

What do the Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland National Committee and the BFHI National Co-ordinator do?

The main object 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. The BFH is an independent body part-funded through a grant from the Health Promotion and Improvement, Health & Wellbeing Division HSE to facilitate it to provide information, support, and monitoring of standards towards assisting hospitals to provide this environment.

The BFHI National Committee

The BFHI National Committee is a multi-disciplinary group including midwives, lactation consultants, public health doctor, dietitian, hospital management, educators, mother to mother support group counsellors, and health service representatives from a variety of work settings including, hospitals, community, education and training. The BFHI National Committee has overall responsibility for the business and affairs of the BFHI. Further details are available in the Constitution which is on the BFHI web site.

Baby Friendly Health Initiative National Committee members at December 14 2016

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

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

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

Plus 2 representatives from each sub-committee

Sub-committees and members

Strategic Planning and Governance:

Mary Mahon (Chair), RN, RM, BScN, MA, IBCLC

Elizabeth Mitrow, Representing Cuidiu-Irish Childbirth Trust

Aideen Breen RM, RGN, IBCLC, Representing the Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland

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

Management and Finance:

Nicola Clarke (Chair), MSc, RM, RGN, RSCN, IBCLC, FFMRC SI

Margaret O'Leary, RGN, RM, IBCLC

Maura Lavery, RN, RM, CMS/IBCLC

Education, Standards and Assessment

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

Aileen Doyle, BSc, MSc, RM, IBCLC

Agnes Fitzgerald, RGN, RSCN, IBCLC



National Co-ordinator of BFHI in Ireland

Dr Genevieve Becker, PhD, MINDI, IBCLC, FILCA

The co-ordinator of the BFHI provides support to hospitals, drafts Irish adaptations of international BFHI materials, compiles reports, highlights BFHI related resources, facilitates networking between hospitals, increases awareness of the BFHI in Ireland, coordinates the assessments, monitors practices and standards, acts as a link to BFHI internationally and generally co-ordinates the BFHI in Ireland. This is a part-time contract.

Dr Genevieve Becker, has coordinated the BFHI in Ireland since it began in 1999. She is a dietitian and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant who has worked in maternal, infant and young child feeding, particularly in breastfeeding, for over 30 years. She was a volunteer counsellor with a mother-to-mother support group for 20 years. Her main interest is the education and performance of health workers in breastfeeding supportive practices. She has earned a Masters of Science (Community Health), a Masters in Education and a PhD, which examined assessment of health worker performance in assisting mothers to learn skills related to breastfeeding. She was awarded a Health Research Board Fellowship to produce a Cochrane systematic review on methods of milk expression, and keeps it up-to-date as a volunteer. She is the first (and as yet the only) European recognised as Fellow of the International Lactation Consultant Association. Genevieve has also worked in Community Nutrition in the Western Health Board and for the Department of Health Promotion, NUI Galway.

Dr Becker working through *BEST Services* was the lead was responsible for the updating and revision of the WHO/UNICEF BFHI global materials in 2006-2009 and acts as a consultant to countries establishing or revitalising their Baby Friendly Initiatives. Dr Becker participated in the World Breastfeeding Conference 2012 in Delhi that focusing on protecting breastfeeding. Dr Becker serves on the WHO/UNICEF External Review Group for the development of guidance on implementation of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. She works from an office in Galway city.