

Welfare Foods – a consultation on meeting the needs of children and families in Scotland

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1. Ministerial Introduction

We are committed to tackling inequality and improving the health of our nation. Programme for Government sets out our ambitions for a fairer, healthier Scotland that meets the needs of our people and tackles the challenges of our times.

One of these challenges is how best to ensure everyone has access to a healthy diet. Our [Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework](#) sets out the crucial role of nutrition in the early months and years of a child's life and how important it is in achieving optimal health. [A Healthier Future](#) sets out our priorities and actions to change our food culture for all.

Through the devolution of Welfare Foods we have an additional opportunity to build on the *Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework* and *A Healthier Future*; to make the best use of the resources available to us to meet the needs of families in Scotland.

We know that for too many families, maintaining a healthy diet is a daily challenge, with poverty and deprivation being barriers to this. Yet there is strong and growing evidence of the impact of diet in children's early years and on their longer term outcomes. Not only does a healthy and nutritious diet contribute to children's overall health and wellbeing, it also contributes to their ability to learn and the life choices they make as they grow up.

The aim of Welfare Foods is to target those who need support most, at critical points in their lives; – pregnancy, birth and early childhood.

We will ensure this continues, but we want to do more.

We want to link Welfare Foods provision to expanded and enhanced early learning and childcare to create a cohesive package of nutrition for young children. We want to make the current system much easier for families to access and use. This includes creating a new smartcard and aligning the application process with the new Best Start Grant. And we want to increase the weekly payments to families to cover the costs of ensuring their children get a healthy diet.

Giving children the best start in life is a key Government priority along with creating a healthier nation for all.

We have a unique opportunity to develop an effective Welfare Foods package that reaches children at the right time. A package that levels the playing field and makes it easier for families to make healthier choices. A package that supports children to develop lifelong eating habits that promote health and wellbeing.

We very much welcome your views on the proposals outlined, actions identified and how best to target Welfare Foods to have the greatest impact for families.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aileen Campbell".

Aileen Campbell
Minister for Public Health
and Sport



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maree Todd".

Maree Todd
Minister for Childcare
and Early Years

2. Background to Welfare Foods

Welfare Foods was originally introduced as a wartime measure in the 1940s to ensure an adequate diet during rationing. Benefits were originally universal but have become targeted over the years as the nation's diet improved¹.

Currently, Welfare Foods are delivered through two schemes:

The **Healthy Start Scheme** provides vouchers (direct financial support) to pregnant women and families on low incomes to purchase affordable nutritious food; and vitamins, for children and women (during pregnancy and after birth). We have already delivered a separate vitamin scheme (free vitamins for all pregnant women) and this will continue to evolve when the power to make schemes is commenced.

The **Nursery Milk Scheme** entitles all children under five to receive a drink of fresh semi-skimmed or full fat cow's milk (1/3 pint) on days where they have spent two or more hours in early learning and childcare² (ELC). This includes infant formula for children under the age of one.

The Healthy Start Scheme and Nursery Milk Scheme are currently delivered by the UK Government's Department of Health and Social Care. The Scottish Government does, however, fund Scottish claims to both of these schemes.

The powers over Welfare Foods (for Healthy Start and Nursery Milk) have been devolved to Scotland through provisions in the Scotland Act 2016. These powers have not yet been commenced (brought into force). This consultation is seeking views on how we take forward these powers and is structured as follows:

Section 3 – Phase 1 of Welfare Foods: a new approach for Scotland, Best Start Foods. This section sets out our changes to the UK Healthy Start Vouchers in Scotland and how they will become part of our Best Start Grant system. This is Phase 1 of our Welfare Foods changes, which will come into force in Summer 2019. This section also covers Healthy Start Vitamins.

Section 4 - Phase 2 of Welfare Foods: a new approach for Scotland – milk and under-fives. This section sets out our proposed approach to delivering a universal milk scheme as part of the ELC expansion, which will come into force at the same time as the free meal for all children in funded ELC in 2020. This section also asks how we can deliver milk for children outwith funded ELC provision and considers the introduction of a healthy snack to further improve on our nursery milk offer.

¹ Scientific Review of the Welfare Food Scheme, Department of Health, 2002

² Eligible childcare settings who can claim for the costs of providing milk include private and local authority run nurseries and day-care settings, childminder services and crèches for children (under 5 years) of management and staff of certain establishments (eg children's homes, voluntary or community homes, NHS hospitals). Set out in Part V of The Welfare Food Regulation 1996.

