

What is our aim?

We aim to protect babies' health by ending marketing practices which commercialise infant feeding and threaten breastfeeding.

This aim can be achieved by bringing UK and European legislation into line with the International Code and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions.* This will help parents base their decisions about infant feeding on truly independent evidence-based information.

Since 1997 health professional and mother-support organisations in the UK have worked together as the Baby Feeding Law Group, convened by Baby Milk Action.

What has the BFLG achieved?

1. Brought attention to the extent of promotion of breastmilk substitutes in the UK (some of which is already illegal) through its ongoing monitoring.

www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk/monitoring.html

2. Provided training on the International Code.

3. Strengthened the UK Government's commitment to the International Code (The Public Health White Paper (2005) in England includes a commitment to toughen UK legislation).

4. Lobbied the European Commission to incorporate the International Code in European legislation.

www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk/advocacy.html

5. Exposed the commercial bias of INFORM, a lobby group which represents formula manufacturers.

6. Instigated the Julie Crawford Award for health visitors who have made a significant contribution to protecting breastfeeding.

The BFLG is a member of the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition. Objectives 6 and 7 of the Manifesto address marketing and education issues. www.breastfeedingmanifesto.org.uk

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BFLG Member organisations

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM)
Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)
Association of Radical Midwives (ARM)
Baby Milk Action (BFLG secretariat)
Best Beginnings
Breastfeeding Network (BfN)
Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA)
Food Commission
Lactation Consultants Great Britain (LCGB)
La Leche League Great Britain (LLLGB)
Little Angels
Midwives Information and Resource Service (MIDIRS)
National Childbirth Trust (NCT)
Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
Royal College of Midwives (RCM)
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)
The Baby Café
UK Association for Milk Banking (U.K.A.M.B)
UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)
UNISON
Women's Environmental Network (WEN)



BFLG
Baby Feeding Law Group
Strengthening UK baby food laws

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BFLG

Baby Feeding Law Group



Strengthening UK baby feeding laws
in line with UN recommendations

What is the International Code?

The International Code* is a set of marketing rules from the World Health Assembly – the world's highest health policy body and part of the United Nations.

It aims to remove obstacles to breastfeeding and protect mothers and babies (both breastfed and artificially fed) from commercial promotion. It is a **minimum requirement for all countries**. It is most effective if written into national laws but companies are required to abide by it, **independently of government action**. It covers breastmilk substitutes,** feeding bottles and related equipment. **Its key points are:**

- No promotion of breastmilk substitutes, bottles etc.
- No free samples or gifts to mothers.
- Information materials and labels must warn of the risks of artificial feeding and information must not idealise artificial feeding or discourage breastfeeding.
- Information materials and labels should warn that powdered infant formula may contain harmful bacteria.
- No free or low-cost supplies of breastmilk substitutes.
- No promotion in health care facilities or gifts to health workers (samples for evaluation only).
- Product information must be limited to factual and scientific information for health workers.
- No sales incentives for staff or contact with mothers.
- No promotion of ANY product targeting babies under six months. Complementary foods should not be marketed in ways that undermine breastfeeding.
- Governments must provide objective information on infant feeding, avoiding conflicts of interest in funding infant feeding programmes.

* In this leaflet the International Code means the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981) plus subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions. The Resolutions have the same status as the International Code and should be read with it. The International Code is also known as the WHO Code.

** A breastmilk substitute is any food or drink given to a baby of any age which replaces breastmilk. The World Health Organisation recommends six months of exclusive breastfeeding with continued breastfeeding alongside family foods for up to two years and beyond.

How can I help?

Report violations of the International Code and illegal promotions to Trading Standards and the BFLG monitoring project.

What's illegal? What's legal? What's against the International Code?

UK legislation stems from an EU Directive and is currently not as strict as the International Code. So although infant formula promotion in shops, magazines and on TV is illegal, promotion of follow-on milks, bottles/teats, baby juices and teas is not. But such promotion does break the International Code.

Still unsure? Find out more from the website.
www.babyfeedinglawgroup.org.uk



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1. In 2006 the Advertising Standards Authority ruled that some of the claims made in this Cow & Gate advert were unsubstantiated.
2. This piece appeared in six magazines prompting an 8-day trial brought by Birmingham Trading Standards in 2003. Wyeth/SMA was found guilty of illegal advertising and fined £60,808 for a “cynical and deliberate breach of the law.”

Write to your MP

Visit www.faxyourmp.com or www.writetothem.com and ask how the Government is implementing the International Code.

Without internet access?

Contact: BFLG secretariat on **01223 464420**

And also, if you are a health professional

- Ensure there are no formula company leaflets on health service premises.
- Use your professional code of conduct to guard against commercial gifts/ sponsorship/promotion materials.
- Encourage your colleagues to refuse any items carrying formula company logos, such as pens, diaries, conversion charts, etc. They are seen as company endorsements. Use non-branded items or produce your own.
- Limit formula company reps to providing information to just one infant feeding specialist – she/he can disseminate any useful information.
- Press for policies in Trusts, trade unions and other Health Professional organisations to forbid formula company advertising, sponsorship or display of logos.
- Lobby your Health Professional journal not to accept advertising from formula companies.
- Ensure that the education on parenting in schools or hospitals is free from commercial influence.
- Raise these issues at any relevant local meeting.

Remember to use these tools

