



Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland Annual Report for 2015

The main objective for which the BFHI in Ireland is established is to benefit the community by encouraging and supporting health-promoting practices towards ensuring a breastfeeding supportive health care environment which fosters life-long health for infants and their mothers.

Based on the data returned by the hospitals to the BFHI national coordinator for 2014, 42% of births occurred in a Baby Friendly designated hospital, a similar rate to 2013 and higher than the 34% in 2010. The majority of infants breastfeed in hospital and are breastfeeding at discharge. Only one maternity units had a breastfeeding initiation rate below 50% (at 47.5%) which is an improving situation.

The BFHI in Ireland is funded through a grant from the Health Promotion and Improvement, Health & Well-being Division HSE to facilitate it to provide information, support, and monitoring of standards towards assisting hospitals to provide this environment.

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland acted towards its objective to encourage and educate health facilities towards implementing best practices, including to develop and disseminate policies and guidelines and supporting education materials.

Participating hospitals are supported to each carry out a planned action during the year to improve and sustain practices. In 2015 there was a focus on increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates with ten hospitals networking on this action. A wide variety of other actions were planned and supported including, improving skin to skin contact following C-section births, early initiation of hand expression for mothers of infants in the neonatal unit, improved environment for mother support in hospital, improving retention of antenatal information, and publication of research activity. Material for action planning is easily accessible available to hospitals via the web site. Action planning workshops were held at four venues, well attended with NMBI continuing education credits obtained for the workshops. Participant evaluation of the workshops generally rated it as excellent and requested an annual workshop. BFHI information was rated as highly used and suggestions were gathered for further topics.

Activity continued to gather and examine the existing guidelines, protocols and procedure documents related to Baby-friendly practices towards developing consistent guidance across the maternity units and reducing duplication of work.

The BFHI Link newsletter was published three times during the year including reports of experiences and achievements of hospitals in linking BFHI activity with quality programmes and communication ideas, breastfeeding statistics, research updates on evidence on infant feeding and obesity and what's in mothers' milk, use of language to promote and support breastfeeding as the norm, resource reviews including links for free downloads, and other items to assist in implementing the practices including staff materials on policy implementation, breastfeeding and emergencies, infant formula waste management and more. Parent handouts on positions for feeding, "is my milk good enough?" and responsive feeding formed part of the BFHI Link publications and are also on a separate section of the web site including QR codes to facilitate easy access via smart phones.

The BFHI in Ireland web site functions as an information point for those working in the maternity services, for service users and for interested wider public. It is well used with over 5000 visits (34,187 hits not including robots) and 31.5% of visitors adding the site to their favourites list in 2015. Material is added to the web site at least quarterly. During the year sections were added with Irish research articles, posters and presentations from hospitals related to Baby-friendly

practices as well as material that hospitals can use for orientation of new staff to the policies and practices and an enlarged section highlighting how marketing can effect attitudes and practices.

There is staff turnover within hospitals and this resulted in one new hospital BFHI contact person being oriented and supported through face to face support and assisting with networking regarding requirements of BFHI participation, completing annual reports and action planning.

The BFHI was very active in the updating of the HSE Infant Feeding Policy for Maternity and Neonatal Units with an emphasis on expanding the section on neonatal towards bringing it into line with the international BFHI-Neo programme. A presentation on breastfeeding supportive neonatal practices and standards was given at the Portlaoise Hospital Neonatal seminar as well as a BFHI Link newsletter article.

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland acted towards its objective to serve as the National Authority for the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative in Ireland and undertake the monitoring and assessment of practices when invited to by the health facility, in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

In 2015, South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel went through the external assessment process, including review of assessor reports by the Education, Standards and Assessment sub-committee, and achieved designation as a Baby Friendly Hospital. Portlinculla Hospital achieved its five-year re-designation and is the longest continuously designated hospital in Ireland (since 2004). Award ceremonies were held and media reported on these achievements including radio and print media interviews. Two additional hospitals commenced the external assessment process and plan to complete it in 2016.

Kerry General Hospital, St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny, and Cork University Maternity Hospital renewed their Certificate of Participation (previously titled membership) for a further three years. Support visits were carried out with Galway University Hospital and University Maternity Hospital Limerick and mid-designation reviews carried out with the Midlands Regional Hospitals Mullingar and Portlaoise. Other hospitals were supported and participated in monitoring.

During 2015, the BFHI in Ireland developed, piloted and circulated audit tools for all of the Ten Steps and Code. These audit tools assist health facilities in improving their practices towards meeting and sustaining the BFHI standards and also towards full implementation of the national policy. The BFHI assessment team participated in continuing education and was active in their assessment and monitoring activities; training of two new members continued.

Assessment items from the international BFHI-Neo assessment tools were piloted towards the BFHI Ireland expansion to assessment of neonatal practices in 2016-2017. Key social media sites are monitored to keep an eye on mothers' comments about practices in Baby Friendly Hospitals.

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland acted towards its objective to network and collaborate with individuals and entities with related objectives nationally and internationally.

The BFHI is represented on the National Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Committee and sub-committee on health worker Education and Training, and works closely with the National Breastfeeding Coordinator. Activity during 2015 included work on a national competency for breastfeeding framework for health workers, commenting on the HSE Action Plan for Breastfeeding, and participation in the evaluation of National Breastfeeding Strategy.

The Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland, Cuidiu-Irish Childbirth Trust, La Leche League in Ireland and the HSE have representatives on the BFHI National Committee. The BFHI has a representative on the Baby Feeding Law Group.

The BFHI in Ireland is active in the International Network of BFHI National Coordinators and in contact with UNICEF and WHO ensuring BFHI Ireland remains aligned to international standards

and is aware of BFHI activities in other countries. In 2015 this included review, networking and discussion with other countries regarding their audit, tools, process and linking with other audit and quality systems, and update documentation to use in monitoring visits.

