

Inverclyde HSCP – July 2023

PATHWAY FOR EMERGENCY INFANT FEEDING SUPPORT

This pathway has been based on guidance documents published by UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative: *A Guide for Local Authorities-Infant feeding during the Coronavirus (COVID 19) crisis*¹ and *A guide for Local Authorities supporting families with infants under 12 months experiencing food insecurity*². NHS Lanarkshire's pathway has also been utilised, further developed and localised to Inverclyde HSCP. *This pathway is applicable for families who are experiencing financial difficulties/food insecurity (box1). This is also applicable during times of national emergencies (such as during the pandemic) (box 2&3)*

Our children's rights focus highlights that during periods of crisis babies are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. In challenging economic times, there is a need to ensure that that if difficulties are faced, that uninterrupted access to safe and adequate nutrition is available. This document is for use for HSCP staff, Local Authorities, community groups and the voluntary sector.

- There is a wide range of evidence regarding the health benefits for breastfed infants including protection from infections and viruses³. Breastfeeding can protect against food insecurity should there be an interruption to the infant formula milk supply chain or financial hardship. Services should take all steps possible to promote, protect and support continued breastfeeding including ongoing provision of support from Midwifery (MW), Health Visiting (HV) and Family Nurse (FN) teams and signposting to local and national BF support services.
- **To protect breastfeeding and to safeguard infant health, all families requesting infant formula through emergency food aid need to have a meaningful conversation on infant feeding with an appropriate health professional as above.** This will include all aspects of care including supporting initiation and continuation of breastfeeding, supporting mixed feeding or re-lactation or safe and responsive bottle feeding.
- If formula feeding, the baby will require ongoing reliable access to powdered infant formula for the first year of life and facilities for safe preparation e.g., washing and sterilisation of bottles and equipment. *Where families do not have the facilities for safe powdered formula milk preparation, they may need to be provided with ready to feed formula milk (sterilisation equipment for bottles and teats still required). All families should be signposted to information and support on Formula feeding*.*

- **Current infant feeding recommendations:** Breastmilk or first stage (whey –based) formula milk is all the nourishment an infant requires in the first 6 months of life. Solid foods should be introduced around 6 months of age. Breastfeeding should continue along with the introduction of solid foods for up to 2 years of age and beyond. Formula fed babies should continue on first stage formula milk until 12 months of age when they should be introduced to pasteurised full fat cow's milk. (There is no need to introduce "hungry baby" or "follow on formula" milks.)
- **Cost of Formula Milks⁴:** All infant formula milks must meet UK minimal compositional requirements and therefore all brands are nutritionally adequate and have a similar composition. There is **no** advantage to purchasing more expensive brands. *For example*, the cost of feeding a 2-3 month old baby powdered Infant Formula over a month (30 days) can vary in cost from £91.20 to £33.00. For example, Aptamil Advanced First Infant Milk would cost approx. £74.40 a month, compared to £41.40 a month for Cow & Gate 1 First Infant Milk or £33.00 a month. The least expensive brand of formula milk costing £8 (at the time of writing) was found at a budget supermarket. *Ready to feed formula can cost between around £23 and £38 per week. Choosing a lower cost formula could have a positive impact on household income in the longer term.*
- **Powdered infant milks are not sterile.** To protect infant health, all infant feeding equipment should be thoroughly washed and sterilised and feeds made up with water at a temperature of 70°C or above following national guidance. For more information- [Formula feeding: How to feed your baby safely \(healthscotland.com\)](https://www.healthscotland.com)

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FOR FAMILIES REQUIRING INFANT FORMULA OR BABY FOOD.

It is acceptable for public services to distribute infant formula in an emergency and where there is genuine need providing that a continued supply can be guaranteed. *This should include processes for access out of hours.* (UNICEF). **Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Service-Telephone 0300 343 1505** can be contacted out of hours, should assistance be required. *Please see appendix 1 for local Social Work contact details during office hours.*

The Pathways below provide information on how families can access support. Families should be supported according to their individual situation:

- **Normal infant feeding support and safeguarding/child protection policies will apply.**
- Income Maximisation: If not already referred. NHS/Council staff should refer families to Income maximisation services. Best Start Foods scheme provides eligible beneficiaries with a prepaid card which can be used to buy fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs, pulses and first stage infant formula. For information on how to apply: [Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods - mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot) ** [Best Start Foods if you have no access to public funds - mygov.scot](#).
- The HSCP will record and monitor data on families receiving emergency support to feed their infants using normal GDPR compliant processes.
- If support provided directly via another party, permission should be sought and encouragement given to notify the family's Health Visitor or Family Nurse (if family cannot remember name can be accessed via GP) to ensure support can be provided relating to infant feeding, safe and responsive formula feeding, starting solids (as appropriate), financial inclusion and any other health concerns.

