelines regarding support for breastfeeding mothers. 134 respondents answered this question. Table 3 shows the top nouns, of which 'training' (39 times), 'policy' (25) and 'guidance' (22) were mentioned particularly frequently.

Table 2.3: The most frequent nouns (minimum frequency 3)

Noun	Freq.	Norm Freq.
training	39	17257
policy	25	11062
guidance	22	9735
employee	15	6637
none	13	5752

manager	11	4867
company	10	4425
mother	8	3540
place	6	2655
information	6	2655
organisation	6	2655
time	5	2212
topic	5	2212
work	5	2212
workplace	4	1770
break	4	1770
situation	4	1770
issue	4	1770
management	4	1770
employer	3	1327
breast	3	1327
right	3	1327
recommendation	3	1327
subject	3	1327
feeding	3	1327
leave	3	1327
guideline	3	1327

Most respondents expressed the wish for more training either as specifically dedicated training package for breastfeeding mothers or as part of more training on the slightly more general topic of parents returning to work and/or pregnancy. Only 13 respondents said that there were in no need of training ('none' used in 13 responses).

38. More **training** on what can be done in the workplace to make people feel more comfortable in this situation

39. Any **training** on parents returning to work after maternity leave would be beneficial.

40. I've never had any **training** here so anything would be a step forward

41. Some focused **training** on it might be useful

42. so would prefer **training** when someone is pregnant so it is relevant and up to date.

25 line managers said that they would welcome a policy with many specifying that it should be a 'clear', 'proper' or 'formalised' company policy:

43. A proper **policy** needs to be put in place rather than leaving it up to managers discretion

44. I think our organisation should have a clear **policy** on this

45. A more formal **policy** produced by my employer that I could consult and use.

46. a full **policy** breakdown to ensure I'm following the right protocol

A similar pattern emerged in responses that used the word 'guidance' (22) with most respondent emphasising that they wish they had some written or formal guidelines that they could use to support breastfeeding employees. Some also mentioned the need for governmental or legal guidance to be explicitly communicated within their workplace contexts:

- 47. Would like to see any government **guidance** as well as ACAS etc to ensure my company was enacting this correctly
- 48. I would like more **guidance** on the law and on our company policies and facilities
- 49. **Guidance** on ensuring we are putting appropriate accommodation in place for an employee to breastfeed as long as they wish to.
- 50. **Guidance** on what is acceptable, what adjustments can be made, what is and isn't covered in terms of pay or hours worked

It is clear from the responses that alongside training, line managers feel they are in need of a formal policy or guidance which would give them the necessary tools to support mothers and make appropriate decisions as opposed to the matter being at their discretion. Studying the responses in which the noun 'manager' was used provide further evidence that line managers feel they need more formal and informal support in order to be more supportive for their breastfeeding employees:

- 51. I would like to know what being a good **manager** who supports breastfeeding looks like I think I would be able to manage this locally.
- 52. What is expected of **manager** and employee and what support is required
- 53. A more formal policy produced by my employer that I as line **manager** could consult and use.

Figure 2.4: The most frequent nouns



To summarise, a considerable number of respondents expressed a need for more training and a clearer policy framework, suggesting that line managers are seeking more structured guidance and support to effectively assist breastfeeding mothers. This discrepancy between positive intentions and practical implementations suggests an urgent need for organizations to establish formal policies and training programs to truly support breastfeeding employees.

## Appendix 1: HR Decision Maker Survey Questions

The following questions relate to questions asked to the YouGov Panel – the same questions were asked to the public sector sample, except ‘organisation’ was used in place of ‘business’.

### Appendix 1.2: Characteristics of Business/Organisation and Respondent

#### *YouGov survey*

YouGov provided the following characteristics of interest:

Organisation size:

- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250+ employees)

Industry (Select all that apply and Main)

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Retail
- Finance and Accounting
- Hospitality and leisure
- Legal
- IT & telecoms
- Media/marketing/advertising/PR & Sales
- Medical & health services
- Education
- Transportation & distribution
- Real estate
- Other

Region Business Based (Question asked: Where in Britain is the business you work for based?)

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands

- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East
- South West
- Wales
- Scotland
- Elsewhere (i.e. outside of Great Britain)

#### Sex

- Male
- Female

#### Age

- Under 35
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55+

#### *Prolific Survey*

Prolific provided information on sex (options of male and female) and age (in years). We grouped age into the same categories as used by YouGov.

For organisation characteristics we provided additional questions. We asked respondents their organisation size, giving options, and added the option of 'I am not sure but fewer than 250 employees' and 'I am not sure but 250+ employees'. No respondent ticked the 'I am not sure but fewer than 250 employees'. We then grouped categories into the same categories as used by YouGov.

To obtain further information on the main industry we asked a free text question of 'What does your organisation make or do?' and used the information to allocate an industry code using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. We then collapsed the SIC code to the industry section which allowed us to identify the industry sector they belonged to (see Section 1.1) We further asked: 'Which sector is your organisation in?': Public, Private, Other [Please specify]. Using both the industry sector and whether they were in the private sector or not we were able to identify those in our target industries: Public Administration and Defence, Education, Health and Social Work. 13 (out of 157 responses) did not meet our industry criteria and hence reduced our sample size to 144.

