



The
**Baby Friendly
Initiative**
For all babies



UNITED KINGDOM

QUICK GUIDE
to
**UNICEF UK
Baby Friendly
ACCREDITATION**





Quick guide to UNICEF UK Baby Friendly accreditation

Introduction

This booklet is designed to give you an overview of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative including what it is and how it works. If you need more detailed information on the standards and how to implement them, our full guidance document will be



helpful and can be found at [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/guidance](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/guidance).

We are also keen to help so do contact us at bfi@unicef.org.uk

About the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative is an accreditation programme based on the Global World Health Organization/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. The health and well-being of all babies is at the heart of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative. A strong mother-baby relationship is the foundation for a baby's future health and well-being, and breastfeeding supports this loving bond, making a vital difference to health.

We work with UK public services, championing evidence-based practice to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding, and to strengthen mother-baby and family relationships. We believe that support for these relationships is important for all babies, not only those who are breastfed.

How it works

Evidence-based standards have been developed for maternity, neonatal, health visiting/public health nursing and children's centre services (or equivalent early years settings in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). Implementation of these standards will improve the care and support that pregnant women, new mothers and their families receive to build a strong relationship with, and feed and care for, their baby.

Services are encouraged to work collaboratively with partner organisations to implement the standards (e.g. health visiting and children's centres, maternity and neonatal services) but accreditation is available for services working on their own.

The highly valued award of Baby Friendly accreditation is achieved through a rigorous external assessment process which gathers evidence that the standards have been implemented. To support effective implementation of the standards the assessment process is broken down into three stages; accreditation is achieved when all these

stages are reached. Following accreditation, services can then progress to Advanced or even Beacon



status. UNICEF UK keeps a league table of UK services and their progress towards Baby Friendly accreditation.

This can be found at [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/leaguetables](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/leaguetables)

Proven to be effective

There is a wealth of evidence from the UK, and internationally, that Baby Friendly accreditation is effective at increasing breastfeeding rates^{1,2,3,4}. It is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)^{5,6,7,8} and the UK Government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)⁹ and is an integral part of the *Healthy Child Programme: Pregnancy and the first five years of life*¹⁰, the Scottish Government's *Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A Framework for Action*¹¹ and the breastfeeding strategy in Wales and Northern Ireland.¹²

Costs

UNICEF UK is a charity and receives no monetary support to run the Baby Friendly Initiative; we therefore have to charge for the services we provide.



We work hard to keep these as low as possible and charge you only on the cost of running the service, with no element of profit. For more details go to

[unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/costs](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/costs)

Getting started

Contact the Baby Friendly office to register your intent. This means that you will be on our system so that you can receive up to date news and research.

We then recommend that you book an implementation visit as early as possible. This visit, from a senior member of the Baby Friendly Initiative team, will support your service to develop a robust project plan. Once the plan is complete and the Chief Executive confirms support for the project, a Certificate of Commitment is awarded. The service then progresses through the stages to full accreditation.

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Overview of the new Baby Friendly Initiative standards

Building a firm foundation

- 1 Have written policies and guidelines to support the standards.
- 2 Plan an education programme that will allow staff to implement the standards according to their role.
- 3 Have processes for implementing, auditing and evaluating the standards.
- 4 Ensure that there is no promotion of breastmilk substitutes, bottles, teats or dummies in any part of the facility or by any of the staff.

An educated workforce

Educate staff to implement the standards according to their role and the service provided.

Parents' experiences of maternity services

- 1 Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships on the health and wellbeing of their baby.
- 2 Support all mothers and babies to initiate a close relationship and feeding soon after birth.
- 3 Enable mothers to get breastfeeding off to a good start.
- 4 Support mothers to make informed decisions regarding the introduction of food or fluids other than breastmilk.
- 5 Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Parents' experiences of neonatal units

- 1 Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.
- 2 Enable babies to receive breastmilk and to breastfeed when possible.
- 3 Value parents as partners in care.