3. Phase 1 of Welfare Foods: a new approach for Scotland: Best Start Foods

3.1 Current UK Healthy Start Vouchers

The current UK Healthy Start Scheme provides vouchers to purchase healthy foods for all pregnant teenagers under the age of 18 plus pregnant women and families with children under the age of four who qualify for the following benefits:

- Income Support, or
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance,
- Child Tax Credit (with a family income of £16,190 or less per year),
- Universal Credit (with monthly income below £408 per month).

The UK Healthy Start Vouchers can be used to purchase; plain cow's milk, infant formula milk, fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables from registered supermarkets and grocers. Those qualifying are entitled to receive one £3.10 voucher per week or two vouchers per week worth a total of £6.20 for babies under one. The weekly vouchers amount to nearly £900 per child over the duration of entitlement, from pregnancy to four years old. We estimate that current uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers is around 70 per cent³. The recently published Scottish Maternal and Infant Nutrition Survey 2017 provides information about awareness of the Healthy Start Scheme and the use of Healthy Start vouchers, as reported by women who responded to the antenatal and 8-12 month survey⁴.

3.2 A new Best Start Foods payment

Our [2016-17 Programme for Government](#) set out our intention, on devolution, to integrate the systems for Healthy Start Vouchers and the Sure Start Maternity Grant, which is also being devolved to Scotland. Our new combined system Best Start Grant (BSG) will replace the former Sure Start Maternity Grant and will form part of a Scottish social security system that is based on dignity, fairness and respect, helping to support those who need it, when they need it.

The BSG aims to improve children's wellbeing and life chances by mitigating the effects of child poverty and material deprivation. The BSG will provide eligible families⁵ with £600 on the birth of their first child and £300 on the birth of any subsequent children. It will also give families two further payments of £250 around the time their child's early learning and childcare (ELC) entitlement starts and around the time a child starts school, to recognise the costs parents face in supporting their children during these years. A consultation on the [Best Start Grant Regulations](#) was launched on 26 March 2018.

The Best Start Grant will also include a system for Best Start Foods payment, formerly known as the UK Healthy Start Vouchers. This will be delivered by the new Social Security Agency.

³ UK Government's Department of Health

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00531610.pdf>

⁵ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/early-years-assistance-best-start-grant-illustrative-regulations>

Best Start Foods will continue to provide targeted financial support for low income pregnant women and families to purchase healthier foods.

Best Start Foods will be a sub-set of BSG, which means that some, but not all, BSG recipients will also be entitled to Best Start Foods. Section 3.4 sets out who will be eligible. This is Phase 1 of our transition to the new Welfare Foods policy for Scotland. We will launch the BSG and the Best Start Foods in Summer 2019 and will communicate the processes and practicalities for transitioning into the new system in due course.

As part of our new Best Start Foods payment we will increase the weekly value from £3.10 to £4.25 to ensure this covers the value of providing fruit, vegetables and milk.

We know that the current UK Healthy Start Voucher of £3.10 a week has been static for many years and is too low to provide sufficient fruit and vegetables for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. It is also insufficient to cover the weekly cost of providing the recommended daily portion of fruit/vegetables (five portions) and milk (½ pint) for a child per day⁶. The additional £1.15 will ensure families on lower incomes can buy nutritious food and milk for their children throughout their early years.

3.3 Designing a new system for Scotland

We want to ensure we provide the best offer for parents and families through the BSG system that is as efficient and accessible as possible. The Scottish Government's BSG Service Design Team has been working with a range of people, including parents and practitioners, to design a new system for Scotland. We have been using a wide range of research and engagement techniques including focus groups, interviews and co-design workshops, to understand people's experiences and what they need, want and hope for from our new system. This includes designing and testing the business processes needed to allow people to access and receive the BSG, including the application form.

Parents have told us that they would prefer a single application process for the new Best Start Foods and BSG. This will reduce the number of different applications parents need to make and keep track of. The branding of the payments will be linked, making entitlements clearer from pregnancy through to children starting school. On-going contact will allow us to prompt people to apply for what they are entitled to and ensure they are accessing the benefits to which they are entitled.

Health professionals also advise us that a single administrative process will provide opportunities for combining promotion of these schemes and will help increase uptake and reduce duplication.

