



David Holmes CBE  
Director, Family Action  
34 Wharf Road  
London, N1 7GR

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

Dear Mr Holmes

The Baby Feeding Law Group is an association of 27 organisations that work together to better protect infant feeding in the UK. You can find out more about Baby Feeding Law Group UK at [www.bflg-uk.org](http://www.bflg-uk.org). The global WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes protects all families from inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes and working within the Code is a mandatory requirement of Unicef UK Baby Friendly accreditation. This accreditation can be given to children's centres as well as maternity and community services.

We were very disappointed to see Family Action are in a partnership with Cow & Gate, who as I am sure you know, are a breastmilk substitute brand owned by the multinational Danone Nutricia, Danone Nutricia is a global WHO Code violator and by going into partnership with this brand you are undermining the efforts of the many people in this country who support families with independent information around infant feeding. You may have been told by the company that they are 'Code compliant', however the companies write their own versions of the Code which are not the same as the full WHO Code within which Unicef BFI works.

We have done a short report on why Danone Nutricia are so keen to partner with organisations such as yours that you can find at <https://tinyurl.com/y5su95ap>.

Breastmilk substitute manufacturers are not philanthropic organisations: a paper published this week reviewing the marketing tactics used by the breastmilk substitute industry concluded that great harm is being done to public health by the activities of these companies who *'use emotional appeals to reach out and build relationships with parents and especially mothers ...with evocative brands that give these approaches a human face'*. The manipulative techniques used have been well documented and it is sobering to remember that the marketing they do is to sell a product which falls far behind the 'competition' (breastfeeding) in terms of its health benefits for infants and young children, mothers and the planet. I enclose a copy of this paper as it makes sobering reading.

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**Baby Feeding Law Group UK Members:**

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM), Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS), Baby Milk Action, Best Beginnings, Breastfeeding Network (BfN), Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA), Doula UK, Fatherhood Institute, First Steps Nutrition Trust, GP Infant Feeding Network (GPIFN), Hearts Milk Bank, Hospital Infant Feeding Network (HIFN), Human Milk Foundation, Institute of Health Visiting, Lactation Consultants GB (LCGB), La Leche League GB (LLLGB), Leicester Mammias, Local Infant Feeding Information Board (LIFIB), Midwives Information and Resource Service (MIDIRS), National Breastfeeding Helpline, NCT, Save the Children, UK Association of Milk Banking (UKAMB), Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative, Unison, World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative UK, Women's Environmental Network.



We hope you will reflect on your relationship with Cow & Gate and whether this supports your mission statement:

*'Family Action believes that every child has the right to the best possible start in life and that every family should be supported to enable their children to reach their full potential'*

It is unequivocally the case that 'the best start in life' is a nurturing breastfeeding relationship for an infant. As James Grant the long-time Director of UNICEF famously said:

*'Breastfeeding is a natural "safety net" against the worst effects of poverty. If the child survives the first month of life .. then for the next four months or so, exclusive breastfeeding goes a long way toward cancelling out the health difference between being born into poverty and being born into affluence .... It is almost as if breastfeeding takes the infant out of poverty for those first few months in order to give the child a fairer start in life and compensate for the injustice of the world into which it was born'*

Yours sincerely

Dr Helen Crawley

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cc. James Mitchell, Acting Head of Fundraising, Family Action

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