Parents' experiences of health visiting services

- 1 Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships on the health and wellbeing of their baby.
- 2 Enable mothers to continue breastfeeding for as long as they wish.
- 3 Support mothers to make informed decisions regarding the introduction of food or fluid other than breastmilk.
- 4 Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Parents' experiences of children's centres

- 1 Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of early relationships to the health and wellbeing of their baby.
- 2 Protect and support breastfeeding in all areas of the service.
- 3 Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Building on good practice

Demonstrate innovation to achieve excellent outcomes for mothers, babies and their families.



Overview of the stages

1 Stage: Building a firm foundation

The aim of this first stage is for the service to put into place the foundations for achieving the changes needed. This includes an infant feeding policy (or equivalent), a plan for staff training (including a curriculum) and the protocols and guidelines which underpin how the staff will implement the standards. Stage 1 is assessed at a distance to keep costs low. The relevant documentation is submitted to a designated Baby Friendly assessor who will check in detail that all the documents meet the required standard. A report with detailed feedback on progress will be provided, which will outline any amendments required.

For more information see unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/stage1



2 Stage: An educated workforce

The aim of stage two is to ensure that all staff caring for mothers, babies and their families have the knowledge and skills they need to implement the standards according to their role. When the education programme is complete, and audit results show that it has been largely effective, Stage 2 assessment can take place. At assessment we will visit your service(s), and talk to staff and managers to gather evidence about how successful the training programme has been.

For more information see unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/stage2



3 Stage: Parents' experiences

The aim of this stage is to ensure that the standards are being implemented, benefiting mothers and babies, and achieving improved outcomes. When internal audits show that the standards have been implemented, Stage 3 assessment can take place. Assessors will visit your service(s) and talk to mothers/families who have consented to an interview about their experiences of the service. The assessors will also review the internal audit results, outcome data and other supporting evidence.

When all three assessment stages have been achieved, full Baby Friendly accreditation is awarded. It is at this stage that services usually see improvements in breastfeeding rates.

For more information see unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/stage3



Building on good practice

Periodic reassessments are needed to make sure that mothers, babies and their families are still experiencing Baby Friendly care. Moving beyond the basic standards is encouraged once they become embedded in everyday practice. Innovations that support enhanced standards of care, evidence of improving outcomes and more advanced staff education can all contribute towards a services application for Advanced or Beacon Baby Friendly status.

1 Kramer, M. S. et al., Promotion of breastfeeding intervention trial (PROBIT): a randomized trial in the Republic of Belarus, *JAMA*, vol. 285, no. 4, pp. 413–420, 2001.

2 Broadfoot, M., et al., 'The Baby Friendly Initiative and breastfeeding rates in Scotland', *Archive of Diseases in Childhood: Fetal and neonatal*, vol. 90, no. 2, pp. 114–116, 2005.

3 Del Bono, E. and Rabe, B., 'The success story of the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative', paper presented at the Baby Friendly Conference, 2011.

4 Bartington, S. et al. and the Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group, 'Are breastfeeding rates higher among mothers delivering in Baby Friendly accredited maternity units in the UK?', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 1178–86, 2006.

5 Dyson, L. et al., Promotion of Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration: Evidence into practice briefing, NICE, London, 2006.

6 Renfrew, M. et al., 'Breastfeeding promotion for infants in neonatal units: a systematic review and economic analysis', *Health Technology Association*, vol. 13, no. 40, 2009, available at www.hta.ac.uk/1611, accessed 2 November 2012.

7 NICE, Improving the Nutrition of Pregnant and Breastfeeding Mothers and Children in Low-Income Households, NICE, London, 2008, available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PH011guidance.pdf>, accessed 2 November 2012.

8 NICE, Postnatal Care: Routine postnatal care of women and their babies, NICE, London, 2006, available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/10988/30144/30144.pdf>, accessed 2 November 2012.

9 SACN, Infant Feeding Survey 2005: A commentary on infant feeding practices in the UK, position statement by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, TSO, London, 2008.

10 Department of Health, Healthy Child Programme: Pregnancy and the first five years of life, COI, London, 2009.

11 Scottish Government, Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A framework for action, 2011, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/13095228/11>, accessed 2 November 2012.

12 Welsh Government, 'Proposals for a National Breastfeeding Programme', minister's statement, 2011, available at <http://wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/dmewhomepage/dr2011/health/5831017/?lang=en>, accessed 2 November 2012.