

# **Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly in Great Britain**

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## **Background**

The World Health Organisation and Unicef in its Innocenti Declaration (2007) advised all countries to increase support of breastfeeding and recommended that all infants should be exclusively breastfed up to six months old and continue to receive breast milk up to the age of two years. Many countries have struggled to achieve this and the UK remains one of the lowest breastfeeding nations in the world, despite the consistently strong evidence that breastfeeding promotes the health of infants and mothers and prevents ill health and hospitalization. This presentation will report on the Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly (BBF) process that is based on an implementation science approach, across the countries that constitute Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland).

## **Aim of the study**

The BBF-GB study was conducted during 2017-19 comprising BBF England, Wales, and Scotland. As part of an international project being conducted during the same period by Yale School of Public Health, the aim was to inform policymakers how to improve the environment for the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding through a whole-system approach.

## **Methods**

The process involved a stakeholder-consensus approach to assessing the status of 54 benchmarks across eight 'gears' that drive a country's whole system 'gear model' towards a sustainable policy approach to supporting, promoting and protecting breastfeeding.

## **Results**

This presentation will provide a critical overview of how the process was conducted, the findings and recommendations and how these were managed. Based on each country's total gear scores (mean benchmark scores for each gear) we found that Scotland scored higher than England and Wales on all gears, especially on political will and national co-ordination. England and Wales scored less well on all gears than Scotland but especially on co-ordination and promotion of breastfeeding.

## **Conclusions**

The BBF process across England, Wales and Scotland highlighted that each country is at a different stage of readiness to improve the environment for breastfeeding. We draw on critical theory as a theoretical approach to explaining the different outcomes for each country and some considerations for future action.