

(A) Interview survey to 1 000 women who had directly breastfed or expressed milk at least once in past 12 months

## Top Three Locations of Breastfeeding Apart from Residence

Babycare & lactation rooms (BLRs) of shopping malls



BLRs of Maternal and Child Health Centres, hospitals, health centres or clinics



Meeting rooms or storage rooms in offices



## Top Three Reasons for Not Breastfeeding or Expressing Milk in Public Places

More convenient to breastfeed or express milk elsewhere



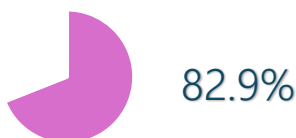
It made her / others feel embarrassed



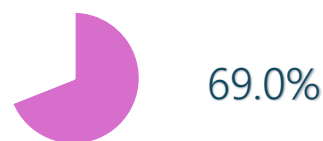
Direct breastfeeding or expressing breast milk in public places is seen as indecent exposure



Knew about Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO)



Knew about Provisions on Breastfeeding under SDO



Overall Satisfaction Level of BLRs (from 1-10)

Commercial Premises	Government Premises
7.6	6.9

Most Common Difficulty Encountered in the Most Recent Use of BLRs

Commercial Premises	Government Premises
Too crowded or long waiting time (25.1%)	Facilities were insufficient or in poor condition (22.4%)

## Suggestions for Breastfeeding or Expressing Facilities in Public Places

More breastfeeding or expressing facilities



Improve hygiene standards



Enhance privacy



## (B) Focus group discussions with 30 breastfeeding women

### Comments on Babycare and Lactation Rooms in Public Places

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#### Long Queues During Peak Times

“Generally, most large shopping malls do have lactation rooms. However, However, during **weekends** and **summer vacations**, there may be in higher demand and result in **shortages**.”



#### Inadequate (Especially in Older Malls and Government Premises)

“There is a lack of breastfeeding facilities in Hong Kong, especially in **old shopping malls** which are **entirely absent** of these facilities. This is really bad.”



#### Poor Condition

“The lactation room in a sports centre is **basically an accessible toilet with a shower**, meaning it's just a shower area where you can breastfeed.”



#### Hinder Male Carers from Usage

“My husband took our daughter out. But the **diaper changing table was only available in the ladies' restroom**. The needs of male carers have not been considered in such occasions.”



#### Potential Misuse by Individuals for Non-breastfeeding Activities

“Currently, some employees of the shopping malls **use the lactation rooms to relax or take naps**. Although they will let mothers use them first, it actually still hinders mothers from using them.”



#### Lack of Separation between Lactation and Diaper-changing Areas

“The babycare room has **both the diaper changing area and the lactation area in the same room**. Sometimes people need to change diapers only so they knock on the door impatiently. This can make me feel nervous and anxious.”

### Unwelcome Behaviours when Breastfeeding or Expressing Milk at Workplace and in Public Places

“After resuming work, I brought up the request of expressing milk with my boss but he refused. I proposed using my lunch break for expressing milk. But he insisted that it's not allowed in a secluded area without CCTV. He made it clear that the company would not take any responsibility if any accidents were to occur. In short, he **does not support and allow me to express milk at the workplace**.”

“I've had an experience that even though I covered myself with a nursing cover **at a library**, I was approached by a security guard who told me that **breastfeeding was not allowed there**.”

“**In restaurants**, I used a cloth to cover myself for breastfeeding discreetly. The restaurant staff often approached me and said, “Sorry, **some diners complained**. **How about arranging you to a more secluded area?**” I would wonder why this is necessary since I'm not causing any inconvenience to them. But at the end, I **have to hold my baby and breastfeed while being relocated**.”



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(C) Access Audit to 50 shopping centres and 50 government premises

Problems of the BLRs found in 40 Shopping Centres & 42 Government Premises

	Shopping Centres	Government Premises
Having directional signs and symbols with signs of gender stereotyping	45.0%	61.9%
Size of babycare area not complying with suggestion of Practice Note of Buildings Department	52.5%	38.1%
Inside restrooms	10.0%	19.0%
Non-users can easily see the interior when the door is open	42.5%	61.9%
Doors of babycare areas require fingers or effort to enter	32.5%	76.2%
Layout of babycare areas actually suitable for use by all genders^ but now restricted access to women only	13/15*	22/26*
A single area for both babycaring and breastfeeding by multiple users (men and women) but without partitions	3/25#	3/16#

^ Refer the BLRs which were for single user or had separate rooms or cubicles for breastfeeding.  
\* 15 and 26 babycare areas restricted access to women in shopping centres and government premises respectively.  
# 25 and 16 babycare areas allowed access to both men and women in shopping centres and government premises respectively.

(D) In-depth Interviews to 10 representatives from property developers and 10 representatives of property management companies

“Support for Provision of Babycare and Lactation Rooms in their Premises  
“We should increase the number of babycare and lactation rooms and enhance the privacy of these rooms.”

Challenges in Designing and Providing Facilities Due to Space Limitation  
“Due to limited space in the shopping malls in Hong Kong, the lactation rooms available are often not enough to meet the needs of breastfeeding mothers.”

Challenges when Renovating Older Shopping Centres Due to Regulatory Complexities  
“Older shopping malls may face challenges in adding breastfeeding facilities due to limited space or changes in ownership. Internal renovations in older malls can be extremely difficult or even impossible due to the involvement of multiple government departments and restrictions in regulations, such as the Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Buildings Department and Architectural Services Department.”



# Recommendations



## Government

- Consider incentives for establishing breastfeeding facilities
- Develop a babycare and lactation room award scheme
- Revise Practice Note on “Provision of Babycare Rooms and Lactation Rooms in Commercial Buildings”
- Mandate developers and government premises to plan for setting up and renovating babycare and lactation rooms
- Promote mobile apps and online resources



## Property Developers and Property Management Companies

- Allocate space for well-equipped babycare and lactation rooms
- Develop real-time queuing apps
- Highlight the uniqueness of babycare and breastfeeding facilities
- Distribute promotional leaflets to relevant staff



## Employers and Employees

- Adopt flexible policies that allow breastfeeding and integrate them into company protocols
- Conduct comprehensive awareness training sessions among employees