

## **Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland (BFHI)**

### **SURVEY REPORT March 2017**                      **Executive Summary**

The BFHI has been providing information, support, capacity building, and monitoring of standards for breastfeeding supportive practices in Ireland for nearly 19 years. It also provides an independent, external assessment process for health facilities seeking designation under the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. The BFHI in Ireland is a registered charity with a volunteer governance committee and part-time national coordinator.

**The aim of this survey** was to invite those directly involved with the implementation of the BFHI within all 19 maternity units/hospitals in Ireland to evaluate the service provided and provide feedback that the BFHI national committee could use to measure or to improve services and supports to hospitals/units. The Survey Monkey questions were drawn up by the BFHI national coordinator and committee, then administered and the report compiled by independent project manager Jane Waugh in March 2017. *The full report containing all the comments received is available at [www.babyfriendly.ie](http://www.babyfriendly.ie)*

**Respondents:** 9 Clinicians (CMS lactation/breastfeeding or similar role), 2 BFHI contact persons where there was no breastfeeding lead, and 7 Managers (DOM or similar) completed the survey. 53% of all those responding said their hospital holds Baby Friendly Hospital designation.

**Overall Level of Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction with Provision of Services and Support by BFHI in Ireland:** Choosing a point on a scale where 0 equalled very dissatisfied and 100 very satisfied, the overall average from the 18 respondents was 76 (range 12-100), with 11 (61%) choosing 90 or higher.

**Value of BFHI in Ireland Services and Supports:** 88% of respondents agreed that all the services and supports were very useful or useful. Detailed comments were received from 9 respondents; and all were supportive of the work of the BFHI in Ireland.

**Suggested Changes to Services and Supports Provided by BFHI in Ireland** included suggestions for information sharing between hospitals, support for more funding to be made available to BFHI, a request for less of an administration burden, expansion of the work of BFHI to include neonates, paediatric and community services, the benefit of having a lactation consultant in every hospital and a team of BFHI support people who can visit hospitals regularly.

**Effect in Hospitals should BFHI in Ireland no longer function** (percentage choosing each response)

- “There would be no effect” and “Would find other ways to acquire information and monitor breastfeeding supportive practices” both 11%
- “Breastfeeding rates were likely to reduce” and “Supportive practices (e.g. skin to skin, exclusive breastfeeding) less likely to occur as routine” both 61%
- “There would be more time to use in other ways for improving quality of care related to breastfeeding” 22%
- “Staff would feel that their previous work to achieve BFHI standards was not valued” 72%
- “Parents would think the hospital might be below standards” 56%

Detailed comments were received from 9 respondents; and all were supportive of the work of the BFHI in setting and maintaining standards. There was a strong feeling that without the BFHI standards would begin to drop, therefore reducing the quality of information and support available to mothers.

**How should BFHI in Ireland be funded?** 88% responded that funding should come from the HSE direct to the BFHI National Committee through an on-going service agreement.

**Final Comments** regarding services and supports provided or not provided by the BFHI in Ireland national structure. Of the 11 comments received, 10 were very supportive of the standards and structures that BFHI in Ireland provides and underlined the importance of the continuation of this work in Ireland. One comment suggested changes would be welcomed regarding the process of working towards accreditation.