To obtain information on the region of the organisation we asked, 'Which region of the UK is your organisation mainly based?', giving them the same options as in the YouGov survey.



## Appendix 1.1: Core Questions

**JUB\_Q1. Which, if any, of the following policies/practices/training does your business have in place, in relation to maternal/parental leave and breastfeeding? (Please select all that apply)**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

Enhanced paid maternity leave beyond statutory maternity leave

Extended paid paternity/childbirth support leave beyond two weeks

A section on breastfeeding support as part of a maternity policy

A separate formal breastfeeding policy

Include breastfeeding as part of an expectant/new mothers' health and safety risk assessment

Offer breastfeeding employees a formal meeting/conversation with line managers/HR to discuss their concerns and needs

Offer mentorship/coaching for employees returning from parental leave

Guidance/support/training for line managers managing employees returning from maternity/parental leave

Guidance/support/training for line managers managing breastfeeding employees

Guidance for employees on breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk in the workplace

Other

Don't know

**JUB\_Q2. Which, if any, of the following facilities or opportunities to support breastfeeding employees returning from maternity/parental leave does your business offer? (Please select all that apply)**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

Onsite childcare facilities

A purpose-designed room for breastfeeding (i.e. including a chair, a sink, a fridge etc.)

A non-purpose-designed room for breastfeeding (i.e. a private place which does not have facilities specifically for breastfeeding)

Facilities to store breastmilk (e.g. a specific fridge)

General facilities to store breastmilk (e.g. a communal staff fridge)

Facilities to wash breast pump equipment

A phased return to allow returning employees and their children time to adjust

Opportunities to work from home/flexible working arrangements

Additional/extended paid breaks to allow employees time to express breastmilk/breastfeed when needed

Additional/extended unpaid breaks to allow employees time to express breastmilk/breastfeed when needed

Other

Don't know

**JUB\_Q3. How, if at all, does your business inform employees of the policies/support/facilities available to them regarding breastfeeding? (Please select all that apply. If your business does not inform employees about this, please select the 'Not applicable' option.)**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

Via an in-person meeting when the employee provides formal notification of their pregnancy/maternity leave

Via email/other written communication when the employee provides formal notification of their pregnancy/maternity leave

As part of the health and safety assessment provided to pregnant employees/new mothers

In person during keep in touch days/whilst the employee is on leave

Via email/other written communication whilst the employee is on leave

Via an in-person meeting when the employee is returning to work

Via email/other written communication when the employee is returning to work

Online (e.g. via intranet)

Other

Don't know

Not applicable - my business does not inform employees about this

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Please select one option on each row)**

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

**JUB\_Q4\_1. It is the responsibility of employers to make it possible for mothers to breastfeed or express breastmilk while at work**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q4\_2. It is the responsibility of employees to locate the business' policies regarding breastfeeding and/or discuss concerns and seek support when needed**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q4\_3. Employers have a duty of care to support breastfeeding employees in the workplace**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q4\_4. My business is clear about what is needed or would be needed to accommodate employees wishing to express breastmilk and/or breastfeed in the workplace**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q4\_5. It is easy/practical to accommodate breastfeeding employees in my business**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q4\_6. My business' Right to Request Flexible Working policies provide adequate support for breastfeeding employees**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

**JUB\_Q5. Which, if any, of the following barriers has/does/would your business face regarding supporting breastfeeding employees? (Please select all that apply. If your business does/has/would not face any barriers regarding supporting breastfeeding employees, please select the 'Not applicable' option.)**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

Lack of clear legal guidance/policy on employers' responsibilities regarding breastfeeding employees

Lack of facilities/space for employees to breastfeed/express breastmilk

Lack of awareness of the legal requirements

Lack of awareness of how to best support breastfeeding employees

The nature of the job makes it difficult to allow (some or all) breastfeeding employees to work from home/adjust shift patterns

The nature of the job makes it difficult to allow (some or all) breastfeeding employees to take more frequent/longer breaks

Lack of cover to allow breastfeeding employees to take longer/more frequent breaks and/or adjust start/finish times

An overriding formal equality approach that means we treat everyone equally and hence make no special provision for employees choosing to breastfeed

Not knowing which employees are breastfeeding/need support

Other

Don't know

Not applicable - my business does/has/would not face any barriers regarding supporting breastfeeding employees

**JUB\_Q6. Which, if any, of the following do you feel would help better support breastfeeding employees in your business? (Please select all that apply. If you don't think there is anything that would better support breastfeeding employees in my business, please select the 'Not applicable' option.)**

Base: HR Decision Makers surveyed

A private room for breastfeeding/expressing employees

A fridge to store expressed breastmilk

A mentor/coaching system to support return to work/infant feeding choices

Longer/better paid leave provisions

Better flexible working opportunities for breastfeeding employees

Clarity around the legal obligations relating to breastfeeding employees

A policy around breastfeeding/expressing breaks

Better employee guidance/information provision for breastfeeding employees

Better line manager guidance/information provision around supporting breastfeeding employees

