



**The National Authority for the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI)**

## **Baby-Friendly Initiative Assessment Process and Costs for Hospitals, Birthing Centres and Community Health Services**

The process for a hospital, birthing centre or community health service to achieve Baby-Friendly designation is a journey, the milestones of which are outlined below.

1. Facility establishes a Multidisciplinary Breastfeeding/BFI Committee
2. Facility conducts a BFI Self-Appraisal using the BCC's [\*BFI Guideline Checklist\*](#) and [\*BFI Implementation Guideline\*](#)
3. BFI Pre-Assessment: Document Review and Site Visit
4. BFI External Assessment
5. BFI Designation
6. Maintaining BFI Designation: self-monitoring and interim reports
7. BFI Re-Assessment every 5 years
8. BFI Re-Designation

Typically, most hospitals, birthing centres and community health services (referred to below as the Facility) can expect to spend several years on this journey.

## Milestones for the BFI Journey

**1. Certificate of Intent** – Some provinces/territories (i.e. Ontario, British Columbia) provide this to recognize facilities starting the BFI journey. Certificate of Intent is issued to the facility when the following requirements are met:

- The facility has made a decision to use the [BFI Implementation Guideline](#) and companion documents to guide and inform practice.
- The facility submits the name and contact information for a BFI lead to the P/T BFI contact person.
- The facility establishes a BFI workgroup within the facility.

**2. Certificate of Participation** – A facility can contact their [P/T BFI member](#) for a Certificate of Participation when the requirements listed below are met. When there is no P/T BFI committee, the facility can contact the BCC BFI Assessment Committee at [assessmentcommittee@breastfeedingcanada.ca](mailto:assessmentcommittee@breastfeedingcanada.ca). A Certificate of Participation is issued to the facility when the following requirements are met:

- Establish a Multidisciplinary BFI/Breastfeeding Committee including administrators, direct care staff from the facility, and members from the community.
- Perform a self-assessment using the BCC's [BFI Guideline Checklist](#).
- Develop a work plan using the BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#).
- Review breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.
- Assign a contact person who will lead communication with the P/T BFI Committee or the BCC's Assessment Committee.

### 3. Capacity Building Visit

- A facility can request a capacity building visit by contacting their P/T BFI Committee or the BCC's Assessment Committee.
- The P/T BFI contact or Assessment Committee assigns an Assessor or Lead Assessor to visit the facility to provide guidance.

- The Memorandum of Understanding for Capacity Building visits is completed by the Assessor and facility and submitted to the BCC's Assessment Committee.
- The capacity building visit can be done virtually or in-person.
- The cost of the visit includes an honorarium for the Assessor and travel, accommodation (if needed), and a per diem rate for in-person visits. The facility will be invoiced by the BCC's Assessment Committee once the capacity building visit has been completed.
- A capacity building visit is optional.

## 4. BFI Pre-Assessment

### 4.1 Readiness for BFI Pre-Assessment

The following criteria must be met prior to the facility entering into Pre-Assessment:

- The facility's self-appraisal has been updated using the BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#) and the [BFI Guideline Checklist](#).
- The criteria for each Step are complete or very close to completion.
- All documents that are submitted for review must be complete (documents under revision or in a draft state will not be reviewed).
- Breastfeeding surveillance is provided in accordance with the requirements described in Step 1c of the [BFI Guideline Checklist](#).

### 4.2 Pre-Assessment Process

- Pre-Assessment is a two-part process: a review of the facility's documents followed by a facility site visit.
- The BFI Pre-Assessment is conducted by a BCC certified BFI Lead Assessor, assigned by the BCC BFI Assessment Committee, in collaboration with the P/T BFI contact.
- For educational purposes, additional BCC BFI Assessors and Assessor Candidates may participate in the BFI Pre-Assessment without additional cost to the facility.
- The BFI Pre-Assessment contract and guidelines are outlined in point 6 of this document.

