

# CALL TO ACTION STEP 1: NATIONAL INFANT FEEDING STRATEGY BOARD



The UK has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world. Only 34% of women maintain breastfeeding to six months as compared to 49% in the US and 71% in Norway. Unicef UK has launched a Call to Action, for all UK Governments to provide leadership on improving breastfeeding rates by creating a National Infant Feeding Strategy Board. This document explains what that board could look like, who should be part of it, and what the remit and role of the board would be.

## ROLE OF THE BOARD

The aim of the board is to provide leadership to remove all barriers – practical, societal and commercial – that prevent women from breastfeeding.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Board's terms of reference are to drive improvements in the rates of breastfeeding by:

- Producing and implementing a 5 year strategy to improve breastfeeding rates, with annual evaluation to ensure progress
- Monitoring breastfeeding prevalence and planning appropriate action based on the results

- Recognising the inter-dependency between infant feeding and numerous other policy areas, which together have a profound impact on children's life chances. Ensuring that actions to improve infant feeding are included in all of these relevant policy areas, including obesity, diabetes and cancer reduction, emotional attachment and subsequent school readiness, improved maternal and child mental health and environmental sustainability
- Modelling a new way of talking about breastfeeding that clarifies the evidence and acknowledges the fact that improving breastfeeding rates is not the responsibility of individual mothers; rather, this is a public health imperative for which government, policy makers, communities and families all share responsibility
- Holding an annual meeting of all four devolved NIFSBs to share progress.

## MEMBERSHIP

To be effective, the Board should include members of all relevant departments and bodies that make policy related to, or impacted by, infant feeding. We recommend that the Board has 'core members' and 'non-core members' who are invited when relevant, as well as a reference group.

### Chair

Appointment of a chair with sufficient, knowledge, skills, power and influence to take the agenda forward, such as the Chief Medical Officer or the Chief Nurse.

### Core Members England

- Public Health England, NHS England & Health Education England
- Representatives from Department of Health and Department for Education
- Children's Commissioner.

### Non-Core Members England

Civil servants from: Department of Work & Pensions, Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, Department of Culture, Media & Sport, Department of Energy & Climate Change, Cabinet Office.

### Reference Group

- Chair of National Infant Feeding Network
- Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative
- Representation from academic and voluntary sector organisations
- Breastfeeding policy leads from Governments of the devolved nations.

*"Women are not getting the support they need to breastfeed.  
Success in breastfeeding is the collective responsibility of  
society, not the sole responsibility of a woman."  
Lancet Breastfeeding series, 2016*

For more information please visit [unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly](http://unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly)

