



Information Policy

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Links or overlaps with other strategies/policies:			
Information Governance Policy			
Equality and Diversity Policy			
Environmental Policy			
Complaints Policy			
Social Media Policy			
Communications and media policy			
Information creation/review process and checklist			
Internal moderation policy			
Expenses Policy			
Volunteer Handbook			
Tutor Handbook			

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Introduction

The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) provides information and resources on breastfeeding and associated topics to mums, parents and families, the general public, healthcare professionals, staff and volunteers. These take a variety of forms, including our website, leaflets, handbooks, training materials and social media channels*. Providing information, particularly to mums, parents and families, is fundamental to the work of BfN. Our information is a key organisational asset and as such it must be managed, controlled and protected. It is therefore essential that this information is accurate, up-to-date, evidence-based, accessible and independent of commercial or political interests. This will ensure BfN's integrity and reputation, as well as protecting our service users.

Scope

This policy covers all information created or maintained by BfN that is communicated to the public, members, volunteers, staff, course attendees and healthcare professionals, on our website, in leaflets and posters, social media and blog posts*, handbooks and training materials (including assignments), both physical and online.

Policy statement

The policy sets out the standards that information created or maintained by BfN should comply with. It should be read in conjunction with the Information Creation and Review Process and Checklist, which describes the procedures BfN will use for creating new information or reviewing and updating existing information. This will lead to improvements in the quality of the information provided by BfN and in user confidence in this information.

Aim of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all information provided by BfN is up to date, accurate, consistent, evidence based, inclusive, accessible and independent of commercial or political interests. This policy will be compliant with other BfN policies and external standards such as the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (WHO Code) and subsequent, relevant resolutions, and national health policies from all four home nations. Ensuring our information meets these standards will enhance BfN's integrity and reputation, and protect BfN from the risk of a health incident being attributed to incorrect, unclear or out of date information provided by us.

Roles and responsibilities

Information and Policy Officer (IPO)

The IPO will maintain the information database, identify items of information due for review and ensure review is completed according to schedule, address comments and concerns regarding BfN information. They will assess requests for new information to be created and will identify new information that is required.

Central support manager (CSM)

The CSM will sign off minor amendments to information.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO will approve the creation of new information and sign off new information or information that has had substantive amendments as a result of review.

Advisory Panel

The wider BfN advisory panel is composed of people both internal and external to BfN with a wide variety of backgrounds, experience, knowledge and expertise. These people have all expressed interest in supporting the development and review of BfN information. The panel members identified to support a particular task will have experience or expertise relevant to the information in question, or will be members of the intended audience for the information. The panel will support the IPO in creating and reviewing information. They will check information that has been created or reviewed and provide comments and final approval.

Managers, Programme Managers, Project Leads, Tutors and Supervisors

Staff in these roles should ensure that they use up to date BfN information, or information from appropriate sources as detailed in this policy, in all aspects of support, communication, training and supervision. Documents used for formal training programmes fall under this policy and must be created and reviewed accordingly. Materials used for supervision and continued professional development (CPD) sessions should be taken from BfN information or from appropriate sources as detailed in this policy. Information shared via social media channels under the BfN brand should be taken directly from information currently published by BfN, or from a reputable source as detailed below, to ensure it is compliant with this policy.

Local project staff may produce their own marketing materials, in accordance with the branding guidelines, but should use information obtained from BfN central resources, rather than creating their own, wherever possible. Staff should contact the IPO if they need to create any new information, or require help sourcing information, so this can be undertaken in accordance with this policy.

Social Media and Marketing officers

Staff in these roles should ensure that any information shared via social media channels under the BfN brand has been taken directly from information currently published by BfN, or from a reputable source as detailed below, to ensure it is compliant with this policy. Posts providing information may be shared directly from other reputable sources, including other national breastfeeding charities and those detailed below. If any blog posts contain information, this should be consistent with information currently provided by BfN, or other reputable sources, as detailed below. Staff should contact the IPO with any queries.