Training for line managers and colleagues regarding breastfeeding in the workplace

Other

Don't know

Not applicable - I don't think there is anything that would better support breastfeeding employees in my business

## Appendix 2: Line Manager Survey and Interview Questions

### Appendix 2.1: Line Manager Survey Questions

Researchers at the University of Reading are undertaking a research study on 'Maternal Well-Being, Infant Feeding and Return to Paid Work Decisions' which is being funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

The study is interested in the group of women who wish to continue to breastfeed upon return to work, and how they can be better supported in the workplace. To understand the employer perspective, we are conducting a survey of line managers based in the UK who are currently line managing individuals or who have line managed individuals in the last 3 years. We want to hear from line managers regardless of whether they have line managed individuals who have returned from maternity leave or who have breastfed. Participation is voluntary and the survey is entirely anonymous. It should take approximately 12 minutes of your time. For more information about the study please see our website. If you agree to take part in the survey all information will be strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. If you have any questions about the survey or wish to receive more information about the survey or the research which it is going to inform, please e-mail X.

Please confirm that: 1) I have read and understand the above information for this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. 2) I agree to take part in this study

I confirm the above and consent to take part in the study

## **Section 1: Your views**

### **Q1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements**

[Scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree/Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know]

1.1 You are clear about what is needed or would be needed to accommodate employees wishing to express breastmilk and/or breastfeed in your workplace

1.2 It should be the responsibility of employers to make it possible for mothers to breastfeed or express breastmilk while at work

1.3 It should be the responsibility of employees to locate their employer's policies regarding breastfeeding and/or discuss concerns and seek support when needed

1.4 Breastfeeding is not something a line manager should have to deal with at work

1.5 Breastfeeding employees should have the right to one or two additional breaks per day to breastfeed their child/express breastmilk

### **Q2 In general, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for an employee in your organisation to combine breastfeeding and/or expressing breastmilk with paid work?**

Very easy

Somewhat easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Somewhat difficult

Very difficult

It depends on the job role

Don't know

### **Q3 How important or unimportant do you think it is that your organisation support mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed and/or express breastmilk upon return to work?**

Very important

Somewhat important

Neither important nor unimportant

Somewhat unimportant

Very unimportant

**Q4 Please expand on why you think it is important/unimportant for your organisation to support breastfeeding employees** [Free Text]

**Q5 How comfortable or uncomfortable do/would you feel if a mother breastfeeds near you?**

[Scale of Very comfortable, Somewhat comfortable, Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, Somewhat uncomfortable, Very uncomfortable]

5.1 In a public place

5.2 In your workplace

5.3 In an in person meeting

5.4 In an online meeting

**Q6 Would you typically expect a mother to be breastfeeding and/or expressing breastmilk if she returned to work when her child is...?**

[Options: Yes, No, Don't know]

6.1 3 months

6.2 6 months

6.3 9 months

6.4 12 months

**Q7 Do you know for how long the NHS recommends children are breastfed for?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**Q8 Please state how long you think the NHS recommend children are breastfed for?** [Free text, asked to those who responded yes or not sure to Q7.]

## **Section 2: Your Organisation's Workplace Support**

**Q9. Does your organisation offer onsite childcare facilities?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q10 Does your organisation offer any of the following facilities or opportunities for breastfeeding employees?** [Options: Yes, No, Don't know]

10.1 A purpose-designed room for breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk (e.g. including a chair, a sink)

10.2 Facilities to store breastmilk (e.g. a specific fridge)

10.3 General facilities to store breastmilk (e.g. a communal staff fridge)

10.4 Facilities to wash up breast pump equipment

10.5 Opportunities to work from home/flexible working arrangements so an employee can breastfeed/express breastmilk

10.6 A phased return to allow returning employees and their children time to adjust

**Q11 If an employee wanted to breastfeed/express breastmilk during work hours, where would it be recommended they do so?** [Please select all that apply]

A purpose-designed room for breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk (e.g. including a chair, a sink etc.)

In a first aid room

In a private office/workspace

Other private place

In the toilets

Recommended to work from home

No recommendation made/let the employee decide

Don't know

Other [Please specify]

**Q12 Does your organisation accommodate additional/longer breaks to allow time to breastfeed/express breastmilk?** [Please select all that apply]



Yes, employees are formally entitled to additional/extended breaks

Yes, employees can take such breaks as and when needed

This would be a matter of discussion between the employee and their line manager

No

No, the employee would be expected to use their scheduled breaks such as lunch and tea breaks

It depends on the job role

Don't know

Other [Please specify]

**Q13 Would any breaks for expressing breastmilk/breastfeeding typically be?**

Paid [the individual would not be expected to make the time up]

Unpaid [the individual would be expected to make the time up]

It depends

Other [Please specify]

**Q14 Does your organisation provide any information for employees regarding breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk in the workplace? [Please select all that apply]**

Yes, information on our organisation's formal breastfeeding/expressing milk policy/guidance

Yes, through a meeting with the line manager

Yes, through a meeting with human resources/other colleague

Yes, signposting to facilities for breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk

