

BFHI Action Plan - Planning the Evaluation section

Each hospital is asked to develop a Plan for Actions that will be carried out. It is not a report of what has been done.

In the Plan, one area of action is to evaluate the Plan.

Do you understand the difference between evaluating how the Action Plan went as a plan and stating the outcomes of the actions? This difference was described in the workshop, in a BFHI Link and in the sample action plan sent early in the year and is also in the Action Planning section of the BFHI web site resources <http://www.babyfriendly.ie/resources.htm> One part of the web site article Thoughts on Evaluation is re-printed here:

Evaluation is designed to answer the questions: does this project, practice, or action function the way it was intended? Should it continue? Does it need to change? In short – what is its value? It is an assessment, reflection and understanding of the efficiency of the process, usefulness, acceptability, impact, and sustainability of the project, or lack of these. An evaluation can look at both the process of how the project is working and the outcomes of the project. Outcomes may be clinical, behavioural or attitudinal, or relate to changed structures and processes. Evaluation provides broad learning applicable to other projects and provides accountability to the stakeholders. When the evaluation is planned in the development stage of the Action Plan it helps to clarify what the Action is about and facilitates putting simple evaluation indicators into every day routine.

Is the purpose in doing an evaluation clear?

Do you understand why the evaluation section of the Plan needs to be planned as an integral part of the Action Plan and not as an after-thought?

Check your Plan has the evaluation planning section phrased as a report of how the action plan itself will be evaluated rather than a report of the outcomes of the actions.

Look at the template.

The action plan template has a last section titled Objective Evaluation - it is Objective number whatever your plan is up to.

The template gives you questions in the first column which usually you do not need to change. So read these; **do the questions in the first column fit with your Action Plan? Will you need to ask any other questions in your evaluation of your plan?**

Look at the second column - general method/tasks that you need to make specific to your plan by putting in the details where there are italics. Usually the non-italic parts will suit most plans. **Can you put in the specifics of the method/tasks into the second column?**

The next column is the start and finish dates for the evaluation of the plan (often 1-2 weeks in December but may be earlier if the plan was to complete some actions early in the year and evaluate them at that time). Usually the evaluation is done over a short period so be specific with your dates. For example a team review meeting would have a specific date for the meeting (such as Dec 11), not a vague “Dec” and the start and finish date would thus be the same for a task of a meeting. **Can you put in appropriate dates for each task into the column?**

Next column is the person taking responsibility or leading on each of the tasks. Be specific – who will organise the questionnaire, or meeting or whatever? Often tasks that are a general responsibility end up as no-ones responsibility. **Can you fill in who will lead each task?**

The Target column and the Outcome Sought has generic items that generally don't need to be changed. Check - do they suit your Plan and actions?

It may help to understand the function of evaluation if you read the template pages that relate to the reporting on the Action Plan. You will be asked for this report of the Plan early in following year. Reporting of the results of the evaluation and on the outcomes of the Plan is separate to developing the Plan. **Does reading about what will be needed for the report help to clarify that you need to Plan how to collect this information in the evaluation phase.**

Is this explanation clearer? **Do you have questions? If so contact the BFHI National Coordinator contact@babyfriendly.ie**

Do you have a health promotion officer in your hospital? They often understand how to do evaluation of projects.