

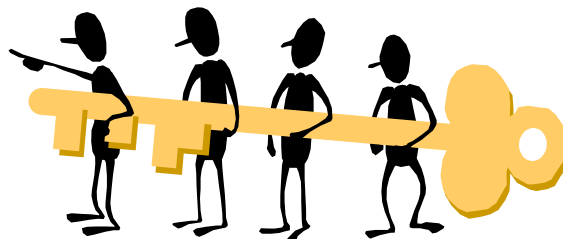
Quality, Patient Safety and Risk Management and the Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) work together to provide high quality care to infants, mothers and families

The WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFHI) has been active in Ireland for fifteen years. It is an international evidence based initiative that assists in providing high quality services and a supportive environment for health and wellbeing. This initiative recognises that implementing best practice in the maternity service is crucial to the success of programmes to promote and support breastfeeding. The HSE Infant Feeding Policy for Maternity and Neonatal Units reflects the practices of the BFHI.

All maternity units participate in the initiative. The successful implementation of the BFHI criteria means that the hospital's maternity services has implemented an infant feeding policy, provides training for staff, promotes informed parental choice through the provision of appropriate, accurate and unbiased discussions, as well as implementing practices supportive of good mother and baby care. The BFHI has goals (Steps), global measurement criteria, self-assessment, annual action plans and audits, and external assessments for accreditation as a Baby Friendly Hospital. This quality improvement process fits well with other quality and health promotion activities.

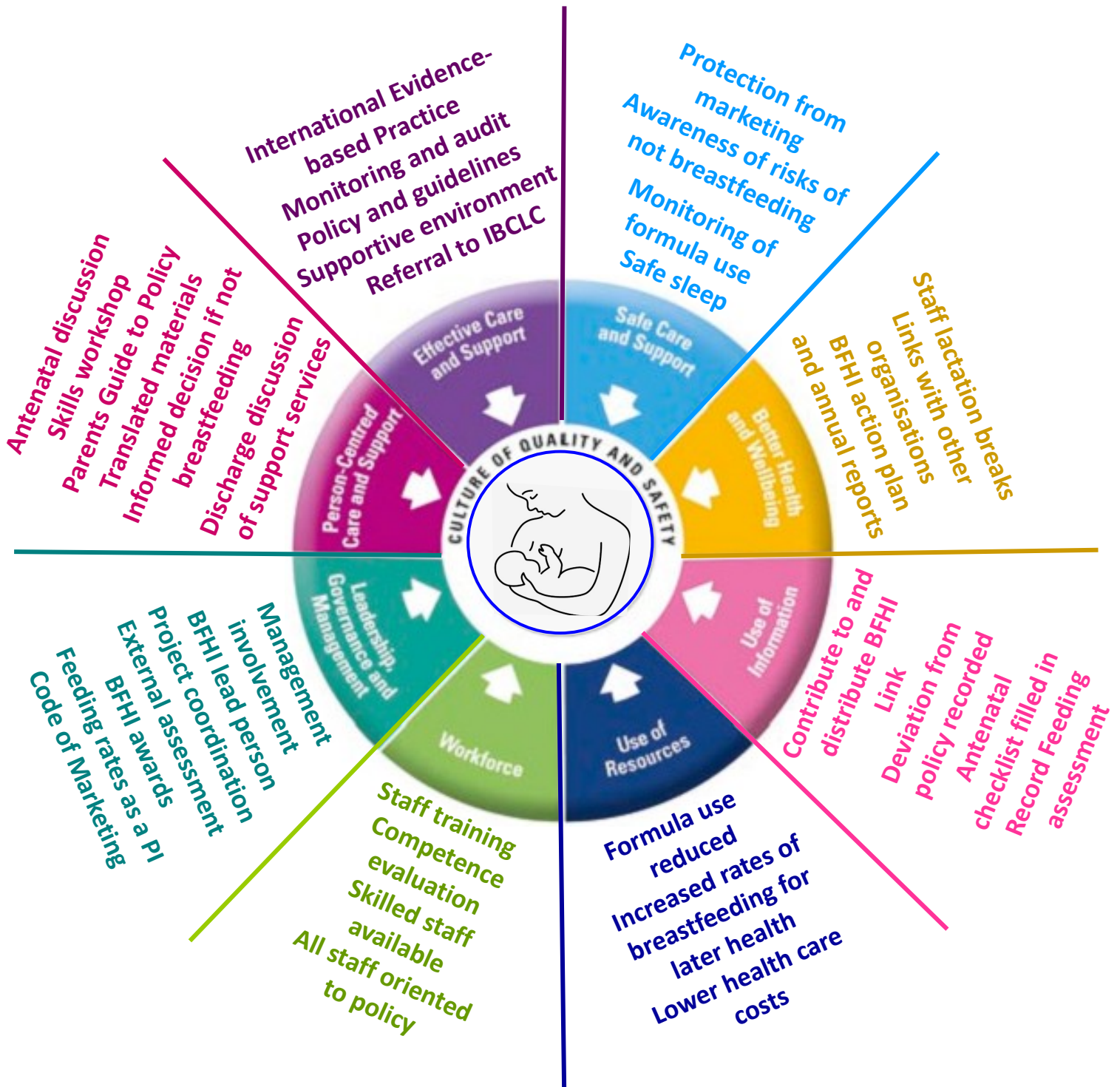
Every maternity unit has a BFHI contact person to link with Quality, Patient Safety and Risk Management for efficient, effective and quality services.

- ◆ Hospitals can evaluate the BFHI overall when placed as a health promotion programme for Standard 1.9 and 4.1.
- ◆ Individual activities and criteria of the BFHI can provide evidence of compliance in many Standards across the Themes, for example:
 - ◇ Standard 1.4: Service users are enabled to participate in making informed decisions about their care fits with BFHI Step 3 to provide information to pregnant women and an opportunity for one-to-one discussion;
 - ◇ Standard 2.1: Healthcare reflects national and international evidence of what is known to achieve best outcomes for service users fits with BFHI criteria of providing practices that support breastfeeding.
- ◆ Monitoring, audits and assessments required for annual BFHI reports can serve to indicate compliance with the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare without additional work.



Working together is the key to providing quality care.

Activities as part of the Baby Friendly Health Initiative can provide evidence of meeting many of the Themes in the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare. Some examples:



Participation in the Baby Friendly Health Initiative can also fit in Standards 1.9 and 4.1 as a health promotion activity.



Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland
 c/o Health Promotion, HSE
 Block 4, Central Business Park
 Clonminch, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
 bfhi@iol.ie www.babyfriendly.ie