

# Consultation Guidelines

***"Consultation is the dialogue that precedes decision-making"***

## **Introduction**

The standards for BFHI accreditation require that all facilities have a written breastfeeding policy and that "this policy be developed in consultation with Maori, other ethnic groups, community organisations and other providers using the facility" (BFHI Documents - Step 1).

Relevant legislation such as the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer's Rights outlines specific requirements that District Health Board funded providers must meet in terms of appropriate consultation.

As part of the BFHI accreditation process services are required to meet standards that indicate a robust consultation process has been followed in the development and implementation of the breastfeeding policy.

## **Definition of Consultation**

Consultation is a stage in the decision making process where maternity facilities and health services seek input from relevant health professionals, community providers, Maori, Pacific Island and other relevant ethnic groups on their policies and plans.

## **Principles of Consultation**

- Values relationships;
- Empowers community and ensures them a voice;
- Promotes integrity and responsibility; and
- Allows sufficient time and ensures genuine effort is made.

## **Purpose of Consultation**

- To ensure the policy reflects the needs of the community;
- To strengthen relationships with key stakeholders; and
- Build confidence on the integrity of the service and its commitment to meeting the needs of people that access the service.

## **Who to consult**

Midwifery, nursing staff and other health professionals that are employed within the service will have the responsibility of implementing the breastfeeding policy. Greater ownership of the policy will be created by including staff early in the development or review of the policy. Maternity facilities and health services should consider who the key stakeholders of their service are and ensure that the consultation process allows them adequate opportunity to have input and/or provide feedback on the breastfeeding policy.

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Ethnicity data will determine what ethnic groups should be consulted. It is a requirement that any group that make up more than 5% of their client based must have the opportunity to have input and provide feedback on the breastfeeding policy.

The BFI documents provide a list of services and personnel that should form part of the consultant group.

## Consultation with Maori

Consultation with Maori is a mandatory requirement within the BFI standards and the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000. "Guidelines for Consultation with Maori" are available as a separate document to support facilities and health providers to meet the required standards.

## Methods of Consultation

Successful consultation can be carried out in a variety of ways to ensure a successful engagement process and improve responsiveness of the organisations or personnel that make up the consultation group

Consultation could include:

- Distribution by hard copy or email with an identified process to receive feedback
- Written surveys
- One-on-one interviews
- In-service training
- Focus groups/consumer panels
- Network meetings
- Hui/Fono
- Advisory group

## Documentation

Evidence of the consultation process must be available for the BFHI assessment team and include the following:

- copies of letters, emails and written surveys sent
- distribution list
- collation of feedback
- minutes or notes from consultation meetings, staff meetings, hui, focus groups
- list of other networking opportunities undertaken
- copies of relevant customer satisfaction surveys if applicable

# Consultation Guidelines

*“Consultation is much more than participation. Consultation involves presenting information in a way which all participants understand, recording their responses, and altering policy as a result of these responses. Consultation involves serious ongoing obligations to the people consulted. It is a process done in utmost good faith, not to be undertaken for the sake of it”.*

Pacific Consultation Guidelines

## References

Ministry of Health. (2002). *Consultation Guidelines: For the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards relating to the provision of health and disability services*. Ministry of Health, Wellington.

Ministry of Health. (2004) *Ko Tatou: Building and Maintaining Relationships with Maori. A Guide for District Health Boards*. Ministry of Health, Wellington.

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