## Part 1: Pre-Assessment Document Review

The facility compiles three copies of documents to be reviewed. Two copies of the documents are submitted to the Assessors listed in the contract. One copy is retained by the facility as a master copy. The following content should be included for the document review:

- **Cover letter** including demographics of the facility, prenatal and postpartum services provided, and demographics of the population served by the facility.
- **Self- assessment** using the BCC's [\*BFI Guideline Checklist\*](#).
- **Completed table 1** of [\*BFI Implementation Guideline\*](#)
- **Written BFI/Infant Feeding Policy** and any related policies such as *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code)* and *relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions*.
- **Clinical protocols and standards** related to infant feeding and BFI.
- **Public BFI policy** including translation into languages most commonly understood.
- **Orientation** to the BFI, the WHO Code and subsequent WHA resolutions, and the Infant Feeding Policy:
  - information provided to staff (including management, direct care providers, indirect care providers, physicians, midwives, students, and volunteers)
  - description of how the facility ensures that all staff receive orientation to BFI within 6 months of their start date.
- Protocol for **ongoing monitoring and data-management systems** for the eight key clinical practices.
- **Meetings of the facility's quality improvement/BFI team** showing that they take place regularly.
- **Competency validation:** procedure for staff (direct and indirect care providers) to review and ensure BFI standards are met within their role.
- **Prenatal education materials:**
  - A written curriculum for prenatal classes (in person and/or on-line).
  - A copy of all the educational materials provided to pregnant women/persons and their families prenatally.
- **Postpartum education materials:**
  - A written curriculum for any parenting classes where infant feeding is discussed.

- A copy of all the educational materials provided to mothers/parents and their families regarding infant feeding and related issues (e.g., soothing babies, infant pain management, contraception).

### **BFI Pre-Assessment Document Review Report from the BCC**

- The report will include feedback and recommendations to the facility. The report will not include detailed editing and revisions of documents.
- The written report is submitted by the Lead Assessor to the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee Co-Chairs within six weeks of receipt of the documents.
- The facility and the relevant P/T BFI Committee receive a copy of the report from the BCC's Assessment Committee.
- The facility is expected to carefully review the report and utilize the feedback to further facilitate the implementation of the *BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#)*.
- Readiness for the Pre-Assessment site visit is mutually determined by the Lead Assessor and the facility. The Lead Assessor will liaise with the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee and the facility to arrange a BFI Pre-Assessment Site Visit date.

### **Part 2: Pre-Assessment Site Visit**

The site visit is an abbreviated evaluation of the facility and an opportunity for the facility and Lead Assessor to determine readiness for an External Assessment.

- The site visit usually requires one day but may be longer depending on the size of the facility.
- The site visit includes discussions with staff and clients and observation of practices within the facility.
- The site visit can be virtual or in-person.

### **BFI Pre-Assessment Site Visit Report from the BCC**

- A written report with feedback and recommendations is submitted by the Lead Assessor to the BCC BFI Assessment Committee within six weeks of the site visit. The facility and the relevant P/T BFI Committee also receive a copy of the report.

- The facility is expected to carefully review the report and utilize the feedback to enhance the implementation of the *BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#)*.
- If the facility is not ready to move to External Assessment an action plan is requested from the facility. The action plan, including timelines, should be submitted to the Lead Assessor within 90 days of receipt of the report.
- The P/T BFI Committee will provide information and assistance in formulating a plan and making changes to meet the outstanding criteria whenever possible. In some situations, the Lead Assessor will provide guidance to the facility.
- Following the Pre-Assessment site visit, the Lead Assessor will liaise with the BCC BFI Assessment Committee and the facility to arrange the External Assessment once readiness has been determined.

## 5. External Assessment

### 5.1 Readiness for BFI External Assessment

The following criteria must be met prior to a facility entering into an External Assessment:

- Facility self-appraisal has been updated using the *BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#)* and the *[BFI Guideline Checklist](#)*.
- All the Pre-Assessment criteria have been met.
- The facility has informed the Lead Assessor who completed the Pre-Assessment site visit of any changes in service provision.
- The Lead Assessor makes a recommendation for application for External Assessment to the BCC BFI Assessment Committee and the relevant P/T BFI Committee.

### 5.2 External Assessment Process

External Assessment confirms that policies and practices ensure that the standards defined in the *BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#)* are being met. The BFI External Assessment Contract and Guidelines are outlined in point 6 of this document.