No

Don't know

Other [Please specify]

**Q15 When would this information/meeting be provided/take place? [Please select all that apply]**

Before they go on leave

On keep in touch days

Whilst they are on leave

Upon/after their return to work

During a health and safety risk assessment

When the employee provides notification they are pregnant

When the employee provides notification they are breastfeeding

Don't know

**Q16 If any, please state any other provisions or workplace support your organisation offers to support breastfeeding employees** [Free text]

**Q17 In your job role (or any previous job role), have you received training/guidance on any of the following?**

Diversity/unconscious bias training

Harassment/bullying training

Managing individuals going on/returning from parental leave

Breastfeeding and the workplace

Conducting health and safety risk assessments

None of the above

### **Section 3: Your Line Managerial Experience**

#### **Q18 Do you currently line manage any individuals?**

Yes

No, but I have line managed individuals in the last 3 years

No and I have not line managed any individuals in the last 3 years

#### **Q19 How many individuals have you line managed in the last three years?** [asked if Q18=Yes or No, but I have line managed individuals in the last 3 years]

1-2

3-5

5-9

10-14

15-19

20+

#### **Q20 How many years of line manager experience do you have [include line manager experience in all job roles/organisations you have worked for]?** [asked if Q18=Yes or No, but I have line managed individuals in the last 3 years]

Less than a year

1-2 years

2-3 years

3-4 years

5-6 years

6-7 years

7-8 years

8-9 years

9-10 years

10+ years

**Q21 Have you ever line managed any individuals who have returned from maternity leave or are due to return from maternity leave?** [asked if Q18=Yes or No, but I have line managed individuals in the last 3 years]

Yes

No

**Q22 How many individuals have you line managed who have returned from maternity leave?** [Asked if Q21=Yes]

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10+

**Q23 Are you aware of any individuals that you have line managed who were breastfeeding when they returned to work?** [asked if Q18=Yes or No, but I have line managed individuals in the last 3 years]

Yes

No

Don't know

**Section 4: Line Managed Breastfeeding Employees** [this section asked if Q23=Yes]

**Q24 Did you seek out any information in relation to supporting breastfeeding employees?**[Please select all that apply]

Yes, I referred to my organisation's formal breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk policy/guidance

Yes, I referred to ACAS's guidance on accommodating breastfeeding employees

No, I did not know where to look

No, I did not think I needed to seek out any information

Other [Please specify]

**Q25 Did any of the individual(s) you line managed who were breastfeeding formally notify you or someone else in your organisation writing that they were breastfeeding?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q26 Did you meet with any of the individual(s) to discuss how you can help support their breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk needs?**

Yes

No

**Q27 Who initiated this meeting?** [asked if Q26=Yes]

The individual

You

Human resources

Someone else

**Q27 When did discussions with the individual(s) about their breastfeeding /expressing breastmilk needs take place?** [Please select all that apply]? [asked if Q26=Yes]

Before they went on leave

On Keep In Touch (KIT) days

Whilst they were on leave

Upon their return to work

When officially notified that the employee was breastfeeding

Don't know

**Q28 Why did you not meet with the individual(s)?** [Please select all that apply]?  
[asked if Q26=No]

They did not want a meeting

I did not think a meeting was necessary

We discussed over email

I felt uncomfortable suggesting a meeting

I did not know the procedure to suggest a meeting

They met with another colleague / Human Resources

I did not know they were breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk

Other [Please specify]

**Q29 How comfortable or uncomfortable do you/would you feel discussing with an individual you line manage about breastfeeding?**

Very comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable

Somewhat uncomfortable

Very uncomfortable

It depends on the individual

**Q30 Did you undertake a health and safety risk assessment for any of the individuals you managed who were breastfeeding?**

Yes

No

No, but someone else did

**Q31 When did the health and safety risk assessment, and any updates, take place** [Please select all that apply]? [Asked if Q30=Yes or No, but someone else did]

When first notified of pregnancy

Other point during pregnancy

On Keep In Touch (KIT) days

Whilst on leave

Upon/after return to work

When officially notified that the employee was breastfeeding

Don't know

**Q32 Was breastfeeding ever discussed as part of a health and safety risk assessment?** [Asked if Q30=Yes or No, but someone else did]

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q33 Did the individual(s) request any of the following to help accommodate their breastfeeding needs?** [Please select all that apply]

Phased return

Working from home request

Altered start/end time

Other flexible working request

A place to express breastmilk/ breastfeed

Facilities to store breastmilk

A place to wash up breast pump equipment

More frequent/longer breaks to express breastmilk/breastfeed

Other [Please specify]

None of these

Don't know

**Q34 Were any of these requests rejected?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q35 Why were any requests rejected?** [Asked if Q34=No]

**Q36 Do you feel you have received adequate training/guidance to manage a breastfeeding employee?**

Yes

No

I do not feel I needed any training/guidance

**Q37 If any, please state [further] training/guidance you would like to receive in relation to line managing breastfeeding employees? If anything, what do you wish you had known in relation to line managing breastfeeding employees?**  
[Free text]