Q1. How can we increase the uptake and awareness of the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods?

⁶ The weekly cost of providing the recommended daily five portions of fruit/veg across a week per child is around £3.10. This means that the current voucher value only covers fruit/veg and not the cost of buying the recommended ½ pint of milk per day milk for children.

3.4 Eligibility and links to Early Learning and Childcare

3.4.1 Support in Early Learning and Childcare

We want to create a cohesive package of nutrition for young children through Best Start Foods that complements our ELC expansion. Our ambitious ELC expansion programme includes healthy eating choices with near universal uptake of the existing 600 hours funded entitlement by three and four year olds⁷. Some children who attend full-time ELC will receive as much as 90 per cent of their daily food within the ELC setting and as much as 40 per cent when in a part-time setting⁸.

Our support in ELC will be strengthened further from 2020 when all children in funded ELC will receive a free meal during their session⁹. This means that **all children, including those from low income families, will be able to access nutritious food from the ages of three and four in ELC settings through a free meal.** Section 4 of this consultation proposes that from 2020 all children in ELC funded places will receive a drink of milk and healthy snack as part of their day to further improve our offer in funded ELC provision. Section 4 also asks how we can deliver the same offer of milk and a healthy snack for children outwith funded ELC provision.

3.4.2 Support at home through Best Start Foods

For those children under the age of three, we will focus our support for low income families at home through Best Start Foods. This targeted support aims to make it easier for low income families to access healthy food for their children at home in the earliest years up to the age of three.

As set out in Section 3.2, we will increase the weekly value of the Best Start Foods payment from £3.10 to £4.25 to ensure this covers the value of providing fruit, vegetables and milk for a child. **Across the duration of the Best Start Foods payment the amount recipients will receive for each child will increase by £112 - from £899 to £1,011.**

3.4.3 Eligibility for Best Start Foods

We want to create consistency across the benefits available in early years. There are currently different sets of eligibility criteria for the UK Healthy Start Scheme and ELC places for eligible two years olds¹⁰. This makes it difficult for families to understand their entitlement. **We will more closely align the eligibility for the Best Start Foods with the eligibility criteria for two-year old places in ELC.** This will help simplify entitlement, create opportunities for sign-posting families across benefits, and reduce the administrative burden. The Best Start Foods payment is a sub-set of BSG, which means that some, but not all, BSG recipients will also be entitled to Best Start Foods.

⁷ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00528868.pdf>

⁸ [Setting the Table](#)

⁹ Currently, children who meet the free school meals criteria under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended are entitled to a free meal in Early Learning and Childcare funded provision.

¹⁰ <https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare>

To summarise, all pregnant women under the age of 18 and pregnant women and families who receive the following benefits will be eligible for the new Best Start Foods payment of £4.25 per week, per child, up to when that child turns three:

- Income support
- Income-based Job seekers allowance
- Income-related Employment and support allowance
- Child tax credit up to a maximum income of £16,190 per annum
- Universal credit with an income limit of £610/month

In addition, we will also include those receiving:

- Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and income under £6,420, or the 4 week run on
- Pension credit
- Housing Benefit – for those on a maximum income of £16,190 per annum

Entitlement will start from confirmation of the pregnancy instead of from 10 weeks of the pregnancy. We will continue to provide two vouchers for babies under one worth £8.50 per week

3.4.4 Eligible foods

We will expand the range of foods available under the Best Start Foods payment

Currently Healthy Start Vouchers can be used to purchase the following:

- Cow's milk
- Infant formula milk (first milk only)
- Fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables

We want to offer families more choice and to maximise the usefulness of the scheme. We are therefore expanding the foods families can purchase through Best Start Foods to include the following:

Tinned fruit and vegetables: to help those who have limited freezer space or limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables in their area. For example, this may help those who live in remote rural communities or areas where there are a limited number of shops. Tinned fruit and vegetables have a long shelf life and are a good source of vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre and we want to provide choice in the scheme.

Dried or tinned pulses: as these are considered to be good inexpensive source of protein - they can also count as one of your 5-a-day - and can be used to make nutritious meals, such as soups and stews.

Eggs: as they are a reasonably cheap, versatile, nutritious form of protein, they can be easily stored and easily turned into a variety of meals.