Standards and processes to be followed when creating or reviewing any information

- All information within BfN has been catalogued and assigned a schedule for review. This is documented in an information database.
- A full review of each article of information will be conducted before the scheduled review date, or sooner if it comes to light that information is out of date or contains significant inaccuracies.
- The IPO will coordinate the review or creation of all information.
- The intended audience(s) should be clearly defined prior to the creation or review of any information.
- An advisory panel will be identified by the IPO for this particular information, from the wider members of the BfN advisory panel. This panel will include members both internal and external to BfN with relevant experience or expertise, and representation from the intended audience for the information. Diversity of ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexuality, disability, social background and education should be considered when identifying the panel. The development of BfN information as a whole should be undertaken with input from as broadly diverse a group of people as possible. If the information is particularly relevant to any specific protected characteristic, that will be reflected in the panel if at all possible.
- All sources should be referenced and references should be checked to ensure they are still current.

- Any hyperlinks included in the information should be checked and dated to ensure they are current and linking to up-to-date information.
- The IPO and advisory panel will carry out a review of the current literature and guidelines relevant to the information, in accordance with the process detailed in appendix 1.
- Where there is limited or no evidence available on a particular aspect of the information this should be clearly stated.
- All breastfeeding information, including any images used, must comply with The WHO Code.
- Information should be presented in a balanced manner and should not imply judgement or give advice.
- Information should take into account diversity of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, age, disability and social and educational background, and should be inclusive and representative of all.
- Information should be clear of any typographical errors.
- The level of information provided and language used should be accessible, inclusive and appropriate for the intended audience and the intended media. Plain language should be used, with simple words and short sentences where possible. Jargon and acronyms should be avoided and terminology explained where appropriate. Content for the website should be checked for readability and search engine optimisation (SEO).
- Formatting should be consistent with BfN standard for the type of information and with branding guidelines. The IPO will work with the marketing team to ensure a professional and consistent format across all information, particularly that in print and on the website.
- Any images used should be suitable and up to date and should be considered for their representation of diversity of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and disability. It is important that BfN information as a whole encompasses all of them, and this should be considered when selecting images. If the information is particularly relevant to any specific aspect of diversity, this should be reflected in the images used.
- Relevant signposts should be included in the information. These could include the sources listed above, other reputable organisations, or websites managed by known individuals/ groups who have appropriate qualifications and experience. All signposted organisations and websites should be evidence-based. Links should be given to higher level domains, rather than specific pages, where possible, to minimise the risk of broken links. Each link should be provided with a “last accessed” date. Signposted information sources should not contain any information that contradicts or conflicts with BfN information. Care should be taken to ensure that all signposted sources of information are compliant with the WHO international code and not commercially driven. Some websites may be managed by people who provide paid-for services, such as IBCLCs, but the information on the website should not be provided with the motivation of advertising their business or driving trade.
- Any external links should be accompanied by a clear statement that BfN is not responsible for the content of external links.
- All information should include the following disclaimer:

“This information has been compiled by BfN from various reference sources. It is provided for guidance only and should not be considered to give advice. Whilst we have attempted to ensure that it is correct, comprehensive and up-to-date, it is not a systematic review, and we may not have been able to access every possible information source. No responsibility can be taken by BfN for the way in which this information is used. Clinical decisions remain the responsibility of medical and breastfeeding practitioners.”
- The following dates should be displayed on each document or information source. Webpages require only the date of last amendment, although the other dates should be recorded in the information inventory and on the text document version stored on SharePoint.

- Creation/Last full review/last amendment:
- Next full review due by:
- Where appropriate, information should be clearly copyrighted.

Overall Review process

All new and existing information will be reviewed against the above standards by the IPO, using the Information Creation and Review Checklist. The literature review component may be delegated to another person if the information requires specific expertise. Once this review is complete, the draft will be forwarded to the advisory panel for checking and comments. The IPO will make any changes agreed by the advisory panel and return the final draft to them for confirmation that the changes are satisfactory. The document will then be signed off. Reviews that have resulted in only minor amendments to the information can be signed off by the Central Support Manager (CSM). New information, or information that has been substantially altered, should be signed off by the CEO.

