



UNICEF UK BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE INFOSHEET
SHOULD WE GO FOR THE GOLD AWARD?
A GUIDE FOR SERVICES PREPARING FOR RE-ASSESSMENT

©UNICEF UK/Mead

What is the Gold Award?

In 2016 the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) launched new [Achieving Sustainability standards](#). Services that are currently accredited as Baby Friendly will be eligible to be assessed against these standards at their next scheduled re-assessment. If the service meets all of the criteria, they will then be accredited as a Gold Baby Friendly service. It is suggested that you read the [Achieving Sustainability standards and guidance document](#) carefully before considering the information in this infosheet.

Which services are eligible to go for Gold?

Services that are fully accredited as Baby Friendly can consider going for Gold. The Award is designed as the next step for accredited services whose audit results consistently show that the Baby Friendly standards are largely being met. The Gold assessment can be carried out following the next planned re-assessment.

Do all accredited Baby Friendly services have to go for Gold?

It is not compulsory to go for Gold. The decision is entirely up to individual services and choosing not to go for Gold will not affect accreditation. There is also no time limit for going for the Award. If a service does not feel that they are in a position to go for the Gold Award at the time of their re-assessment, they will still be eligible to go for the Award at their subsequent re-assessment.

Services that are not yet fully accredited or that are accredited but are still working to achieve consistency will be encouraged to use the Achieving Sustainability standards to support their work to fully embed the standards over time. Once this has been achieved, they can then consider going for Gold.

What is the advantage of achieving the Gold Award?

Working towards the Gold Award acts as an incentive for services to properly embed the Achieving Sustainability standards and so consolidate and protect all the hard work that has gone into achieving Baby Friendly accreditation. This will mean that future generations of babies, their mothers and families will still continue to experience Baby Friendly standards of care. The Award will be a recognition that the service is not only implementing the Baby Friendly Initiative standards, but that they also have the leadership, culture and systems to maintain this over the long term.

Gold services will no longer have to undergo large external re-assessments in order to maintain their accreditation, but rather will be re-validated via the annual submission of a portfolio (see page 3) and three-yearly re-validation meetings with an external assessor. Re-assessment costs will be replaced with an annual licence fee.

What do we need to consider before deciding whether to go for Gold?

Prior to your next re-assessment, it is suggested that the decision about whether to go for the Gold Award is taken by a mixed group of staff, including the Head of Service, other relevant managers, representative clinicians and the Baby Friendly Lead. This will bring a range of perspectives to the analysis of whether the service is ready or not. This group will need to consider the internal audit results of the core Baby Friendly standards. They will then need to complete the Achieving Sustainability self-assessment tool (see appendix) and identify which criteria are currently being met, which criteria will need more work, and how long this will take.

The service is ready to go for Gold when:

1. Internal audit results indicate that most of the core Baby Friendly standards will be met at re-assessment
2. The Achieving Sustainability criteria as listed on the self-assessment tool (see appendix) are being met or can be achieved within a reasonable timeframe of the re-assessment
3. The managers have undergone [managers' education](#)
4. A Guardian is in post and has undergone relevant education according to need.

How does the assessment for the Gold Award work?

- When completing the [re-assessment application form](#), the service indicates that they would like to go for the Gold Award.
- The planned re-assessment is then slightly amended, and the assessors carry out more in-depth interviews with the Head of Service, the Guardian and a random selection of managers. The assessors also ask the mothers who are interviewed a question related to their experience of the culture within the service. This extra information gathered has no bearing on the re-assessment, which will be carried out and judged as normal. Instead, the information is stored and will be used as part of the Gold assessment.
- Following a successful re-assessment:
 - the service applies for an Achieving Sustainability (Gold) assessment which will be carried out remotely by one assessor over one day (similar to Stage 1 assessment)
 - the service carries out a staff survey provided by UNICEF UK to elicit staff opinions on the culture within the service, with the results going directly to UNICEF UK

