

UNICEF UK INFOSHEET

UPDATES TO NEONATAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

August 2021



Background

The UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) Baby Friendly Initiative neonatal accreditation programme is based on a set of evidence-based standards which enable services to improve care provision and outcomes for babies, their mothers and families on the neonatal unit.

The achievement of Stages 1 and 2 of the accreditation programme help to assess whether units have the necessary mechanisms in place to provide this high standard of care. When units reach Stage 3 assessment (and at re-assessment), they are assessed via internal audit results and interviews with mothers in order to determine whether Baby Friendly standards are being met.

When the neonatal programme was introduced in 2015, a decision was made to require at least a 70% positive response rate for parents' responses. This was lower than the 80% required at maternity and health visiting assessments. At this time, the Designation Committee felt that it would be challenging for neonatal units to achieve an 80% standard due to the amount of change in practice and culture that was needed in many neonatal units across the UK.

Since that time, the neonatal programme has gone from strength to strength, with high levels of engagement and many accredited units exceeding the 70% threshold required at assessment. Therefore, in April 2021, the Baby Friendly Designation Committee decided to increase the standard required for parents' positive experiences of care in neonatal units from 70% to 80%. This change will come into effect from January 2022 and aims to bring the neonatal programme in line with the other Baby Friendly programmes in order to improve standards of care for all preterm and sick babies.

Relevant [guidance materials and audit tools](#) have been amended to reflect this change, and the Baby Friendly team will continue to work with individual units to ensure that they are prepared.

Timeline for implementation of changes

- August 2021 to December 2021: The transition period for this change in assessment requirements is currently underway, with units continuing to be assessed at 70%
- January 2022 to December 2022: Units will be assessed at 80%, but dispensation will be given by the Designation Committee if some standards are determined to be above 70% but below 80% in an otherwise positive assessment.
- From January 2023: All units will be assessed at 80%.

Changes to audit tools obtained before August 2021

If you have previously purchased the neonatal audit tool, you can make updates on the slides (PowerPoint file) and scoring sheets (Word document) to amend the 70% rate to 80% and continue to use. The guidance document (PDF) has been amended only to specify this change in scoring; there are no further changes to the interview forms.

We will be sending an update email to everyone who has purchased the audit tool with a copy of these 2021 versions. If you don't receive the email update and would like a copy of the 2021 versions, please contact the Baby Friendly office at bfi@unicef.org.uk specifying your organisation name and date the audit tool was ordered.

Thank you for your efforts to meet this updated assessment requirement. If you have any questions please contact the Baby Friendly team at bfi@unicef.org.uk