Once the information is signed off, the date the review was completed will be documented on the information and in the information database. A further review date will be set for 3 years' time and this will also be displayed on the information and documented in the information database. The entry in the review database should also include the names of the IPO and advisory panel and summarise the changes made.

The previous version of the information should be saved in an archive folder on SharePoint, with the withdrawal date clearly stated in the document. Withdrawn information should be retained for 3 years from the date of withdrawal.

When an information source has been created or updated, an email should be sent to BfN staff and volunteers alerting them to the change. They will be asked to delete or destroy any old versions of the information that they may have stored locally. Documents should always be accessed or shared directly from the BfN website or relevant SharePoint folder wherever possible rather than stored locally, to avoid using out-of-date versions. When an information source is accessible via a hyperlink, the hyperlink should be retained when information is updated wherever possible, so that previously shared hyperlinks will link to the most up to date information.

Minor amendments to information

Small corrections or updates may be made to information in between full reviews if minor errors or inaccuracies are noticed or if source information is updated or changed. Situations where a minor amendment would be appropriate include:

- Typographical errors
- Editing text for clarity or inclusivity
- Updating hyperlinks that have changed, as long as the information in the link remains the same
- Removing broken hyperlinks or replacing them with other equivalent information sources
- Altering a verbatim quotation of a source for consistency if the text in the source document is altered, as long as the information remains the same
- Updating reference to an NHS publication or NICE guideline if an updated version is released, as long as the information content of the relevant sections of the document or guideline have not changed, beyond edits for clarity.
- Adding new information or updating existing information to a rolling "latest news" page, such as the COVID-19 updates page.

Minor changes should not involve changing the fundamentals of the information contained within the page or document. If changes are required to the information itself, a full review should be conducted. The exception to this is a rolling “latest news” page, which will require information to be added/updated regularly, making a full review each time impractical.

Minor changes should be made by or in discussion with the IPO and checked by an internal member of the BfN advisory panel with relevant expertise. They should then be signed off by the CSM. They should be documented by amending the last amendment date on the document and in the information database, and detailing the changes made in the information database, and who they were made by and approved by. In the case of a rolling “latest news” page, all updates meet the information quality standards described above. The IPO will co-ordinate updates in consultation with a defined internal advisory team, and these will be signed off by the CEO, or CSM in her absence.

Feedback

It is important that end users of information are able to provide feedback on it easily. All information should include the following text:

“If you notice any errors in this information, or have any other feedback you would like to share, please contact our compliments, comments, concerns and complaints team on 4cs@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

You can read more about our compliments, comments, concerns and complaints procedures here: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/compliments-comments-concerns-or-complaints/>”

Feedback and suggestions on information should be forwarded to the IPO, who will address them in accordance with this policy.

Users of this policy who have any questions regarding the policy or any BfN information can contact the Information and Policy Officer on emma.thomas@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

* Social media and blog posts that share information, as opposed to general promotion of or support for breastfeeding, promotion of BfN’s services, or personal testimonials, are covered by this policy.

Appendix 1: Literature review process for a full review or creation of new information.

Create a document named “<title of information source> Notes <ddmmy>”, using the date that the document was created. This will provide a record of all information considered for the review and all decisions made. This document should be saved in the relevant Sharepoint folder with the draft of the information.

Begin by checking the following sources for relevant information, and document any information or positional statements found from each source in the notes document. Include links, screenshots, pdfs of webpages or pdf copies of articles. Any additional documents should be clearly named and stored in the same SharePoint folder as the notes document.

- National Health Service (NHS), including subsidiary sites such as Start4Life and nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)
- UNICEF
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- Royal College of Midwives (RCM), Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). The Royal Colleges do not provide extensive information that would be useful to families and the public, but they do have some factsheets and positional statements that it may be useful to refer to.
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM), La Leche League UK (LLLUK), National Childbirth Trust (NCT), First Steps Nutrition, and other reputable charities or organisations relevant to the information in development. Note, we would not cite these other charities and organisations as an original source, but their information may provide useful insights and starting points when researching our own.

