



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Best Start | FOODS

A guide to Best Start Foods



Dignity,
fairness,
respect.



Healthier
Scotland
Scottish
Government

What is Best Start Foods?

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

How much will I get?

You will get £17.00 every four weeks during pregnancy. This increases to £34.00 up until your child turns one. It will then return to £17.00 every four weeks between one and three years old.

What is the card?

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

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

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.

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 above and takes bank card payments, you can use your card there.

Who can get it?

You can apply 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.

*Qualifying 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 per month
- Maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and income under £7,320, or the four week run
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit – weekly income of £311 and under.

To check if you are entitled to any of these benefits, call 0800 085 7145 for a free and confidential chat with the Money Talk Team.

How many children qualify for a payment in each family?

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

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.

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.

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

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 partner's 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.



How do I apply?

Visit mygov.scot to apply online or call freephone on **0800 182 2222** to complete the application over the phone or to request a paper application form.

Is there other support available?

When you apply for Best Start Foods we also check if you are eligible for Best Start Grant. Best Start Grant is a package of three payments that will give extra money to parents and carers during the early years of a child's life.

For information and advice including financial advice for families visit parentclub.scot

Who is Social Security Scotland?

Social Security Scotland is the service that has been created by the Scottish Government to deliver a number of benefits. These benefits will be introduced by the Scottish Government in stages. At the end of this process we will be delivering benefits for people on low incomes, disabled people,

carers, young people entering the workplace and to help people heat their homes.

You can find out more about Social Security Scotland online at socialsecurity.gov.scot

Contact us

By phone on 0800 182 2222

Text Relay Service: 18001+ 0300 244 4000 (service for the hard of hearing)

If you are a British Sign Language (BSL) user, you can contact us via our national BSL video relay service Contact Scotland-BSL

Visit contactscotland-bsl.org/device-direct/

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