

## The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland

### *“I thought you should know ...”*

The BFHI Coordinator receives positive comments (that are passed on to the hospital mentioned). She also receives some complaints about maternity services and asking what the BFHI is going to do about these services. A generic reply is sent that:

There is a complaints procedure for HSE services “Your Service, Your Say” that can be found at <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/focus/ysys.html>

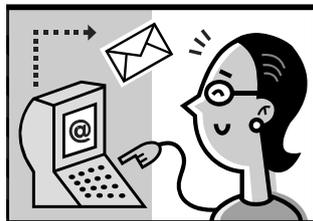
The non-HSE hospitals each have their own complaints procedure which can be found on the hospital’s web site or by contacting the hospital directly.

If the hospital has been awarded Baby Friendly status and thought to be below the standard of the BFHI criteria, a complaint made to the hospital can be copied to BFHI Ireland. When the BFHI Coordinator receives a copy it indicates that the mother has given permission for the BFHI to ask the hospital about the incident. The hospital still has the responsibility to respond to the complaint directly to the mother. The BFHI Coordinator does not get involved in the specific incident. The BFHI Coordinator and the Assessment Team pays particular attention during monitoring to any practices that appear to be below standard from complaints received.

The BFHI criteria only cover some aspects of care. For example, it does not have criteria that multiple support people are facilitated to be with the woman in labour, or that a certified lactation consultant is available to all mothers at all times, or if hygiene is to standard.

Participating hospitals and level of awards as well as the assessment criteria and monitoring process can be seen at [www.babyfriendly.ie](http://www.babyfriendly.ie)

Hospitals are encouraged to make their users aware of the feedback process in the hospital.



The “participant” in activities of the Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland (BFHI) is deemed to be the health facility (as an entity) and not the service users of the health facility.

The BFHI National Committee views comments and complaints about the BFHI service as an opportunity to continuously improve the quality of service provided to the participating health facilities and to learn lessons so as to prevent further similar occurrences in the future. If a health facility has any complaint about the action or omission of the BFHI in Ireland staff, contractors, employees or volunteers acting in a capacity as an official representative or acting on behalf of the BFHI in Ireland, in relation to that health facility, that, it is claimed, does not accord with fair and sound administrative practice or adequate health and safety practice, and adversely affects the health facility by whom the complaint is made, there is a complaint procedure. **The full BFHI – Complaints Policy and Procedure can be read on the web site.**