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland acted towards its objective to raise awareness of the importance of supportive health service environments in promoting and supporting breastfeeding, and awareness of the value of participation in the Baby Friendly Health Initiative.

A BFHI panel presentation was given at the HSE Breastfeeding Action Plan consultation day, posters displayed from five hospitals on BFHI related activity, and a presentation by a hospital CEO (who is a member of the BFHI National Committee) given on the value of BFHI participation.

The BFHI National Committee chair attended the Áras an Uachtaráin breastfeeding week event. The BFHI poster and material were visible at events including the ALCI conference, HSE Breastfeeding Action Plan consultation day, and WHO Eastern Mediterranean BFHI workshop. BFHI was represented at the HSE Inequalities workshop, and information on BFHI added to the INDI web site. Discussions were held with health service managers on the value of participation in the BFHI.

Submissions and requested input was made to the Maternity Charter from the National Women's Council of Ireland, WHO consultation on marketing of foods for infants and young children, Obesity Policy, Department of Health National Maternity Strategy and the National Cancer Strategy.

Requests from the general community, journalists, students and parents on the purpose and activity of BFHI are responded to and the publically accessible BFHI Link newsletter and web site also serves to raise awareness of the BFHI wider than the participating hospitals with mention of materials on social media sites for parents and re-circulated by BFHI in other countries.

The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland acted towards its objective to plan, review and manage activities of the Initiative so as to ensure effective functioning exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as defined by the tax status regulations.

Good governance is an important component of any initiative if it is to be effective, transparent and sustainable. During 2015, financial control was monitored by the Management and Finance sub-committee and costs kept within budget. The annual Tax Clearance certificate was obtained. The Committee applied for charity registration under the new system with Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) and is awaiting their response; coordinator and committee member attended training events by the CRA. The BFHI National Coordinator participated in a Governance Code workshop and the Strategic Planning and Governance sub-committee reviewed governance checklists and a Children First review.

BFHI National Committee and sub-committee meetings were held regularly with on-going electronic contact, and the BFHI National Coordinator and committee members kept up to date with research, knowledge, skills and contacts to facilitate effective running of the BFHI. Quarterly reports on BFHI activities and finances, budgets and financial records for BFHI assessments, monitoring visits and general coordination work were provided by the coordinator to the committee. Cloud storage of governance and other key documents for BFHI continued. Refocusing of the Committee on BFHI development, strategic planning and ensuring due governance continued. Four new Committee members were orientated to their roles and responsibilities with the newly developed orientation pack and all committee members signed a declaration related to conflict of interest and loyalty.

The public annual report Constitution, complaints procedure, status of participating hospitals and information on the role of the committee and coordinator are publically accessible on the BFHI web site towards transparency of activity.

The BFHI National Committee and the Coordinator thank all those involved in assisting the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative to be active and effective throughout 2015: the staff members in the participating hospitals, the members of the assessment teams and the volunteer national committee and their managers who facilitated them to have the time for these duties, UNICEF Ireland, breastfeeding and parenting organisations that encouraged their members to expect Baby Friendly practices, and Siobhan Hourigan, National Breastfeeding Coordinator.

Baby Friendly Health Initiative National Committee members at December 31 2015

Chair: Maura Lavery, RN, RM, CMS/IBCLC

Hon. Secretary: Mary Toole, RGN, RM, CMS/IBCLC

Hon. Treasurer: Nicola Clarke, MSc, RM, RGN, RSCN, IBCLC, FFMRCISI

Plus 2 representatives from each sub-committee:

Strategic Planning and Governance sub-committee:

Mary Mahon (Chair), RN, RM, BScN, MSc LHPE, MSc HI, IBCLC

Mary Kelly, Health Promotion Officer

Maura Lavery, RGN, RM, CMS/IBCLC

Fionnuala Cooney, MB, MRCP, MSc Epi, FFPHMI, working as Specialist in Public Health Medicine

Angela Cahill, Breastfeeding Counsellor, Representing Cuidiu-Irish Childbirth Trust

Siobhan Hourigan, MA Health Promotion, HSE National Breastfeeding Coordinator

Patricia Marteinson MSc, RGN, RM, RPHN, IBCLC, Representing ALCI

Management and Finance sub-committee:

Nicola Clarke (Chair), MSc, RM, RGN, RSCN, IBCLC, FFMRCISI

Pauline Treanor, RGN, RM, MBA, PGDip Governance

Margaret O'Leary, RGN, RM, IBCLC

Education, Standards and Assessment sub-committee

Linda O'Callaghan (Chair), CMM/ACPCM/IBCLC

Mary Toole, RGN, RM, BNS, IBCLC

Mary Bird, La Leche League Leader, Representing La Leche League in Ireland

Eileen Earley, SRN, RM, IBCLC

Claire Hawkes, BVSc, MSc, Cert ES, Dip ECVS

Aileen Doyle, BSc, MSc, RM, IBCLC

BFHI National Co-ordinator: Dr Genevieve Becker, PhD, Dip Diets, MSc, MEd, IBCLC, MINDI, FILCA IBCLC

www.babyfriendly.ie

Hospital status at end 2015

Designated as meeting Baby Friendly criteria (National award):

Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe Co. Galway

University Maternity Hospital Limerick

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda

Cavan General Hospital

South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel

Rotunda Hospital, Dublin

Galway University Hospital

Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar

Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise

Participation level (previously called Membership level):

Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital, Dublin

Sligo Regional Hospital

Letterkenny General Hospital, Donegal

University Hospital Waterford

Tralee General Hospital, Co. Kerry

National Maternity Hospital, Dublin

University College Maternity Hospital, Cork

Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar

St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny