



# **The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland (BFHI) - health promotion and quality care**

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# Baby Friendly Health Initiative

## In Ireland since 1998

Started as part of the Health Promoting Hospitals Network (WHO)

- Health Promotion “Settings” approach (Ottawa Charter)

A supportive environment that:

- Makes the healthy behaviour the easy behaviour
- Protects from promotion of less healthy behaviours



- Support for health facilities as well as assessment of standards



# Expansion with HPH

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- Breastfeeding Supportive Health Service Workplace
- Breastfeeding Supportive Paediatric Unit
- Breastfeeding Supportive Whole Hospital
- Then major restructuring of the health service resulted in the loss of the HPH Network, and the expansion areas ceased.
- BFHI eventually found a new structure:
- Now an independent registered charity with a volunteer governance committee.

# All mothers, All babies, All facilities

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- All maternity facilities can participate.
- They carry out an annual structured action plan including evaluation, and submit report to BFHI Coordinator.

Since 2006 Ireland has included the criteria related to:

- Breastfeeding supportive birth practices (Mother Friendly Care)
- Support for informed decision making and skills education for parents of babies who are not breastfeeding.

# BFHI leads in quality

- BFHI was the first health quality programme in Ireland to have measureable standards and external assessment.
- Now actions as part of BFHI participation can provide evidence of meeting national health care quality standards – thus linking BFHI to newer quality programmes





# 25 Years of global BFHI

## 18 years of BFHI in Ireland

### *Achievements*

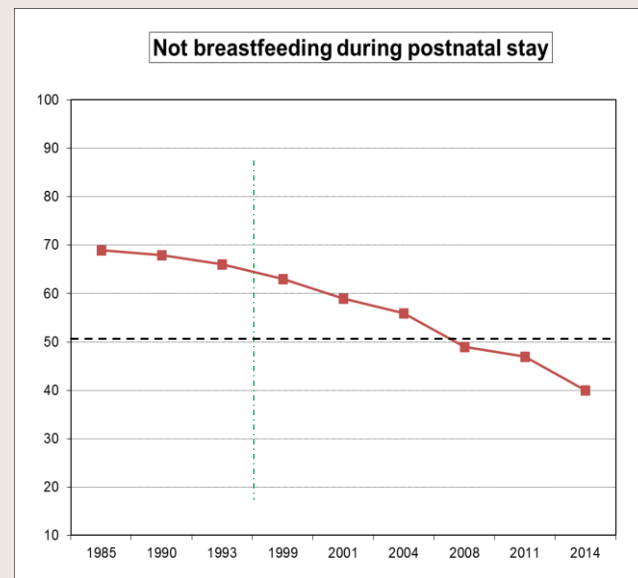


#### **BFHI practices are integral to:**

- National Infant Feeding Policy, strategies and action plans
- Induction of new staff to policy
- Midwifery training and CPD

#### **Routine practice includes:**

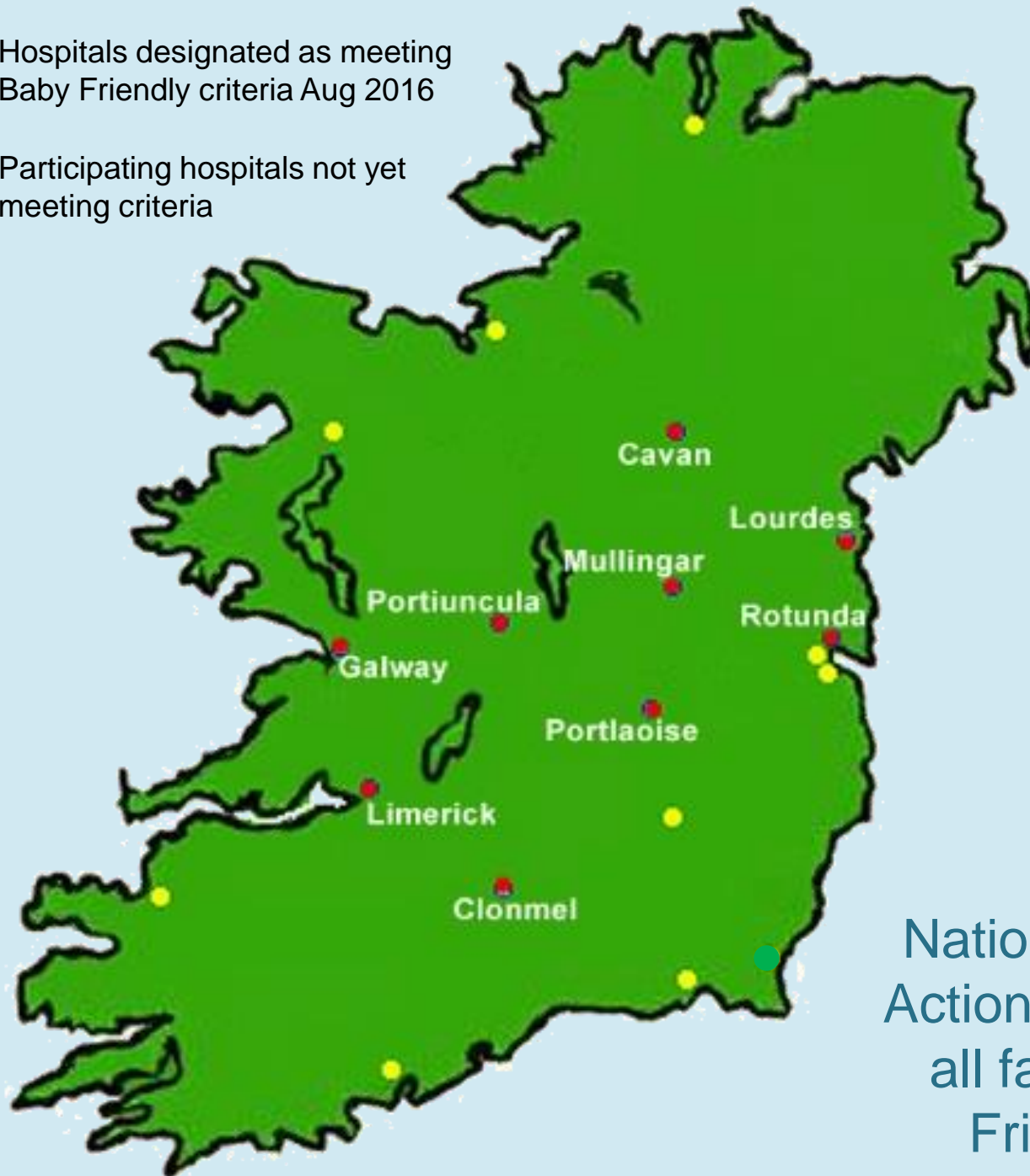
- Antenatal discussion and charting
- Skin to skin contact immediately
- Staff skilled in assisting feeding
- Baby and mother together
- Responsive feeding - Baby-led cues
- On-going supports
- Some access to IBCLCs



*Not breastfeeding  
in hospital is  
now the minority*

● Hospitals designated as meeting Baby Friendly criteria Aug 2016

● Participating hospitals not yet meeting criteria



9 out of 19 maternity units are assessed as meeting Baby Friendly criteria

43% of births take place in a Baby Friendly facility.

National Breastfeeding Action Plan target is that all facilities are Baby Friendly by 2025.

# BFHI in Ireland assists by:



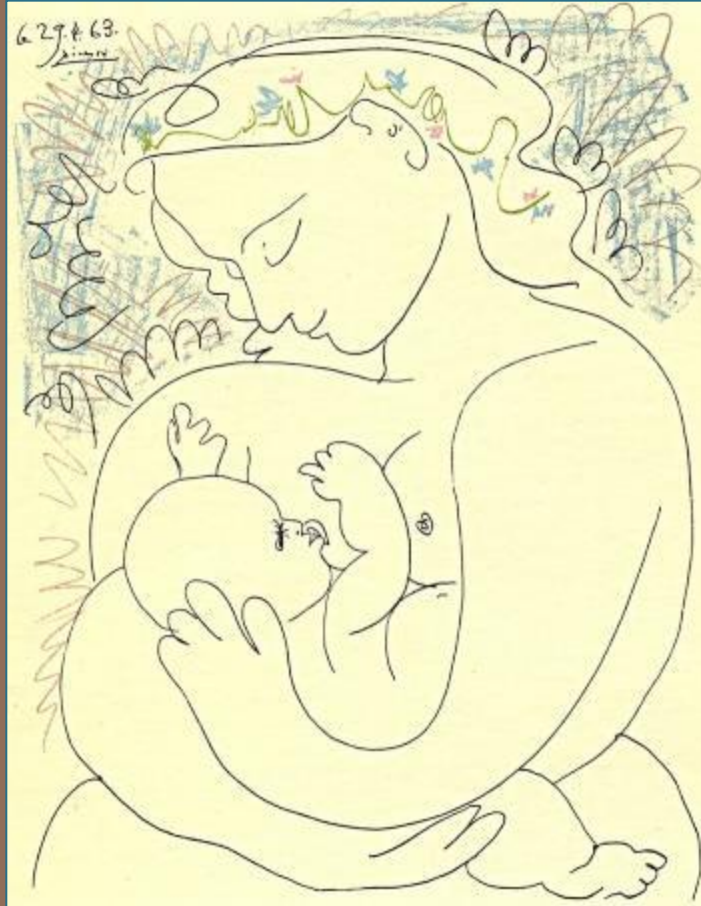
- BFHI Link newsletter 3-4 times a year :
  - research-based practice information
  - parents' handout
  - sharing from other hospitals
- Support and Advocacy for best practices
- Assessment, Audit tools, Plans, W'shop
- Highlights of achievements

**[www.babyfriendly.ie](http://www.babyfriendly.ie)**

- National coordinator of BFHI (part-time)



*A good start for babies and mothers  
makes a difference*



"Maternity", 1963, © 2003 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS),  
New York

*A strong Baby Friendly Initiative  
helps make it happen*