



ACHIEVING BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE ACCREDITATION:

SUPPORT OFFER FOR MATERNITY SERVICES IN ENGLAND

2020/21 - 2023/24

OVERVIEW

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NATIONAL AIM

NHS Long Term Plan Commitment

As part of the NHS's ongoing vision to improve postnatal care, the Long Term Plan includes a commitment that:

'All maternity services that do not deliver an accredited, evidence-based infant feeding programme (such as the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative) will begin the accreditation process'

– with a view of all services achieving full accreditation by March 2024.

Local Maternity Systems (LMSs) are responsible for ensuring that all maternity services are on track to achieve this commitment. It will help to improve standards and reduce variation in the care women and families receive.

Targeted support is now available for local services to fulfil this commitment. This document sets out:

- the support available
- who is eligible
- how to access support
- the roles and responsibilities for everyone in the NHS to achieve this national aim.

UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) Baby Friendly Standards

"A number of maternity units have maintained the Baby Friendly standards for many years. In my visits to these services, I have been struck by how proud staff are to work within a fully accredited Baby Friendly unit and the improvements that the standards have realised for women and staff. I have seen authentic leadership in action, passionate local teams and the real positive impact of Baby Friendly on culture.

However, the 2019 Care Quality Commission maternity survey found that only two in three women felt midwives and other health professionals had given them active support and encouragement about feeding their baby in the first few days after birth. There is clearly more to do to ensure that all women have timely access to high quality support, centred around them and their families.

Currently, around half of maternity units in England are

fully accredited, and we are focusing this support offer on those services that need additional help to reach the national aim. This echoes the principle of proportionate universalism – whereby actions are universal, but are implemented with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of need – and our imperative to achieve equity.

UK breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks compare unfavourably with other countries in Europe and we have a moral responsibility to invest in supporting breastfeeding to maximise the associated long-term health benefits.

With our commitment in the Long Term Plan and the support set out below, I am hopeful that by 2024, all babies will be born in a Baby Friendly environment and that all women can expect the same high standards of care across the country."

Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer, NHS England and NHS Improvement



SUPPORT OFFER

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative have agreed a joint support offer for 38 maternity services to achieve Stage 3 accreditation by March 2024. There are two levels of support:

Level 1 (20 units) – accreditation assessment costs: NHS England and NHS Improvement will fund Baby Friendly accreditation assessments costs to achieve Stage 1, 2 and 3 (full accreditation) that occur up until March 2024 for all services who have not achieved UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative full accreditation before.

Level 2 (18 units) – accreditation assessment costs and additional support: In addition to the support outlined in Level 1, for the services that have made limited progress with Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation, UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative will provide targeted support. This will include:

- A dedicated planning meeting for each service with the Baby Friendly team to help them develop an action plan for implementing the Baby Friendly standards and to assist with the preparations for Baby Friendly accreditation
- Two nationally funded spaces per provider to attend five days of UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative training for the project lead (AfC Band 7 or above), supported by an appropriate manager. This training will be run on a cohort basis from April 2021
- Twice-yearly peer-to-peer support meetings.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

While recognising the exemplary work of maternity services who have achieved and maintained accreditation, this support is focused on those that have not achieved accreditation before, and those who have furthest to go. Eligibility criteria are set out in the table below. A full list of the services eligible for Level 1 and 2 support is set out in **Appendix A**.

Eligible	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Maternity services actively working towards UNICEF UK Baby Friendly accreditation■ One sitting of each assessment will be paid for per service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Follow-up assessment costs if a service does not achieve the funded assessment at the first attempt■ Assessments costs relating to the maintenance of full accreditation■ Assessment costs for services that previously held accreditation that has now lapsed■ Costs to achieve the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Achieving Sustainability standards 'Gold Award'.

HOW TO ACCESS THE SUPPORT OFFER

Eligible services set out in Appendix A have the option to access the funded support offers from 12 November 2020 to help them achieve Baby Friendly accreditation.

To access this support, services will need to sign commitments detailing how they will ensure implementation of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative. This will be coordinated at the Local Maternity System level.

Commitments for trusts eligible for Level 1 support (20 units) must include the following:

- Senior management and leadership support for achieving UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation
- Confirmation that a project lead (AfC Band 7 or above) is in place with sufficient hours to lead the accreditation process
- A commitment to undertake audits and monitoring in line with the requirements of the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation process.

Before any accreditation assessments are funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement, services must complete the Level 1 commitment form and return it to bfi@unicef.org.uk and their LMS.

