



PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of Equality Supports Breastfeeding Friendly Premises

– *Minister Sacramento will introduce new legislative measures to protect breastfeeding mothers*

Breastfeeding is an important public health issue because it promotes health, prevents disease and generally confers extensive and well-established benefits. Breastfeeding is recognized as an extremely effective preventative health measure for both mothers and babies. Except in very few specific medical situations, breastfeeding should be universally encouraged.

The Government supports the awareness campaign that has been organised by the Gibraltar Breastfeeding Association, the aim of which is to inform mothers of the benefits of breastfeeding as well as to support any mums who may be feeling anxious about the process. This year's initiative is aimed at raising awareness of a mother's right to breastfeed and of the importance of providing environments where women are made to feel comfortable when doing so. The Association has launched a "Breastfeeding Welcome" scheme where they are encouraging local businesses and community facilities to provide a welcome, safe, clean and comfortable environment that promotes breastfeeding.

The Minister for Equality, Samantha Sacramento, has today announced that in order to promote breastfeeding, she will introduce law that will make it discriminatory for businesses and establishments not to permit breastfeeding: any such action would amount to discrimination. There will be proposed amendments to the Equal Opportunities Act to provide for this.

The Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento MP, said: "Breastfeeding is the most natural, healthy, best start a mother can provide for her child. Apart from the medical benefits breastfeeding has to both baby and mum, it can be done anytime and anywhere.

"Whether to breastfeed or not is, of course, a personal choice and mothers need to feel comfortable and confident when choosing to exercise that choice. As a society we need to help mothers feel comfortable in feeding their babies whenever they need to; we all have a role to play so that negative attitudes do not undermine this choice or discourage mothers from doing so. They will now have a right to do so because we will enshrine such a protection in law to make it an express provision that it would be discriminatory to treat women unfavourably because they are



breastfeeding. I have already instructed that an amendment to existing legislation be drafted so that I may give effect to these changes to the law in Parliament as soon as possible.

“I am grateful for our close working relationship with the Gibraltar Breastfeeding Association and the excellent awareness work that they do, and their new initiative to work with businesses to promote environments that are welcoming to breastfeeding mothers.”

Ms Tasmin Suarez of the Gibraltar Breastfeeding Association said: “The Health benefits from breastfeeding for mum and baby, both mentally and physically, can be one of the biggest gifts a family can bestow on their child. The Gibraltar Breastfeeding Association's aim is to empower every mother that wishes to breastfeed her infant to be able to do so. This is achieved by providing the correct information to all the community as a whole. The confidence to breastfeed is achieved through community support and we applaud the Ministry of Equality for introducing legislation to enable a family to be comfortable to feed their child whenever that child is hungry, without prejudice.”