

## **Response to WHO letter of 11 Feb**

Sir,

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) applauds the letter from staff of the World Health Organization (*Health Professional Associations and Industry Funding, 11 February 2017*) criticising the tragic decision of the British Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to continue accepting money from the infant formula industry to support their activities. In our work to protect, promote and support breastfeeding, WABA and its partners all over the world encounter promotional activities of the industry, which undermine mothers' ability to breastfeed, and mislead the health professionals who might support them. We struggle to educate health professionals about the importance of resisting industry's tempting offers and subtle misrepresentation of the facts, and about the unbiased skilled support that mothers need from them to breastfeed effectively. Is it surprising that the UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world, with a majority of mothers giving up in despair after a few weeks, when paediatricians appear not to consider it important? The British RCPCH should give an exemplary lead to the profession, and to fellow organisations in other countries to stand up to the infant formula industry in accordance with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and should find other sources of financial support that are free from conflict of interest.

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action

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