

Bradford Nutrition and Dietetics Service

The Healthy Start Scheme – 2020 and 2021 changes to the scheme and what you need to know

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

What is the Healthy Start scheme? The Healthy Start scheme is a national government welfare scheme for families on low income that has run for many years. Pregnant women or families who have children under 4 years old, may be entitled to get vouchers or payments every 4 weeks to spend on: Cows milk, fresh, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, infant formula milk, fresh, dried or tinned pulses. The family can also get free Healthy Start vitamins***

During the last 18 months there have been a number of changes to the national scheme: (please see the website for full details)

- A healthcare professional is no longer required to countersign the application form if the claim is for children under 4 years old – the family can complete their application themselves.
- The value of the voucher has increased to £4.25
- Pulses – fresh, tinned or dried pulses are now included in the list of foods that the vouchers can be used towards.
- From September 2021 **the voucher scheme is going digital** (this roll out will take place over 12 months). This may have implications for the family and the Retailers they use. A pre-paid card will be offered to those applying for the Healthy Start Scheme in exchange of paper vouchers. This card will be topped up every 4 weeks. Families already using the scheme will be contacted directly to re-apply to upgrade to the new system, by completing an online application form. These families will also receive a pre-paid card which they can use at their usual retailers. The pre-paid card can be used in chip and pin machines.
- There is a temporary addition to the schemes eligibility criteria, to quote the Healthy Start website (2021): “The Department of Health and Social care (DHSC) has recently agreed to temporarily extend the Healthy Start scheme to British children (aged under 4 years old), whose parent/guardian meet the

financial eligibility criteria and are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status, or their lack of immigration status.” (For the qualification criteria, please see the website.)

- The Healthy Start website has been updated and rebranded - It now includes a 'check your eligibility' function and a copy of the paper application form that is still currently being used.

*****Please note:**

There are NO changes to the Bradford District Universal Vitamin Supplementation policy which continues to provide FREE Healthy Start vitamins to:

- All pregnant women giving birth in Bradford (Healthy Start Maternal vitamin tablets from their Midwife team)
- All infants born in Bradford (Healthy Start infant vitamin drops for the first 6 months from their Health Visitor).
- If a family has any questions, please ask them to speak with their Midwife or Health Visitor.

Please see the Healthy Start website for more information:

www.healthystart.nhs.uk