

## Spread the word about expansion to Best Start Foods

### Website/Newsletter article

You can add this news story on your organisation's website or newsletter to tell people about changes to Best Start Foods and encourage them to check if they are eligible.

### Changes mean more people qualify

Thousands of people will become newly eligible for Best Start Foods following changes to the payment due to be made on February 26.

The expansion will see all income limits removed from qualifying benefits.

One of the main differences brings in Working Tax Credit as a qualifying benefit without the need to also receive Child Tax Credits.

This means some people who previously applied with a qualifying benefit, but were declined because they had too much income, could become eligible. They should re-apply when the changes come into force.

When changes are introduced, an estimated 20,000 more people will qualify.

Best Start Foods is money every four weeks on a pre-paid chip and pin card to help pay for healthy food.

The amount is £19.80 every four weeks during pregnancy and for any children between 1 and 3 years old. This payment increases to £39.60 for any child under one.

The card can be used to buy milk, first infant formula and healthy food including eggs, fruit and vegetables.

Other changes will make it simpler for young parents to apply for Best Start Foods.

The payment is already designed with young mums and dads in mind. Parents and carers under the age of 18 are eligible during pregnancy, without qualifying benefits. Payments continue until their child turns one.

From February 26, parents under 18 and parents who are 18 or 19 and whose parent or carer gets certain benefits for them, will not need a qualifying benefit. Payments will continue until their child turns one or their parent or carer stops getting benefits for them, whichever is later.

It will also be simpler for people's partners to apply for the payment. If someone is pregnant, or the partner of someone who is pregnant and under the age of 18, they are eligible for Best Start Foods without a qualifying benefit, regardless of income.

If someone is **pregnant and aged 20** and their partner is 17, the younger partner will be able to get Best Start Foods without a qualifying benefit.

**Dignity, fairness, respect.**

This will also apply to some 18–19-year-olds whose parents or carer gets certain benefits for them.

Parents or carers of someone who is pregnant and under 20 will be encouraged to apply if they or their partner receive certain benefits.

Qualifying benefits for Best Start Foods will include:

- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Housing Benefit

From February 26, eligible families should apply online, over the phone, by post or in-person by visiting [mygov.scot/beststartfoods](https://mygov.scot/beststartfoods) or call Social Security Scotland free on 0800 182 2222.