- unless the re-assessment has happened within the preceding few months, a cohort of mothers will be interviewed to ensure core Baby Friendly standards have been maintained. A list of consented mothers is therefore needed. Staff audits will also be submitted to demonstrate continued high levels of knowledge and skill
- the service completes an application form and submits this, along with all supporting material, to the nominated assessor at least one week before the assessment.
- On the day of the assessment, the assessor will review the application form, supporting material, results of the manager interviews, mother interviews, staff audits and survey. The assessor will then interview the Head of Service, Guardian and Baby Friendly Lead via telephone or video call about the findings. The assessor will also interview a small selection of managers if they were not already interviewed at the time of the re-assessment. A date for this to happen will be arranged with you.
- A report will be written and submitted to the Designation Committee for their decision. The report will also be sent to the service being assessed.
- If there is evidence that all the Achieving Sustainability standards are met, then the service will be accredited as Gold. If some of the standards are not met, then more time will be given to make the necessary changes and submit further evidence of the improvements made. This may or may not necessitate a further charge, depending on the amount of time needed to review the additional materials.

What happens once we have the Gold Award?

- A portfolio will be kept by the service which will include audit results, breastfeeding rates and other relevant data. It will also record successes and challenges relating to all the standards, including evidence of action planning and evaluation. Significant changes in management structures and personnel will also be reported.
- A re-validation meeting will take place after two years via telephone with a UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative assessor in order to review the portfolio and the actions taken to address any recommendations made at the re-assessment visit and/or Gold assessment. A date should then be planned and booked with the Baby Friendly office. This date should be suitable for the Baby Friendly Lead, Head of Service and Guardian, as all will be interviewed.
- Further formal re-validation meetings, as above, will take place with a Baby Friendly Initiative assessor every three years.
- In the interim years, an annual report with key documents from the portfolio will be submitted to UNICEF UK. Additional documents and information can be requested to aid clarification if needed.
- Short notice monitoring visits will be carried out by UNICEF UK on a percentage of facilities holding a Gold Award every year.

Further questions

What happens if we decide to go for Gold, but don't pass the re-assessment?

This will depend on how many requirements and recommendations are made following the re-assessment. If there are a limited number and overall the result is good, then you will be asked to do the necessary work to make improvements and then submit internal audit results or undergo a follow up visit. Providing the results of these are satisfactory, the service will then move on to the Gold assessment.

However, if there are significant improvements required, then the service may be asked to undergo a further re-assessment before moving forward to Gold. The ultimate decision will rest with the Designation Committee.

What happens if we don't pass the Achieving Sustainability assessment?

This will depend on which criteria the service has not passed, and how many require improvement. A likely scenario is that the service will be asked to make the necessary improvements and then submit further evidence that these improvements have been made by a specified date. The assessor will consider the evidence and submit the findings to the Designation Committee who will make the accreditation or ask for more evidence if required.

We have recently passed our re-assessment. Can we go for Gold?

Yes, providing you believe you can meet the criteria listed in the Achieving Sustainability self-assessment tool (see appendix). It may be that a bespoke package needs to be arranged for your service to allow UNICEF UK to gather all the relevant evidence needed, including from mothers, to confirm that you are implementing all the core Baby Friendly Initiative standards and to ensure that the managers' assessments can take place. [Contact the office](#) for more details.

What happens if we decide not to go for Gold?

If the service decides not to go for the Gold Award at this re-assessment, they can consider it again at the next re-assessment. The timing and structure of the next re-assessment can be discussed with the Baby Friendly team on an individual basis. There is no rush or pressure to go for Gold if your service is not ready; we will support you to move forward in any way that supports the service to deliver the best outcomes for babies, their mothers and families.

Appendix: Achieving Sustainability self-assessment tool

Please refer to the [Achieving Sustainability guidance document](#) for details of the evidence required for each criteria at the Gold Award assessment. Please work through the checklist below, deciding if you feel each criteria is met. Only tick 'met' when you believe that all the evidence required is available. Once you have completed the checklist and all standards appear to be met, please email it to bfi@unicef.org.uk so we can decide on a Gold assessment date with you. To download a word version of this document, visit unicef.uk/sustainability.