**Q38 If any, please state anything else you would like to share relating to your experience breastfeeding employees?** [Free text]



## **Section 5: Not line Managed Breastfeeding Employees**

*To help answer the following questions, imagine an individual who you line manage informs you they are breastfeeding*

**Q39 If you wanted to seek out information in relation to supporting a breastfeeding employee where would you look? [Please select all that apply]**

I would refer to my organisation's formal breastfeeding/expressing breastmilk policy/guidance

I would refer to ACAS's guidance on accommodating breastfeeding employees

I would not know where to look

I would not seek out any information

Don't know

Other [Please specify]

**Q40 How comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel discussing with an individual you line manage about breastfeeding?**

Very comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Neither comfortable or uncomfortable

Somewhat uncomfortable

Very uncomfortable

It depends on the individual

**Q41 Would an employee receive a (updated) health and safety risk assessment as a result of informing you or your organisation they are breastfeeding?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q42 Do you feel your organisation provides adequate training/guidance for you be able to line manage a breastfeeding employee?**

Yes No

I do not feel I would need any training/guidance

**Q43 If any please state [further] training/guidance you would like to receive in relation to line managing breastfeeding employees?**

## **Section 6: Experience of Breastfeeding**

**Q44 Do you know anyone who has breastfed?** [Please select all that apply]

I have breastfed

Your partner

Relatives

Friends

Work colleagues

Other

I do not know anyone who has breastfed

**Q45 how long did you breastfed for?** If you have breastfed more than one child, please answer for the child you breastfed the longest [Asked if Q44=I have breastfed]

Under 1 month

1-3 months

3-6 months

6-9 months

9-12 months

More than 12 months

I am still breastfeeding

Prefer not to say

**Q46 Overall how would you describe your breastfeeding experience(s)?** [Asked if Q44=I have breastfed]

Very positive

Somewhat positive

Neither positive nor negative

Somewhat negative

Very negative

Prefer not to say

**Q47 Do you know whether you were fed with breastmilk or formula milk when you were a baby?**

Fed with breastmilk entirely or almost entirely

Fed with formula entirely or almost entirely

Fed with both breastmilk and formula milk

I don't know

**Q48 Were any of your children breastfed?**

All

Some

None

I don't have any children

Don't know

## **Section 7: About Your Job Role and Organisation**

*The next few questions are about your job role and organisation.*

**Q49 What is your job title?** [Free text]

**Q50 How long have you worked in your current role?**

Less than 1 year

1 year but less than 2 years

2 years but less than 5 years

5 years but less than 10 years

10 years but less than 20 years

20 years or more

**Q51 How long have you worked for your organisation?**

Less than 1 year

1 year but less than 2 years

2 years but less than 5 years

5 years but less than 10 years

10 years but less than 20 years

20 years or more

**Q52 What does your organisation make or do?** [Free text]

**Q53 Which sector is your organisation in?**

Private

Public

Other [Please specify]

**Q54 How many people does your organisation employ?**

Under 25 employees

25 to 99 employees

100 to 249 employees

250-499 employees

500+employees

I am unsure but fewer than 250 employees

I am unsure but 250 or more employees

**Q54 Does your organisation have a Human Resources (HR)department?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**Q55 Who fulfils the Human Resources (HR)role in your organisation? [Asked if Q54=No]**

## **Section 8: About you**

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about you. The survey is anonymous so the information cannot be traced back to you. This information will be used to ensure we collect a range of experiences.

### **Q56 What is your sex? [An optional question about gender identity will follow]**

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

### **Q57 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

[Optional question]

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

### **Q58 How old are you?**

18-20

21-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-59

60-69

70+

### **Q59 What is your ethnic group?**

\*White /English /Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British

Any other white background

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian Background

Black African

Black Caribbean

Any other black background

Mixed/multiple ethnic background

Any other ethnic group

Prefer not to say

**Q60 What is your highest qualification level?**

\*Degree level (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate, PGCE, PhD)

Higher qualification below degree level (e.g. higher education certificate/diploma)

A-level /AS-level, International baccalaureate or equivalent

GCSE/O-level or equivalent

Other

No Qualification

Prefer not to say

**Q61 What is the age of your youngest child?** [Asked to those who do not respond  
I don't have any children to Q48]

0-2 years

3-4 years

5-11 years

12-15 years

16-18 years



Over 18

**Q62 In what region of the UK do you currently work?**

\*

North East

North West

Yorkshire and the Humber

East Midlands

West Midlands

East of England

London

South East

South West

Wales

Scotland

Northern Ireland

**Q63 If any, please enter below any further information you wish to provide or any further comments**

## Appendix 2.2: Line Manager Interview Information and Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in taking part in an interview or focus group for our project exploring ‘Maternal Well-Being, Infant Feeding and Paid Work Decisions’. Please see below for information about the project and your involvement in it.

### **Project Information**

At the heart of this study is an exploration of the well-being, opportunities and experiences of new mothers who want to continue to breastfeed on return to paid work. This work will help identify practices that benefit mothers as well as areas of weaknesses and challenges in existing workplace processes. As part of this project, we would like to undertake some interviews and focus groups with HR decision makers and line managers to better understand the employer perspective. Based on this research, we aim to develop suggestions for best practice with the view to inform workplace policy and practice to better support mothers wanting to combine breastfeeding and paid work.