The sources listed above may have referenced relevant research articles or other sources which should be checked. Each reference checked should be documented in the notes document, with a summary of the relevant findings, outcomes or conclusions of the article. If a reference is not accessible (if it is behind a paywall), this should also be documented.

Check for relevant, recent systematic reviews (published in approximately the last five years) using the Cochrane library (<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/>), and Pubmed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>). Reviews published in academic journals should have undergone peer review. If the review is not open access, refer to the expert panel to see if any members are able to assist with access, or contact the author to request a copy. Consider purchasing a copy if it is not possible to obtain it by other means. Contact the Central Support Manager to authorise and arrange the purchase if required. Record any suitable reviews identified in the notes document along with a summary of the key findings and conclusions. Save a .pdf copy of the review in the SharePoint folder with the other documents.

Reference to such reviews, along with the other sources listed above, will ideally provide an up-to-date assessment of the current research and be sufficient to inform information provided by BfN.

If no suitable systematic review is available, it may be necessary to refer directly to original research articles. If this is necessary, support should be sought from a member of the expert panel with academic experience in a relevant field.

The search engine PubMed can be used to find relevant articles. Before beginning a search, the topic should be clearly defined. For example, “safe storage locations and durations for expressed breast milk”. Search terms should be selected that encompass that topic. For example, “storage human breastmilk”. The qualifying criteria for articles that will be considered should be defined. For example, “articles in which the safety or integrity of human breastmilk is assessed after different methods and durations of storage”. Consider putting quotation marks around elements of the search term that are fundamental (e.g. articles in which the safety or integrity of “human breastmilk” is assessed after different methods and durations of storage) to narrow the search results. The topic, search terms and qualifying criteria should be documented in the notes document. If a large number of articles are returned in the search, consider refining the search terms or focussing on the most recent articles. Document decisions in the notes document.

The title and abstract of each article should be used to assess if the article qualifies for inclusion. If the abstract suggests that the article is relevant, the reviewer should read the full article, if possible. Some articles will only be accessible on a paid for basis. If this is the case, support should be sought from a member of the expert panel with academic experience in a relevant field. If a copy of the article cannot

be obtained, this should be documented in the notes document. If the article remains relevant for inclusion, the reference and key points of relevance from the article should be documented in the notes document. Any relevant limitations of the article should also be noted.

When reading a research article, it is important to consider the following:

- How eminent is the journal it is published in? A relevant member of the expert panel may be able to advise on this.
- Was ethical approval granted? Studies without appropriate approval should not be included.
- How was the study funded? Is there a conflict of interest that could influence the design or reporting of the results?
- Study design. The following factors should be considered: was the study observational or experimental, retrospective or prospective? Was there a control group? Were the participants randomised? What was the sample size? What was the power of the study? How were the participants selected? Did the participants provide the data by self-report? Consider whether confounding variables have been controlled. These factors can all affect how convincing the results of the study are. For example, if data were provided by retrospective self-report, how confident can we be of their accuracy? If an intervention was studied, was a control group who did not receive the intervention included, to provide a baseline against which the effect of the intervention could be assessed? Was the sample big enough to provide results that can be generalised to a wider population?
- Be aware of demographics of the sample. Where is the research being performed? Age? Ethnicity? Socio-economic status? In a self-selected research sample (volunteers) these factors can often be skewed. Have these variables been controlled for? Are the findings applicable to a broader cross-section of society? If the research was not conducted in the UK, is it applicable to the UK?

If the decision is made not to include a research article in the information due to concerns about the quality of the research for any of the reasons described above, this should be documented in the notes document.

When creating the final draft, all new or reviewed information should always state any current relevant recommendations from the WHO, the NHS and NICE. Additional research findings should be presented in a balanced manner.

When describing research in information, if the research findings are considered to be worth including, but have significant limitations, these should be explained in the information.