Service details

Service name	
Contact name, email & telephone	
Re-assessment date	
Please indicate when you would be ready to have a Gold assessment (e.g. month)	

Themes, Standards and criteria	Met / partially met / not met	Action required
Theme 1: Leadership		
1. There is a named Baby Friendly Lead/team with sufficient knowledge, skills and hours to meet their objectives.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baby Friendly care would be maintained if the current lead was no longer in post. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role is achievable within routinely worked hours without the need for routine overtime – paid or unpaid. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Succession planning has been considered. 		
2. There is a mechanism for the Baby Friendly Lead/team to remain up to date with their education and skills.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Lead/team are enabled to attend NIFN meetings, Baby Friendly Annual Conference, etc. 		
3. A Baby Friendly Guardian with sufficient seniority/engagement is in post.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Guardian is a Board member or has access to the Board. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Guardian can demonstrate engagement via examples of where they have been able to influence decisions or actions in the service. 		
4. The leadership structures support proportionate responsibility and accountability.		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a formal leadership structure, such as a strategy group or similar. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group receives reports related to data and audit results, agrees actions and ensures these are delivered. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant managers in all areas are engaged and aware of roles and responsibilities. 		
5. All relevant managers are educated to support the maintenance of the standards.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant managers, including the Guardian, have received specific training to enable them to understand Baby Friendly and the wider social and political context. 		
Theme 2: Culture		
6. There is support for ongoing staff learning.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updates are carried out annually and are responsive to local outcomes as well as emerging evidence and will support progression. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 80% of staff have been supported to access the updates. 		
7. There are mechanisms in place to support a positive culture, such as staff recognition schemes, mechanisms for staff to feedback concerns and systems to enable parents'/families' feedback to be heard and acted upon.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are mechanisms in place to show that staff are valued, both at a Trust/authority-wide level and at a local/departmental level. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are able to contribute ideas and express concerns about Baby Friendly care and can do this anonymously if needed. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examples of how staff feedback has impacted on the service can be provided. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable mechanisms are used to gain feedback from mothers/families. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The mechanisms are effective – for example if the FFT or other relevant evaluation tool is used, the response rate is reasonable. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examples of how mothers'/families' feedback has impacted on the service can be provided. 		
Theme 3: Monitoring		
8. Baby Friendly audits are carried out regularly according to service needs.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a structured plan for conducting audits throughout the year. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The audit plan is responsive to service need and this can be demonstrated. 		
9. All relevant data is available and is accessed.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breastfeeding data is available for at least two time points. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional data is also available, for example readmission rates, drop off rates, rates by postcode/geographical area, introduction of solid foods, sessional activity in children's centres. 		
10. Data is analysed effectively and collectively to give an overall picture.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data and audit results are considered by the leadership team regularly – 3-6 monthly at least. 		

11. Action plans are developed in response to findings.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plans related to core standards are developed according to need. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plans to aid progression have been developed in response to relevant local data or changing evidence base. 		
12. Relevant data is routinely reported to the leadership team.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mechanism for reporting e.g. a standard report template, dashboard or other mechanism is used to ensure that all data is reported. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples are available to be submitted. 		
13. Relevant data is routinely reported to UNICEF UK.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual audits have been submitted routinely to UNICEF UK. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any audits required following recent re-assessment are available and ready to be submitted. Requirements and recommendations following the assessment have been addressed. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current staff and mother audit results indicate that all standards continue to be met. 		
Theme 4: Progression		
14. The service demonstrates innovation and progress.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of developments made to services can be evidenced and submitted. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developments have been planned/made based on audit results, data, feedback from parents and/or emerging evidence and have the potential to improve outcomes. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The rationale for the development and details of planning, implementation and evaluation are clear and can be explained in the submission – see the Baby Friendly Progression Model (in the Achieving Sustainability Standards and Guidance). 		
15. There is evidence of improved outcomes.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data is available that demonstrates an improvement in outcomes – these outcomes may be breastfeeding rates (initiation, continuation, by area etc.) but could also be related to other outcomes such as timing of introduction of solid foods, increased attendance at parent education, staff or maternal satisfaction, etc. 		
16. The needs of babies, their mothers and families related to the Baby Friendly standards are met through effective integrated working.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is evidence that the service is working collaboratively to deliver a comprehensive care pathway for mothers. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is evidence of collaboration at a strategic level. 		

Please note that significant changes in service provision such as a major reorganisation, merger of services or re-tendering process can have a significant impact on the ability of the service to meet these standards, in particular Leadership and Culture. You are advised to consider very carefully whether you apply for a Gold assessment at such times or shortly afterwards.