For brevity we use the terms women, mothers and breastfeeding, but we acknowledge that some individuals may not identify with the identities that those labels evoke and may prefer alternative terms.

### **Project team**

This project is being funded by the Nuffield Foundation and is being led by Professor Sarah Jewell. The project team includes academic researchers based at the University of Reading including experts in economics, law and health communication. For more information about the project please see [the study's webpage](https://research.reading.ac.uk/accommodating-diversity-in-the-workplace/current-projects/maternal-well-being-infant-feeding-and-return-to-paid-work-decisions/).<sup>4</sup>

### **What am I being asked to do and what information will be collected about me?**

Taking part in an interview or focus group is voluntary. You can take a break or leave the interview/focus group at any point. We will ask questions relating to your organisation's workplace practices, any challenges faced and what might help your organisation to support breastfeeding employees.

### **How will the information be processed and shared?**

The interviews/focus groups will be audio-recorded and transcribed, with pseudonyms used. We expect interviews/focus groups to last around 30-45 minutes. The recordings will be destroyed once the transcription has taken place. The anonymity of the participants will be ensured and protected at all stages of the research; transcriptions will be anonymised and any information that could identify an organisation or an individual will be removed. Transcriptions prepared in this way will be stored in a Word document and will be shared with the project

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<sup>4</sup> <https://research.reading.ac.uk/accommodating-diversity-in-the-workplace/current-projects/maternal-well-being-infant-feeding-and-return-to-paid-work-decisions/>

team. The transcriptions will be stored securely on the University of Reading network through a secure server.

On completion of the project the anonymised transcriptions will be deposited with the University of Reading research archive where they can be consulted by other researchers. If taking part in a focus group you will hear from others, so anything you hear should be considered confidential and should not be shared with anyone else, and you should not make any notes during the focus group. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point up to the recording of an interview/focus group is transcribed. Beyond this point we will not be able to identify your responses anymore as the transcriptions will be entirely anonymous.

We do hope that you are willing/able to contribute your views/stories/experiences to this study. Should you require more information or have any questions, please email Sarah Jewell: [s.l.jewell@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.l.jewell@reading.ac.uk).

*The Nuffield Foundation is an independent charitable trust with a mission to advance social well-being. It funds research that informs social policy, primarily in Education, Welfare, and Justice. It also funds student programmes that provide opportunities for young people to develop skills in quantitative and scientific methods. The Nuffield Foundation is the founder and co-funder of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, the Ada Lovelace Institute and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. The Foundation has funded this project, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily the Foundation. Visit [www.nuffieldfoundation.org](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)*

Please sign and date at the end to confirm you have read and understand the following, and consent to take part in the research:

1. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me and any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet above in so far as they relate to my participation.
2. I have had explained to me what information will be collected about me, what it will be used for, who it may be shared with, how it will be kept safe, and my rights in relation to my data.
3. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project and to withdraw my response up to their anonymised transcription, and that this will be without detriment.
- 4 I understand that the data collected from me in this study will be preserved and made available in anonymised form, so that they can be consulted and re-used by others.

5. The University of Reading is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal data collected within this research project will be processed in accordance with this act and with the University's Data Protection Policy (see [www.reading.ac.uk/data\\_protection](http://www.reading.ac.uk/data_protection)). This project has been reviewed by the appropriate Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

6. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Name: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Please return this consent form to Sarah Jewell: [s.l.jewell@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.l.jewell@reading.ac.uk), before your interview/focus group

## Appendix 2.3: Line Manager Interview Core Questions

Interviews were semi-structured and questions were adapted for each interviewee based on their experience/previous answers

Core Question	Prompts/notes
Ask them to briefly introduce themselves and say a little about their role, their experience, if any, of dealing with employees returning from maternity leave/ breastfeeding employees	Some may want to talk about their own breastfeeding experience, which would be fine
For those who have managed breastfeeding employees, ask to expand on their experience	How did it go? How did they feel when discussing breastfeeding with the staff member(s)? Who instigated the conversation and when / why then?
For those who have managed breastfeeding employee, ask: What do they think was the impact on the mother's wellbeing? What was the impact on the organisation?	How did other workers / people in the organisation respond? Ever come across any hostility or concerns about approach they took?
Ask to all: Whose responsibility do they think it is to facilitate the needs of returning workers that want to express breastmilk / breastfeed?	Clarify if asked: the responsibility could fall on the employer or could fall on the employee Is there a time limit on that 'facilitation'?
Ask to all: Do they think it <i>important</i> that your organisation facilitates infant feeding decisions and needs? Why / why not?	
Ask to all: What do you think the legal rights of workers that want to continue to breastfeed when they return to work are?  Do you think your organisation abides by the law? goes beyond those 'rights' – do they do enough or too much? That more could / should be done in this area?	Is there a right to breastfeed? To breaks? To a written policy? To a risk assessment
Ask to all: What are the challenges around facilitating infant feeding at work, if any, in your workplace/sector?	re time, a policy, facilities, knowing the legal requirements, other workers views?
Ask to all: What support is available in your organisation (if any)?	Online? Legal dept? HR?)

