

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in Ireland

“I thought you should know ...”

The BFHI Coordinator receives positive comments (that are passed on to the hospital mentioned). She also receives some complaints about maternity services and asking what the BFHI is going to do about these services.

Unless the initial communication is very specific, a generic reply is sent along the lines of:

There is a complaints procedure for HSE services that can be found at www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/Complaint/

The non-HSE hospitals each have their own complaints procedure which can be found on the hospital's web site or by contacting the hospital.

If the hospital has been awarded Baby Friendly status and though to be below the standard of the BFHI criteria, a complaint made to the hospital can be copied to BFHI Ireland. When the BFHI Coordinator receives a copy it indicates that the mother has given permission for the BFHI to ask the hospital about the incident and to then assist the hospital to improve their practice as needed. The Coordinator also pays particular attention during monitoring to any practices that appear to be below standard from complaints received.

The BFHI criteria only cover some aspects of care. For example, it does not have criteria that multiple support people are facilitated to be with the woman in labour, or that a certified lactation consultant is available to all mothers at all times 24/7.

Participating hospitals and level of awards as well as the assessment criteria and monitoring process can be seen at www.ihph.ie/babyfriendlyinitiative/

Hospitals are encouraged to make their users aware of the feedback process in the hospital.