External Assessment involves:

- Interviews with staff (management, direct care providers, physicians, midwives, indirect care providers, nonclinical staff, students, volunteers etc.)
- Interviews with pregnant women/persons and mothers/birthing parents
- Observations of the facility and staff at work (e.g., births, clinic visits)
- Reviewing monitoring data
- Review of purchase agreements for breast-milk substitutes and supplies
- May include patient/client records.

The External Assessment is conducted by an External Assessment Team assigned by the BCC BFI Assessment Committee in collaboration with the P/T BFI Committee.

The team consists of:

- A BCC certified BFI Lead Assessor
- BCC certified Assessors
- BCC Assessor Candidates (optional)
- Where possible, the team will be led by the Lead Assessor who completed the Pre-Assessment site visit
- The total number of Assessors will depend on the size of the facility.

The External Assessment requires two to five days depending on the size of the facility.

If conditions prevent an in-person External Assessment, some components of the External Assessment can take place virtually and are followed by an in-person visit once conditions allow. The process is determined by the BCC Assessment Committee, the Lead Assessor, and the facility.

The facility BFI lead/delegate assists with the External Assessment by completing the following:

- Informs the administrators and staff in advance of the visit that staff and patients/clients will be selected by Assessors for interviews.
- Secures a private, locked meeting room for the External Assessment Team's exclusive use during the assessment visit and secures additional private spaces for interviews as requested.
- Remains available throughout the assessment process.

- Arranges internet access for the BFI Assessment Team to report to and confer with the BCC Board and BFI Assessment Committee on the final day of the BFI External Assessment.

### **BFI External Assessment Report by the BCC**

- On the last day of the External Assessment, a verbal overview is given to the facility. The final decision of designation is not disclosed during the External Assessment Site Visit.
- A written report with feedback for the facility is submitted by the Lead Assessor to the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee within 6 weeks of the External Assessment. The facility and the relevant P/T BFI Committee will receive a copy of this report.

### **Outcome of the External Assessment**

- When the facility meets all of the standards in the BCC's [\*BFI Implementation Guideline\*](#), Baby-Friendly Designation is awarded by the BCC. Designation is valid for 5 years from the time of the External Assessment.
- When some standards have not been fully met and require additional work, one of two possible outcomes will occur at the discretion of the Lead Assessor and the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee.
  - The facility will receive a Conditional Designation and must create an action plan outlining how they will fulfill the conditions outlined in the External Assessment report. This action plan is submitted to the BCC and the P/T BFI Committee within 90 days of receipt of the External Assessment Report. The Lead Assessor can provide guidance as requested when the facility is creating the action plan. When the action plan is implemented and required changes are documented, designation is awarded.
  - The facility will receive a BCC Baby-Friendly Initiative Certificate of Commitment when the External Assessment shows there is evidence to support some, but not all of the BFI standards. The Baby-Friendly Certificate of Commitment is a formal recognition of progress made towards BFI designation and is awarded by the BCC, in conjunction with the relevant P/T BFI Committee. This certificate is valid for 1 year from the time of External Assessment and extensions may be

granted by the BCC after discussion with the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee. When a Certificate of Commitment is awarded the facility must:

- Create an action plan with time lines addressing the standards not met by the facility.
- Submit the action plan to the BCC and the relevant P/T BFI Committee within 90 days of receipt of the External Assessment Report.  
The P/T BFI Committee will provide information and assistance in formulating the action plan and making changes to meet the outstanding standards whenever possible. In some situations, the Lead Assessor will provide guidance to the facility.
- If a return site visit is needed, it is arranged when the necessary changes have been implemented. Additional fees may apply. The criteria that were not met during the External Assessment are reassessed by a lead assessor and additional assessors as required. This is determined by the BCC's BFI Assessment Committee.

### **Baby-Friendly Designation Celebration**

- The facility provides staff with feedback from the External Assessment Report.
- The facility liaises with the media to notify the public.
- The facility arranges a date for the presentation of the framed BFI Designation award.
- The BCC and P/T BFI Committee will not share information about the facility until the facility makes the information known to the public.
- The BCC posts on its website and updates UNICEF Canada of BFI designated facilities in Canada after the information is made public.

