



Social Security
Scotland

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Best Start Foods

What is Best Start Foods?

Best Start Foods is money paid every four weeks to help families with young children or a baby on the way with the cost of healthy food.

Who gets it?

Best Start Foods is for parents and carers and their partners who live in Scotland. It's paid during pregnancy and until a child turns 3 under the following criteria:

If you're 18 or over and you or your partner get one of these benefits:

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

If you're under 18:

You do not need to get one of the benefits required for those 18 or over. You can get Best Start Foods if you're pregnant or you have a child under 3 regardless of your income. You can also apply if it's your partner who's pregnant, even if they're 18 or over.

If you're 18 or 19, you do not need one of the benefits listed if your parent or carer gets one of these benefits for you:

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Child element of Universal Credit
- Child addition for Pension Credit

If you look after someone who is pregnant and they are 18 or 19, you are also eligible if you receive one of the benefits listed below for them:

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Child element of Universal Credit
- Child addition for Pension Credit

How many children can get a payment in each family?

When pregnant you are paid per pregnancy, whether it's a single or multiple birth. Once children are born, it's paid per child and there are no limits on how many children can get the payment.

How is it paid and how much do I get?

The payments will depend on how far along in your pregnancy you are and how old your child is. It is paid every four weeks on a pre-paid chip and pin card. The amount is £19.80 every four weeks during pregnancy and for any children aged between 1 and 3 years old. This payment increases to £39.60 for any child under 1.

What can I buy with my card?

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

Where can I use the card?

Best Start Foods cards are accepted in all major supermarkets including Asda, Tesco, Morrison's, Aldi, Lidl, and Iceland. It is also accepted in small convenience stores across Scotland including branches of Spar, Keystore and Premier. If you are not sure, check with your local retailer or shopkeeper.

How do I check my balance?

You can check your balance online at www.allpayprepaid.net, at cashpoints or by calling allpay on 0808 196 1687.

How do you apply?

You can apply online at mygov.scot, via our freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222 or by post. You can also arrange an in-person meeting with a client adviser at a time and place convenient for you.

What evidence will be required?

Most people will be able to apply without sending any evidence. If we need to check information with HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) or the Department for Work and Pensions, we do this.

Does it affect other benefits?

No. Best Start Foods is not counted as part of any other benefit or tax credit assessments.



There are many people worrying about the cost of living. You are not alone. To learn what help you might be entitled to, please visit gov.scot/costoflivingsupport. Or visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

How can people contact us?



Call us free on: 0800 182 2222



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



British Sign Language users: contactscotland-bsl.org



Webchat: chat.socialsecurity.gov.scot

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