Where would you look for guidance / support (if any)?	
Ask to all: What do you think might help support breastfeeding workers? Is there anything your organisation, or organisations more generally, could do better/ differently?	What do you feel the implications of this might be for the wellbeing of working mothers who are breastfeeding? Do you think this approach would be widely supported? if not – why not
What guidance / support (if any) would be useful? ie what would help you or your organisation to help support breastfeeding employees?	
Is there anything else you would like to add?	

## Appendix 3: Supporting Regressions

Regressions were estimated using ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors.

Table A3.1 provides regressions that explore agreement with whether supporting breastfeeding employees is an employer/employee responsibility, using the characteristics available in the HR survey, and comparing the responses in the HR and Line Manager surveys.

Table A3.1: HR and Line Manager Views on Employer/Employee Responsibility

	HR Survey			Line Manager Survey		
	Employer Resp.	Employee Resp.	Duty of Care	Employer Resp.	Employee Resp.	Not Deal With
<b>Female</b>	0.130 [0.092]	-0.189* [0.106]	0.082 [0.080]	0.115 [0.081]	-0.325*** [0.111]	-0.230** [0.101]
<b>Aged 45+</b>	-0.487*** [0.094]	-0.179* [0.105]	0.444*** [0.084]	-0.244*** [0.094]	0.178 [0.111]	0.164 [0.119]
<b>Industry Group (ref: Primary and Secondary industries)</b>						
Other Services	-0.042 [0.156]	0.223 [0.174]	0.129 [0.132]	0.193 [0.139]	-0.106 [0.209]	-0.598*** [0.200]
Business and Professional Services	0.073 [0.133]	0.115 [0.151]	0.112 [0.112]	-0.076 [0.166]	-0.157 [0.202]	-0.305 [0.232]
Transport and Communication	0.119 [0.116]	0.306** [0.141]	0.072 [0.101]	0.059 [0.131]	-0.207 [0.180]	-0.424** [0.210]
Health and Social Work	0.148 [0.142]	0.164 [0.165]	0.214* [0.117]	0.308** [0.130]	-0.201 [0.192]	-0.844*** [0.194]
Education	0.072 [0.170]	0.170 [0.177]	0.149 [0.140]	0.083 [0.153]	-0.035 [0.205]	-0.381* [0.225]
Public Administration	0.301* [0.157]	0.519** [0.216]	0.211 [0.167]	0.123 [0.140]	-0.149 [0.201]	-0.408* [0.219]
<b>Organisation size (ref: under 50 employees/under 250)</b>						
50-249 employees	0.095 [0.113]	0.201 [0.124]	0.125 [0.096]			
250+ employees	0.243** [0.110]	0.162 [0.128]	0.278*** [0.092]	0.003 [0.081]	-0.149 [0.108]	-0.100 [0.102]
Observations	625	624	636	476	476	467
R-squared	0.153	0.086	0.143	0.075	0.050	0.089

Robust standard errors in brackets

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Includes control for main region of organisation

Dependent variable on a scale of Strongly disagree to Strongly agree, a higher value represents greater agreement with the statement. Responses of don't know removed

Employer Resp: It is the responsibility of employers to make it possible for mothers to breastfeed or express breastmilk while at work

Employee Resp: It is the responsibility of employees to locate the business' policies regarding breastfeeding and/or discuss concerns and seek support when needed

Duty of Care: Employers have a duty of care to support breastfeeding employees in the workplace

Not Deal With: Breastfeeding is not something a line manager should have to deal with at work

Table A3.2 expands on Table A3.1 for the line manager survey, including additional characteristics available in the line manager survey. Regression 1 includes a control for whether the respondent has a child and regression 2 whether the respondent has a child that was breastfed. These two regressions were run for each of the three dependent variables in Table A3.2.

Table A3.2: Line Manager Views on Employer/Employee Responsibility, with additional characteristics