### **6. Maintaining Baby-Friendly Status**

- Following Baby-Friendly designation, monitoring is completed by the facility to confirm that the BFI standards continue to be met (see the *BCC's [BFI Implementation Guideline](#)*, Step 1c).

- **Self-monitoring reports** are submitted annually to the P/ T Committee and include the following information:
  - Any change in the provision of service
  - Breastfeeding surveillance information (see [BFI Guideline Checklist](#), Step 1c).
- A **BFI interim report** is submitted every 2 years to the BCC and the P/T BFI Committee and includes the following information:
  - Any change in the provision of service
  - An update for each of the Ten Steps
  - Breastfeeding surveillance information (see [BFI Guideline Checklist](#), Step 1c)
  - Evidence of collaboration with key partners to identify and address issues or barriers revealed in breastfeeding surveillance information.
- Facilities must be reassessed every five years in order to maintain their BFI designation status. Re-Assessment involves a subsequent contract and additional costs to the facility. A Pre-Assessment document review is required for Re-Assessment. A Pre-Assessment site visit is encouraged but optional.

## 7. Contract Details and Financial Guidelines

### 7.1 Pre-Assessment

- A BFI Pre-Assessment Contract is signed between the facility and the BCC.
- Pre-Assessment involves a document review and a site visit (virtual or in-person) by a BCC Lead Assessor.
- A Hospital or Birthing Centre with over 200 births per year or a Community Health Service with over 200 infants at entry into service pays the following fees to the BCC prior to the Pre-Assessment:
  - Administration fee: \$525
  - Document Review fee: \$500
  - Site Visit fee: \$500 per day honorarium for the Lead Assessor
  - In-person site visit: A per diem rate consistent with the current rate of the National Joint Council for meals and incidentals for the Lead Assessor; travel and accommodation for the Lead Assessor are arranged and paid by the facility directly with travel companies and

hotels prior to or at the time of the assessment or will be billed by the BCC.

- A Hospital or Birthing Centre with 200 or fewer births per year or a Community Health Service with 200 or fewer infants at entry into service pays the following fees to the BCC prior to the Pre-Assessment:
  - Administration fee: \$350
  - Document Review fee: \$500
  - Site Visit fee: \$500 per day honorarium for the Lead Assessor
  - In-person site visit: A per diem rate consistent with the current rate of the National Joint Council for meals and incidentals for the Lead Assessor; travel and accommodation for the Lead Assessor are arranged and paid by the facility directly with travel companies and hotels prior to or at the time of the assessment or will be billed by the BCC.

## 7.2 External Assessment

- A BFI External Assessment Contract is signed between the facility and the BCC.
- The External Assessment Team will consist of a Lead Assessor and usually 2 or more Assessors who will visit for 2 to 5 days, depending on the size of the facility.
- A Hospital or Birthing Centre with over 200 births per year or a Community Health Service with over 200 infants at entry into service pays the following fees to the BCC prior to the External Assessment:
  - Administration fee: \$1450
  - Assessor fees: \$500 per day honorarium for the Lead Assessor and \$350 per day honorarium for each additional Assessor
  - A per diem rate consistent with the current rate of the National Joint Council for meals and incidentals for the Lead Assessor and each Assessor.
- A Hospital or Birthing Centre with 200 or fewer births per year or a Community Health Service with 200 or fewer infants at entry into service pays the following fees to the BCC prior to the External Assessment:
  - Administration fee: \$975
  - Assessor fees: \$500 per day honorarium for the Lead Assessor and \$350 per day honorarium for each additional Assessor

- A per diem rate consistent with the current rate of the National Joint Council for meals and incidentals for the Lead Assessor and each Assessor.
- Travel and accommodation for the Assessment Team are arranged and paid by the facility directly with travel companies and hotels prior to or at the time of the assessment or will be billed by the BCC.
- The facility is responsible for the additional costs (honoraria, travel, and accommodation) for one Lead Assessor and any additional Assessors should a return External Assessment visit be required.

### **7.3 Re-Assessment**

- A Re-Assessment Contract is signed between the facility and the BCC.
- Costs are to be determined and are consistent with the Pre-Assessment and an External Assessment outlined above.

**Please note:** The BCC reserves the right to revise the assessment costs as necessary to cover expenses. Revisions will be posted on the BCC website.