

# Overview of Best Start Foods

Best Start Foods (BSF) is designed to provide financial support to low income families to access affordable, nutritious food from the prescribed list below at the point of need.

BSF will replace the UK government's Healthy Start Voucher scheme (HSV) in Scotland.

We are joining the application process for BSF with Best Start Grant (BSG). Therefore, clients will be able to apply in the same way, by phone, online or in paper form.

Best Start Foods is made up of a weekly payment per eligible person as follows:

- a pregnant person, a partner of the pregnant person, or the pregnant person's parent or carer - £4.25 per week (£3.10 per week under HSV)
- a child (person responsible for the child) - £8.50 per week from birth until the child turns 1 (£6.20 per week under HSV)
- a child (person responsible for the child) - £4.25 per week from 1 year old until the child turns 3 (£3.10 per week under HSV)

	<b>BSF weekly amount</b>	<b>BSF 4 - weekly amount</b>	<b>HSV weekly amount</b>	<b>HSV 4 - weekly amount</b>
<b>Pregnant Mother*</b>	£4.25	£17.00	£3.10	£12.40
<b>Birth to 1 year (per child)</b>	£8.50	£34.00	£6.20	£24.80
<b>1 year to 3 years (per child)</b>	£4.25	£17.00	£3.10	£12.40
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<b>3 - 4 years for P cases of BSF only or HSV (per child)</b>				
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The payment will be delivered through a pre-paid card. The payments are made on a 4 weekly basis and paid in advance. For example, a client will get £17 for pregnancy, 4 weekly in advance.

There's 1 payment per pregnancy. There's no limit of children who can be supported as the payment is per child. Therefore, multiple births will receive a per child payment. For example, a mother of triplets would receive £17 per 4 weekly period during the pregnancy, £102 per 4 weekly period from birth until the children turn 1 and £51 per 4 weekly period from 1 year old until the children turn 3 years old.

### **Foods list**

Suggested foods that can be purchased using the payment card include:

- milk – plain liquid cow's milk, including long life, pasteurised or ultra-heat treated varieties of milk, but not milk to or from which chemicals, vitamins, flavours or colours have been added.
- all First Infant formula Milk – a food based on cow's milk or goats milk intended for use from birth by infants in good health and meeting the most current regulations on composition and safety set out in the UK Infant Formula and Follow on Formula Regulations (2007). This excludes any specialist infant milks labelled for use under medical supervision.
- fruit and vegetables – fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables.
- pulses – dried, canned or frozen pulses including but not limited to lentils, beans, peas, barley.
- eggs – any fresh eggs.

BSF is a payment for eligible women throughout their pregnancy and for

## Eligibility

children under the age of 3. To be eligible for BSF the client or the person applying must be either:

- a pregnant person, a partner of the pregnant person, or the pregnant person's parent/carer
- a person responsible for the child

The table below shows where qualifying benefits are required and by who.

<b>Client group</b>	<b>Age of recipient</b>	<b>Qualifying benefit required (could be applicant, partner or dependant who is awarded)</b>
Pregnant person (partner, parent/carer)	Under 18 years old	No
Pregnant person (partner, parent/carer)	18 years old and over	Yes
Child (person responsible for the child)	From birth to 1 year of age	No, if responsible person for the child is under 18 years old
Child (person responsible for the child)	From birth to 1 year of age	Yes, if responsible person for child is over 18 years old
Child (person responsible for the child)	From 2 years of age until 3rd birthday.	Yes

All clients must meet the residency conditions for Scotland.

See the '[Best Start Foods eligibility](#)' guide for the full description of eligibility criteria.

Clients are eligible as self-certified as being pregnant until the 24<sup>th</sup> week. We will contact clients at 22 and 23 weeks asking them to confirm their pregnancy.

All recipients of Best Start Foods will be eligible for Best Start Grant, but not vice versa, as Best Start Foods has an income threshold in 4 of the qualifying benefits (see qualifying benefits section below).

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## Qualifying benefits

Some qualifying benefits for BSF are means tested, where the income of the applicant is taken into account.

Qualifying Benefit	Income threshold
Income Support	N/A
Income-based Job Seekers Allowance	N/A
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	N/A
Child Tax Credit	Income £16,190 per annum
Working Tax Credit	Income £7,320 per annum
Pension Credit	N/A
Housing Benefit	Income £311 per week
Universal Credit (UC)	Earned Income £610 per month

### Evidence

Applicants can apply for BSF as soon as they know that they are pregnant and do not need to wait to provide verification. Health professionals will not be required to sign a BSF application form.

To process an application we need to ask the following information from the client:

- their National Insurance number (from a National Insurance card, benefit letter, payslip or P60) - for example, 'QQ 12 34 56 A
- if the details cannot be verified via e-SEF or BabyBox provider: a MAT B1 form to confirm the due date of the child, if still to be born
- a birth certificate, if the child has already been born
- proof, if they've taken custody of the child - for example, a parental order
- their bank details - sort code and account number

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## **Change of circumstances**

There is a requirement for clients to notify the agency of a change in circumstances, even if that means that they are no longer eligible for BSF.

If a client is no longer eligible for BSF, the payments should stop once the agency has been notified of this change.

For example, if the client loses responsibility for the child, the pregnancy has come to an end or they are no longer in receipt of a qualifying benefit, then they will no longer be eligible for BSF.

There should be no reclaim of any over-payments made.

If there is a break in claim due to a client dropping out of eligibility within a 12 week period, the client should be able to continue receiving BSF without having to re-apply.