

Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in Ireland

Procedure regarding hospitals whose certificate / award lapses (Maternity programme)

Agreed by National BFHI Advisory Committee February 2009

Rationale:

- Participation in the BFHI has positive benefits for the families served, the hospital and the wider community, though there is often a need for hospital management to see BFHI participation as important and allocate resources. Improving breastfeeding and participating in BFHI is included in many Department of Health / HSE strategies.
- Parents have expectations when they see that a hospital has a BFHI award and standards should not be allowed to drop below requirements.
- Other hospitals work to meet the requirements so no hospital should be able to get by with less than the requirements.
- To avoid practice in some hospitals where they start to apply for the next stage only after previous certification expires, thus leaving a gap where the hospital is not at any level.

Requirements:

- Hospitals send annual statistics and develop, carry out and evaluate an annual action plan from membership level onwards.
- The documentation and application for renewal or moving to the next stage are sent by the hospital during the time of current certificate / award so that application is processed before the certificate / award expires.

Procedure:

All levels:

- If annual reports/action plans are not sent by the deadline follow-up letters seeking these documents will be sent to the BFHI contact person and cc'd to Director of Nursing and General Manager.
- Director of Nursing and General Manager will be cc'd in all letters to BFHI contact person notifying that the hospital are due for renewal, not just final notice. Notice is given three months before a membership certificate is due to expires, six months before a certificate of commitment is due to expire, and one year before a Baby-friendly national award is due to expiry.

Expiration and non-renewal of certificate of membership

- If an active hospital has not fully submitted renewal documents within 2 months of the end of the month of expiration of the certificate of membership, one letter will be sent to the BFHI contact person, cc'd to Director of Nursing, General Manager and Regional Breastfeeding Committee Chair.
- This letter will state that unless full documentation is received within 4 weeks time the hospital will be removed from the web site and other lists as a participating hospital, expired certificate should be returned to coordinator, and on-going support from the BFHI coordinator will not be available to the hospital. BFHI Link will continue to be sent for one year.

Expiration and non-renewal of certificate of commitment:

- If certificate of commitment is due to expire and renewal documents are fully submitted by the end of the month of expiration, an additional 2 months will be allowed for the site visit to take place (with action plan addressing required areas to be submitted within 1 month of site visit report) and status as Commitment will remain during this time.
- A category of “in transition” will be added to the lists of participating hospitals for hospitals whose Certificate of Commitment has expired by more than 2 months, have applied for a site visit and sent all documentation, and are awaiting the a visit, or who are preparing their action plan following the visit (to a maximum of 2 months after the site visit).
- If certificate of commitment is due to expire and renewal documents are NOT fully submitted by the end of the month of expiration, one letter is sent to the BFHI contact person, cc'd to Director of Nursing, General Manager and Regional Breastfeeding Committee Chair. This letter will state that unless full documentation for renewal is rec'd within 4 weeks time and a date set for a site visit to take place within 2 months, the hospital will be removed from the web site and other lists as a participating hospital with a certificate of commitment, expired certificate should be returned to coordinator, and on-going support from the BFHI coordinator will not be available to the hospital. BFHI Link will continue to be sent for one year. The hospital may apply for a Membership certificate instead (and they can meet those requirements), and then seek a certificate of Commitment at a later date when they can meet the requirements.

Expiration of certificate of commitment and seeking full assessment:

- If certificate of commitment is due to expire and the hospital is seeking a full assessment, documentation for the assessment must be submitted by the end of the month of expiration of the certificate of commitment, and a date set for assessment within 2 months of expiration of the certificate of commitment.
- If hospital submits all documentation and this indicates readiness for full assessment, the date for the assessment visit may be deferred for operational reasons as long as it does not exceed 4 months from expiration of certificate of commitment. Hospitals seeking to defer assessment past this, should apply for a Certificate of Commitment or Membership in the interim.
- If the submitted documentation does not show readiness for full assessment, 2 months will be allowed for additional action and documentation to indicate readiness (and assessment date deferred for up to 2 months). If the documentation still does not indicate readiness, at this point (maximum 3 months after Certificate of Commitment expires), the hospital may choose to have a site visit towards a Certificate of Commitment (within 1 month) or to apply for a Certificate of Membership (and they can meet those requirements). Full assessment will not be carried out if the documentation-related criteria are not met. (See short-term exception related to national policy below).
- If hospital has a Certificate of Commitment visit (fee paid) and applies for full assessment within one year of that visit, a discount will be allowed on the full assessment fee as documents (policy etc) are already reviewed. (Assuming the documents are sufficient. The discount may be reduced if documents need to be extensively re-written and thus re-reviewed for the assessment.)
- A category of “in transition” will be added to the lists of participating hospitals for hospitals whose Certificate of Commitment has expired by more than 2 months, have applied for full assessment and sent all documentation, and are awaiting the assessment visit (to a maximum of 6 months after the expiration of certificate of commitment).

If a Baby-friendly hospital does not meet the criteria at reassessment

(revision agreed by National BFHI Advisory Committee May 2011)

- If a Baby-friendly designated hospital does not fully meet all the criteria when re-assessed they will be allowed one additional opportunity to achieve the necessary standards. During this time, the plaque will remain on display though the hospital will be listed as “in transition” on the web site and other public lists.
- Within 4 weeks of the assessment report being sent to the hospital, in conjunction with the National BFHI Coordinator, other assessor, or other designated person, the hospital will develop a detailed action plan to meet the criteria within 3 months. However, if the standards not met are the new/revised standards, additional time will be allowed for these standards to be met provided that all the original standards are met. The additional time will not go past April 1, 2011.
 - If the hospital fails on two or less Steps/Code, they can be reassessed on just these specific Steps or components. A one day re-visit fee will apply.
 - If the hospital fails to meet the criteria on more than two Steps/Code, all the Steps/Code will be reassessed. A re-assessment fee will apply, which may be reduced slightly if the documentation (such as policy, curriculum, materials for mothers) does not require reassessment.
- If the hospital meets all the criteria in full at the follow-up visit, it will be re-designated as Baby-friendly and the plaque will be re-issued with the date of the follow-up visit.
- If any of the Steps/Code are still not met at this follow-up visit, Baby-friendly designation will be removed, and plaque will be returned to BFHI office. The hospital will be encouraged to develop a detailed action plan and a Certificate of Commitment or of Membership may be obtained as appropriate.

This procedure will apply to hospitals already in the re-assessment process. Any hospitals likely to be assessed for the first time in the second half of 2010 will be expected to meet all the new/revised criteria. They would have one follow-up visit, if needed, as usual and the time for this could be extended by a few weeks to allow these hospitals until April 1 2011 the same as the re-designated hospitals.

This decision would be reviewed at the National Advisory Committee meeting in Feb-Mar 2011.