

What is Best Start Foods?

Best Start Foods is a new payment that will replace UK Government's Healthy Start Vouchers in Scotland. The new payment will replace the paper vouchers with a new payment card, giving you more flexibility in how you use it.

What can I buy with the card?

You can use the card to buy any of the healthy foods listed below:

- Fresh eggs
- Milk – plain cow's milk and first infant formula
- Fruit/vegetables – fresh, frozen or tinned (those with added salt and sugar are excluded)
- Pulses (e.g. peas, lentils and beans) – dried, fresh, frozen or tinned.

How much will I get?

You will get £17.00 every four weeks during pregnancy and for any children between one and three years old, this payment increases to £34.00 for any child under one.

What is the card?

The Best Start Foods card is a Mastercard provided by our card supplier. It can be used in a similar way to normal bank cards using contactless or Chip & PIN.

Where can I use it?

You can use your Best Start Foods card in supermarkets and local shops. As long as the shop sells the healthy foods listed on your card, and takes bank card payments, you can use your Best Start Foods card there.

Who can get it?

You can apply for Best Start Foods if you live in Scotland and get certain benefits or tax credits and are pregnant or the parent or carer of a child.*

If you are under 18 you may be eligible for Best Start Foods during pregnancy and up until your child turns one without any benefits.

* Income support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit (CTC) up to a maximum income of £16,190 per annum, Universal Credit (UC) with an income limit of £610/month, both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and income under £7,320, or the 4 week run of Pension Credit, Housing Benefit – or weekly income of £311 and under.

To check if you are entitled to any of these benefits, call Citizens Advice Scotland on 0800 085 7145 for a free Financial Health Check.

How many children qualify for a payment in each family?

There is no limit on the number of children you can claim Best Start Foods for. You will get a payment for any child you have responsibility for that is under three.

How do you apply?

We will be taking applications via our freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222, by post or online at mygov.scot.

What evidence will be required?

Most people will be able to apply without sending any evidence. This is because we check with the Department for Work and Pensions and HMRC that you are on a qualifying benefit or tax credit. One of the ways we can check responsibility for a child is by checking if you are on Child Benefit.**

In some cases we will need to ask you to send us more information to process your application.***

**Child Benefit is only checked for evidence of responsibility – you will not get a payment if you don't get one of the other qualifying benefits.

***For example a legal order from a court or children's hearing, evidence of address i.e utility or Council Tax bill.

Do I need my partners information?

Yes - if you live in the same household and are:

- married to each other
- civil partners of each other
- living together as if you are married.

Does it affect other benefits?

No - Best Start Foods is not counted for in any other benefit or tax credit assessments.

This leaflet can be provided in alternative languages or formats by calling 0800 182 2222.