	Employer Resp		Employee Resp		Not Deal With	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
<b>Female</b>	0.148*	0.139*	-0.351***	-0.349***	-0.253**	-0.248**
	[0.083]	[0.082]	[0.114]	[0.114]	[0.103]	[0.102]
<b>Aged 45+</b>	-0.319***	-0.334***	0.073	0.074	0.327**	0.326**
	[0.097]	[0.095]	[0.123]	[0.122]	[0.130]	[0.128]
<b>Have University degree</b>	0.011	0.002	-0.173	-0.168	-0.059	-0.043
	[0.085]	[0.084]	[0.114]	[0.114]	[0.104]	[0.104]
<b>White</b>	0.255**	0.265**	-0.020	-0.022	-0.515***	-0.519***
	[0.125]	[0.124]	[0.169]	[0.170]	[0.168]	[0.168]
<b>Have Child</b>	-0.030		-0.022		-0.092	
	[0.094]		[0.117]		[0.112]	
<b>Have Child: breastfed</b>		0.178**		-0.061		-0.191*
		[0.084]		[0.107]		[0.105]
<b>Industry Group (ref: Primary and Secondary industries)</b>						
Other Services	0.172	0.190	-0.092	-0.096	-0.549***	-0.560***
	[0.140]	[0.142]	[0.216]	[0.216]	[0.205]	[0.205]
Business and Professional Services	-0.044	-0.030	-0.133	-0.137	-0.316	-0.330
	[0.171]	[0.172]	[0.208]	[0.209]	[0.236]	[0.237]
Transport and Communication	0.167	0.198	-0.198	-0.206	-0.455**	-0.477**
	[0.128]	[0.131]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.214]	[0.216]
Health and Social Work	0.332**	0.323**	-0.160	-0.160	-0.756***	-0.760***
	[0.135]	[0.136]	[0.201]	[0.202]	[0.202]	[0.201]
Education	0.109	0.115	-0.030	-0.033	-0.319	-0.331
	[0.151]	[0.150]	[0.210]	[0.211]	[0.228]	[0.226]
Public Administration	0.103	0.090	-0.158	-0.158	-0.299	-0.301
	[0.141]	[0.142]	[0.201]	[0.201]	[0.222]	[0.219]
250+ employees	0.009	0.016	-0.153	-0.153	-0.085	-0.085
	[0.081]	[0.080]	[0.112]	[0.112]	[0.104]	[0.104]
Managed a BF employee	0.056	0.047	0.079	0.081	-0.112	-0.108
	[0.098]	[0.097]	[0.137]	[0.137]	[0.123]	[0.123]



Observations	454	454	454	454	445	445
R-squared	0.091	0.101	0.060	0.061	0.123	0.129

Robust standard errors in brackets

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Includes control for main region of organisation and line manager experience

Dependent variable on a scale of Strongly disagree to Strongly agree, a higher value represents greater agreement with the statement. Responses of don't know removed

Employer Resp: It is the responsibility of employers to make it possible for mothers to breastfeed or express breastmilk while at work

Employee Resp: It is the responsibility of employees to locate the business' policies regarding breastfeeding and/or discuss concerns and seek support when needed

Not Deal With: Breastfeeding is not something a line manager should have to deal with at work

Regression 1 includes controls for whether they have a child, Regression 2 controls for whether they have a child who was breastfed

Table A3.3 expands explores factors that impact how comfortable a line manager is with discussion and seeing breastfeeding in the workplace.

Table A3.3; Line Managers Comfortableness with Discussing and Seeing Breastfeeding in the Workplace

	Comfortable discussing	Public	Workplace	Meeting	Online Meeting
<b>Female</b>	0.302*** [0.083]	0.291*** [0.106]	0.282** [0.114]	0.332** [0.132]	0.414*** [0.126]
<b>Aged 45+</b>	-0.189* [0.106]	-0.080 [0.114]	-0.159 [0.137]	-0.306** [0.154]	-0.270* [0.147]
<b>Have University degree</b>	-0.076 [0.091]	-0.048 [0.105]	-0.120 [0.121]	-0.089 [0.145]	-0.101 [0.132]
<b>White</b>	0.089 [0.114]	0.228 [0.151]	0.103 [0.157]	0.326* [0.188]	0.200 [0.181]
<b>Have Child: breastfed</b>	0.210** [0.084]	0.385*** [0.100]	0.433*** [0.113]	0.584*** [0.131]	0.404*** [0.118]
<b>Industry Group (ref: Primary and Secondary industries)</b>					
Other Services	0.084 [0.183]	0.158 [0.216]	0.252 [0.242]	0.299 [0.289]	0.385 [0.252]
Business and Professional Services	0.146 [0.185]	0.350 [0.231]	0.239 [0.263]	0.189 [0.291]	0.350 [0.262]
Transport and Communication	0.225 [0.163]	0.273 [0.210]	0.230 [0.231]	0.201 [0.273]	0.352 [0.242]
Health and Social Work	0.350** [0.168]	0.471** [0.210]	0.475** [0.228]	0.583** [0.277]	0.556** [0.247]
Education	0.269* [0.160]	0.275 [0.229]	0.153 [0.253]	0.159 [0.296]	0.152 [0.266]

Public Administration	0.181 [0.176]	0.213 [0.225]	-0.050 [0.259]	-0.091 [0.311]	0.038 [0.279]
250+ employees	0.044 [0.085]	-0.140 [0.102]	-0.247** [0.112]	-0.236* [0.129]	0.004 [0.123]
Managed a BF employee	0.241*** [0.085]	0.123 [0.107]	0.204 [0.127]	0.298** [0.148]	0.249* [0.132]
Observations	456	456	456	456	456
R-squared	0.113	0.115	0.120	0.146	0.114

Robust standard errors in brackets

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Includes control for main region of organisation and line manager experience

Dependent variable on a scale of Very comfortable to very uncomfortable, a higher value represents a higher level of comfortableness.

Respondents asked: How comfortable or uncomfortable do you/would you feel discussing with an individual you line manage about breastfeeding? How comfortable or uncomfortable do/would you feel if a mother breastfeeds near you?: In a public place, in your workplace, in an in person meeting, in an online meeting