

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and implementing the National Strategic Action Plan for Breastfeeding

Participation in the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and meeting the criteria are key targets of the Strategy. Targets for Oct 2010:

- *At least 50% of hospital births to take place in nationally designated Baby Friendly maternity units.*
Currently about 38% births take place in the seven designated maternity units/hospitals (including Cavan hospital to be awarded April 1st). Re-assessments will occur in 2009-10 for five of the currently designated hospitals and these would need to maintain their designation.
- *100% participation in the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (maternity).*
Currently of the 20 maternity units, 18 units participate actively, 1 unit is recently inactive and 1 unit is not participating.

Supporting health facilities to participate in the BFHI and supporting national coordination of BFHI needs to be a priority.

BFHI participation directly links to achieving the strategic objectives, as well as assisting in achieving many others

Objective 2.1: Evidence based policies and best practice related to breastfeeding are identified and disseminated throughout the health care system.

	Action	Expected Outcome
2.1 (13)	Supports for mothers and babies with special needs will be enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The special breastfeeding needs of mothers and young children with disabilities are being addressed • If breastfeeding mothers or their babies require medical treatment in paediatric or general hospitals they are being facilitated to sustain and continue breastfeeding in accordance with BFHI guidelines.

Objective 2.3: Relevant health care facilities and organisations support and implement the WHO/UNICEF/HPH Baby Friendly Initiative

	Action	Expected Outcome
2.3 (19)	All relevant healthcare policy, provider and professional groups and institutions will pursue and support the goal of achieving and maintaining the WHO/UNICEF/HPH “Baby Friendly” designation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BFHI criteria for current best practice have been incorporated into all health service breastfeeding policies. • The BFHI has been incorporated into hospital/health service accreditation systems. • Staff member/s with the appropriate expertise are being identified to spearhead the training and institutional changes required to implement the BFHI. • The extension of the Baby Friendly Initiative beyond hospital settings is being pursued to include other relevant health settings. E.g.: community health care setting
2.3 (20)	Adequate support will be given to the coordination, monitoring, assessment and re-assessment processes of the BFHI to provide for the maintenance and expansion of its range of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BFHI is supported to maintain its current activities and the role, scope and resources of the BFHI have been examined to allow for further development and expansion of the Initiative. • Commitments to implement the BFHI are being included in the service plans for all relevant health institutions.

Objective 5.1: Employers support and protect breastfeeding among their employees

	Action	Expected Outcome
5.1 (38)	Employer, employee representative organisations and other key stakeholder groups will be provided with information on their obligations /entitlements under current maternity protection legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information resources have been developed on best practice support for breastfeeding in the workplace and have been disseminated to relevant groups. • Participation in the HPH / BFHI breastfeeding supportive health care workplaces project is being fostered and encouraged.

More information www.ihph.ie including information on the initiatives and breastfeeding support materials for staff and parents and the quarterly *BFHI Link* newsletter

National Coordinator of BFHI in Ireland : Genevieve Becker bfhi@eircom.net