This means the items the Best Start Foods will be able to buy include the following:

- Cow's milk
- First infant formula milk (suitable from birth)
- Fresh, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables
- Fresh or tinned pulses (including lentils, peas, barley, beans)
- Eggs

3.5 A new smartcard

Service users have told us they would prefer a smartcard system to reduce the stigma associated with using paper vouchers to purchase foods and to make the system as easy as possible to access.

We will move from a paper voucher system to a smartcard system. The smartcard will be pre-loaded for use, every four weeks, with users having more control over the value they spend.

Retailers have advised that they support this proposal. They will be automatically reimbursed for the purchase at the point of sale and will no longer have to send the used paper vouchers to a Reimbursement Unit for processing. This will also reduce the administration and postage costs associated with the current UK Healthy Start Scheme. Retailers will no longer be required to register to accept Best Start Foods payments. The smartcard will be restricted to use in food shops/supermarkets that accept card payments.

Q2. What can we do to make the smartcard system as easy to use as possible?

Q3. How do we gather feedback to make improvements as the system evolves?

3.6 Wider support for improving diet and nutrition

Nutrition plays a crucial role in the early months and years of a child's life and is important in achieving optimal health. The *Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A Framework for Action (2011)* outlines the measures that should be taken by all organisations working with families to ensure that every parent is supported to give their baby the very best nutritional start in life.

Our consultation *A Healthier Future: Action and Ambitions on Diet, Activity and Healthy Weight* also sets out our aim to establish good overall food behaviours, including healthy food and healthy eating patterns from the earliest years, which will become part and parcel of Scottish family life. Best Start Foods aim to support access to healthier foods and to empower families to make healthy choices in their nutrition. We want to work with retailers and others to think creatively about how we

can make Best Start Foods better, for example, recipes for healthy snacks and meals.

Q4. How can we work creatively with retailers and others to make it easier for families to use Best Start Foods to improve their diet and nutrition?

There is strong and growing evidence of the impact of diet in early years on longer term outcomes¹¹ including educational attainment. Eating habits developed in the early years frequently last into adulthood. We therefore want to maximise our opportunities for providing broader support to service users as part of these changes.

We want to develop an innovative programme of support around Best Start Foods to help families in establishing healthy eating patterns from the earliest of years that will last a lifetime.

Q5. What could an innovative programme that will support families to establish healthy eating patterns look like?

Q6. What evidence could we gather about the impact?

3.7 Healthy Start Vitamins

Healthy Start Vitamins form part of the UK Healthy Start Scheme. The current UK Scheme provides vitamins for women (in pregnancy and after birth) and families with children under the age of four. People who qualify for this scheme include all pregnant women under the age of 18, plus those who receive:

- Income Support, or
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance,
- Child Tax Credit (with a family income of £16,190 or less per year),
- Universal Credit (with monthly income below £408 per month).

However, in Scotland, we also offer free vitamins to all pregnant women throughout their pregnancy, as part of our commitment to giving children the best start in life. These vitamins are the same as those offered through the current UK Healthy Start scheme. This includes women who would have been eligible for these vitamins by virtue of entitlement to the current UK Healthy Start Scheme.

The new vitamin scheme was introduced because there is strong evidence of the benefits of taking specific vitamins during pregnancy which improves the health of both the mother and baby. The current Healthy Start vitamins contain:

¹¹ Includes research conducted by UNICEF, the British Medical Association and the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

- 70 milligrams of vitamin C
- 10 micrograms of vitamin D
- 400 micrograms of folic acid

The main distribution method for women's vitamins is directly through their midwifery services and some community pharmacies and dispensing practices.

A liquid vitamin product is currently provided for children under the UK HS scheme. The daily dose of five drops contains:

- 233 micrograms of vitamin A
- 20 milligrams of vitamin C
- 7.5 micrograms of vitamin D3

The Department of Health and Social Care is currently reformulating children's vitamins to ensure that the optimal dose of Vitamin D (10 micrograms), as per the most recent UK Chief Medical Officer's advice, is included. This is likely to be introduced in Spring 2019.

Q7. Should the provision of children's vitamins be linked to eligibility for the new Best Start Foods (i.e. up to age of three)?

4. Phase 2 of Welfare Foods: a new approach for Scotland – milk and under 5s

4.1 The current UK Nursery Milk Scheme

The UK Nursery Milk Scheme (UK NMS) funds milk for approximately 1.5 million children across the UK and costs the Department of Health and Social Care and the Scottish and Welsh Governments around £70 million per year. The statutory obligation to provide the Nursery Milk Scheme is set out within the [Welfare Food Regulations 1996](#).