Commitments for trusts eligible for Level 2 support (18 units) must include the Level 1 requirements above, and the five below:

- Release of the project lead and most appropriate manager to attend 5 days of UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative training
- To have booked a Baby Friendly planning meeting with UNICEF UK to initiate the project
- To facilitate a Baby Friendly planning meeting with UNICEF UK and provide baseline data
- The project lead and appropriate manager to attend twice-yearly support meetings facilitated by the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative
- A commitment to mandatory training of all relevant staff to cascade learning within the service, including providing back fill to ensure attendance is feasible for all staff.

To receive Level 2 support, eligible services must complete the commitment form and return it to bfi@unicef.org.uk and their LMS by 23 April 2021.

Commitment forms can be found on the website.

By 23 April 2021, **all 18** services eligible for Level 2 support need to have completed these commitments and returned them to their LMS for collation. The training will be delivered on a cohort group basis, therefore it is vital that all services are ready to engage with the training aspects of the targeted support offer from April 2021.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Local Maternity Systems

- Work with services to ensure the key enablers for achieving accreditation are in place between now and March 2024.
- Encourage and support eligible services to engage with the support offers.
- Coordinate the completion of signed commitments by eligible services, and return these to their regional team, to ensure access to the support offers.
- Ensure that all of the 18 services eligible for the targeted support offer (Level 2) have returned a signed commitment by 23 April 2021 and have appropriate staff in post ready to engage with the training support offer.
- Monitor progress of services, identify risks to delivery and report this to regional maternity programme boards.
- Share good practice and learning between services within the LMS, establishing peer support where appropriate.

Regional Maternity Teams NHS England and NHS Improvement

- Champion this policy commitment and the national support offer.
- Encourage services within their regions to engage with the support offer; by 23 April 2021, all of the 18 services eligible for the targeted support offer (Level 2) should have returned a signed commitment and have appropriate staff in post ready to engage with the training support offer.
- Ensure that LMS and integrated care system (ICS) leadership support services to work towards Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation.
- Monitor and report on LMS engagement and progress as part of the quarterly assurance dashboards for the Work Stream 1 Delivery Group – this will be supported by routine data from UNICEF UK.
- Escalate issues and risks to implementation to the Work Stream 1 Delivery Group as necessary.

National Policy Team NHS England and NHS Improvement

- Review the support offer on an ongoing basis.
- In accordance with their national role, encourage services to engage with UNICEF UK Baby Friendly activities and work towards achieving Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation through communications and the assurance of delivery via the Maternity Transformation Programme regional delivery structure.
- Manage the commercial relationship with UNICEF UK to provide the support offer.
- Monitor and report on progress up to the Maternity Transformation Board.

UNICEF UK

- Monitor service readiness, schedule and undertake assessments promptly once services are deemed ready.
- Work with LMSs and regional maternity programme boards as requested.
- Deliver the targeted support offer to eligible services and train two identified key staff within each service.
- Provide timely and ongoing information related to individual service progress to NHS England and NHS Improvement.
- Host peer support meetings to bring together maternity services working towards accreditation.
- Conduct analysis of the causes of lapsed accreditation.

CALL TO ACTION

“The Long Term Plan for the NHS takes a concerted and systematic approach to reducing health inequalities and addressing unwarranted variation in care. Our commitment in the Long Term Plan and the support set out above present a unique opportunity to provide consistent standards of care and feeding support for new families across the country and it is my sincere wish that every maternity service will take full advantage of this.”

Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer, NHS England and NHS Improvement

FURTHER INFORMATION

Key resources

- [UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative](#)
- [Going Baby Friendly](#)
- [Achieving Sustainability guidance](#)
- [National Infant Feeding Network](#)

Key contacts

- UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative team: bfi@unicef.org.uk
- Regional teams:
 - North East: england.lmspmo-north@nhs.net
 - North West: england.lmspmo-north@nhs.net
 - Midlands: england.midlandsperinatal@nhs.net
 - East of England: ros.o'connor@nhs.net
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- National team: england.maternitytransformation@nhs.net

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This publication can be made available in a number of other formats on request.

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APPENDIX A: TRUSTS ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT

Services eligible for Level 1 support: accreditation assessment costs

Region	Maternity services eligible for support with Baby Friendly accreditation assessment costs
North West	Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
North East	North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Midlands	George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
East of England	East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust Luton and Dunstable University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
London	Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust Barts Health NHS Trust Croydon Health Services NHS Trust The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
South East	Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
South West	Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

Services eligible for Level 2 support: accreditation assessment costs and additional support

Region	Maternity services eligible for targeted support and Baby Friendly accreditation assessment costs
North West	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust
North East	Airedale NHS Foundation Trust Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
Midlands	United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust
East of England	West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
London	Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
South East	Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Isle of Wight NHS Trust Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
South West	None