The UK NMS reimburses childcare providers¹² for the cost of supplying milk. Childcare providers can claim for 189 mls or 1/3 of a pint of milk¹³ for children under the age of five who attend for two or more hours a day. With a greater proportion of children in early learning and childcare (ELC) aged three to four, they are the most likely beneficiaries of the scheme.

The UK NMS is administered by a [Nursery Milk Reimbursement Unit](#) on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care. The Reimbursement Unit processes claims from eligible childcare providers, or agents operating on their behalf, for the full cost of providing milk. Childcare providers are responsible for purchasing their own milk and are encouraged to seek value for money, but there is no cap on the price of milk that can be claimed. Childcare providers can choose to claim for reimbursement.

Claims are usually submitted on a monthly basis¹⁴. Some local authorities will submit one claim on behalf of all the local authority run nurseries in their area. We estimate in Scotland, there are around 30,000 claims made each year by childcare providers. The scheme costs the Scottish Government around £4 million in claim costs each year.

One of the benefits of bringing the powers of this scheme to Scotland is the opportunity to reduce the current administrative burden, particularly for children in funded Early Learning and Childcare.

4.2 The importance of milk

Milk is an important part of children's diet and we must continue to support its provision. It is a nutrient dense food and a good source of protein, zinc and vitamins A, B₂, B₃, B₆ and B₁₂. Milk also contributes towards the intake of iodine, and calcium. 'Setting the Table'¹⁵ provides nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland and advises that children need three servings of dairy

¹² Private and local authority nurseries and day-care settings, childminder services and crèches for children (under 5 years) of management and staff of certain establishments (eg children's homes, voluntary or community homes, NHS hospitals).

¹³ Semi-skimmed cow's milk, full fat cow's milk and infant formula milk.

¹⁴ 60% of childcare providers submit claims on a monthly basis according to our 2017 survey of Scottish childcare providers on the current Nursery Milk Scheme.

¹⁵ [Setting the Table: Nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland](#) is currently being revised to reflect up-to-date evidence and particular issues highlighted by the recent Scottish Government Maternal and Infant Nutrition Survey: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/02/7135>

foods each day. Whole milk should be offered to children under the age of two, with semi-skimmed milk being gradually introduced from age two onwards¹⁶.

4.3 A new approach for Scotland: links to funded Early Learning and Childcare

Devolution provides us with the opportunity to focus on broader nutrition and health promotion than the current UK NMS, which simply reimburses for the cost of providing milk. The development of a flexible and high quality ELC programme is almost doubling the current level of provision¹⁷. The ELC expansion will provide accessible and affordable childcare and will improve outcomes for all children, especially those who live in more challenged communities, and help to close the attainment gap.

As part of this expansion and in order to improve health and wellbeing at this crucial stage in a child's development, we will be providing free meals to all children in funded ELC from 2020. We are looking to integrate the provision of milk into this offer. Funded ELC provides us with a clear route for the universal provision of milk at age three and four due to the near universal uptake of places, as well as reaching those two year olds eligible for funded provision.

Some children who attend full-time childcare receive as much as 90 per cent of their daily food within the childcare setting and as much as 40 per cent when in a part-time setting¹⁸. So it is crucial to make the most of this key opportunity to establish healthy eating patterns which can be carried on into later life. The new Health and Social Care Standards, which apply to ELC, are clear that children should be able to 'choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables'.

By 2020 we propose nursery milk is delivered as part of the Early Learning and Childcare funded provision, complementing the free meal offer.

Q8. What do you think about the proposal to offer milk as part of the free meal offer for all children in ELC funded provision by 2020?

To deliver this we propose removing the administrative burden of the UK NMS by providing milk to children as part of their funded ELC offer, removing the need for a reimbursement scheme. This will include children whose funded ELC place is with a provider in the private or third sectors, including childminders. This would be in Phase 2 of our new Welfare Foods policy for Scotland and we would propose this comes into place at the same time as the free meal provision in 2020. The provision of milk would be available to children accessing funded ELC provision, whether this

¹⁶ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph11/evidence/review-8-supplementary-review-6-months-5-years>.

¹⁷ Offering three and four year olds and eligible two year olds, 1,140 hours of funded entitlement each year from August 2020.

¹⁸ [Setting the Table](#)

is offered in a local authority, private, third sector or childminder setting. We would discuss and agree funding with local authorities.

By providing milk through funded ELC provision we also have the opportunity and flexibility to improve on this offer. Data tells us that children are under-consuming the recommended five-a-day fruit and vegetable intake, with 48 per cent of two to four year olds eating less than three portions a day and four per cent are eating none ([Scottish Health Survey, 2016](#)).

We are considering including an offer of a daily healthy snack such as a piece of prepared fruit or vegetable. This will complement the free meal offer for all children in ELC funded provision by 2020.

As with milk, the healthy snack could be available to children in funded ELC provision, whether this is offered in a local authority, private, third sector or childminder setting. We would discuss and agree funding with local authorities.

Q9. What are your views on the proposal to include an offer of a healthy snack to complement the free milk and meal offer for all children in early learning and childcare funded provision by 2020?

4.4 How do we provide milk for children outwith funded Early Learning and Childcare?

We recognise the importance of milk for children in the earliest of years and want to continue providing milk for all children under five in Scotland. We need a new delivery mechanism for children outwith funded early learning and childcare provision, particularly one that works for and supports childminders, private or third sector nursery settings in providing milk and infant formula for children in their services.

We will maintain the offer currently provided through the UK NMS for children outwith the funded ELC provision. This offer provides for 1/3 of a pint of whole or semi-skimmed pasteurised cow's milk for children under five in childcare for two or more hours per day. Children under the age of one will continue to be entitled to powdered infant formula milk from the list of pre-approved brands under the current UK NMS¹⁹. Childcare providers who are eligible for the current UK NMS will continue to be eligible in Scotland.

We recognise that there will be administrative challenges in capturing a system that caters for many childcare providers without recreating the current UK NMS reimbursement model. We would propose a new system goes live in 2020 to align with the timing for funded ELC provision.

¹⁹ <https://www.nurserymilk.co.uk/frequently-asked-questions#claim-milk-types>

As with funded ELC, we want to consider whether delivering a healthy snack to the children outwith funded ELC provision, such as a piece of prepared fruit or vegetable, will help tackle under-consumption of fruit and vegetables in the earliest years.

Q10. We are interested in your views on how we can best support childcare providers to provide milk to children outwith funded ELC entitlement. How could this work in practice without creating a costly administrative system?

Q11. What are your views on the proposal to include an offer of a healthy snack for children outwith funded ELC entitlement?

RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTATION

This consultation seeks views on the devolution of Welfare Foods and provides the opportunity for all interested parties to comment on proposals prior to these powers commencing. We are inviting responses to this consultation by 28 June 2018.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation platform, Citizen Space. You view and respond to this consultation online at: <https://consult.gov.scot/health-protection/welfare-foods>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 28 June 2018.

If you are unable to respond online, please complete the Respondent Information Form (see "Handling your Response" below) to:

Email: WelfareFoods@gov.scot

Or write to us at:

Promoting Prevention Team
Scottish Government
2B – North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Handling your response

If you respond using Citizen Space (<http://consult.scotland.gov.uk/>), you will be directed to the Respondent Information Form. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be published.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. If

you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to: WelfareFoods@gov.scot

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policy-making process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Consultations may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as public meetings, focus groups, or other online methods such as Dialogue (<https://www.ideas.gov.scot>)

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (without name)
- Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Q1. How can we increase the uptake and awareness of the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods?

Q2. What can we do to make the smartcard system as easy to use as possible?

Q3. How do we gather feedback to make improvements as the system develops?

Q4. How can work creatively with retailers and others to make it easier for families to use Best Start Foods to improve their diet and nutrition?

Q5. What could an innovative programme that will support families to establish healthy eating patterns look like?

Q6. What evidence could we gather about the impact?

Q7. Should the provision of children's vitamins be linked to eligibility for the new Best Start Foods (i.e. up to age of three)?

Q8. What do you think about the proposal to offer milk as part of the free meal offer for all children in ELC funded provision by 2020?

Q9. What are your views on the proposal to include an offer of a healthy snack to complement the free milk and meal offer for all children in early learning and childcare funded provision by 2020?

Q10. We are interested in your views on how we can best support childcare providers to provide milk to children out with funded ELC entitlement. How could this work in practice without creating a costly administrative system?

Q11. What are your views on the proposal to include an offer of a healthy snack for children out with funded ELC entitlement?



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