1: Financially insecure and can shop: including those in crisis

- Where a request is made for infant formula or baby food, the first point of contact for families should be their own Health Visitor (HV), Family Nurse (FN) or Social Worker (SW) where emergency funding (section 22 funds***) can be accessed for these items, usually within the day to enable families to purchase formula and /or food for their infant).
- If not known to Social Work Services, **Health and Social Care Connect** can be contacted on: **01475 715365** during office hours (please see out of hours contacts above). Staff will ensure the family can access ongoing supplies of formula milk/baby food as long as is required and sign post to financial inclusion services as previously described.

Food Network website [Inverclyde Community Food Network \(icfn.org.uk\)](https://icfn.org.uk) For access to organisations offering free and low-cost food locally.



- **Crisis Grant** - is based on access to no funds families can call Tel: 01475 714444

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2: Financially insecure and *cannot* shop (isolating), including those in crisis:

- Families who require support to obtain infant formula or baby food should contact their own Health Visitor (HV), Family Nurse (FN) or Social Worker (SW) where emergency funding (section 22**) can be accessed for these items, usually within the day. Staff will ensure the family can access ongoing supplies of formula milk/baby food as long as is required and sign post to financial inclusion services as previously described. Request for assistance from social worker. Cost of living pot running out.
- If not known to Social Work Services, **Health and Social Care** can be contacted on: **01475 715365** during office hours (please see out of hours contacts above). Staff will ensure the family can access ongoing supplies of formula milk/baby food as long as is required and sign post to financial inclusion services as previously described.

3. Financially secure/do have means to pay but cannot shop (isolating):

- Families can order via supermarkets online, arrange delivery pay for infant formula and baby foods supplies.
- Friends and family members can obtain formula milk for the family
- If neither option is available, contact Local Authorities Tel: 01475 715365

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References

- i. UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative document: *A Guide for Local Authorities-Infant feeding during the Coronavirus (COVID 19) crisis*. Unicef UK Baby friendly Initiative 2020
- ii. *A guide for Local Authorities supporting families with infants under 12 months experiencing food insecurity* [A Guide for Local Authorities - UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative](#) October 2022
- iii. Victora CG, Bahl R, Barros AJD et al. for *The Lancet* Breastfeeding Series Group Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect. *Lancet*. 2016; 387: 475-490
- iv. First Steps Nutrition cost of milks marketed in the UK [Costs-of-IF-FOF-and-milks-marketed-as-FSMP-available-over-the-counter-in-the-UK_April2022.pdf \(infantmilkinfo.org\)](#)

Appendix 1

- **** Best Start Foods Grant:** The weekly allowance for an infant under 12 months of age may not buy sufficient infant formula for one week for most infants and additional support may be required). Families with no access to public funds may also be able to apply for BSF².
- *******Staff will ensure that they refer families for financial inclusion/Income maximisation support *but staff may require to access section 22 funds to provide formula milk/baby food to support the family on more than one occasion while referrals and applications are being processed.*

Contact Information

- **For Social Work Out of Hours information and Support please call. Telephone 0300 343 1505** Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Service provides an emergency social work service out of normal office hours. The service provides emergency social work intervention, relieve situations of acute risk and meet statutory obligations. The service deals with referrals which are too urgent to await action by the **local social work office** the following day
- **Health and Social Care Connect:** Telephone 0141 287 0555/Textphone 18001 0141 287 0555 (during office hours). **Contact Numbers for Local Social Work Offices. Your Support Your Way Glasgow** (yoursupportglasgow.org)
- **National Breastfeeding Helpline – Helpline** Open 9.30am – 9.30pm every day of the year.

Other Sources of information

- ***Formula feeding: How to feed your baby safely (healthscotland.com)/ Formula feeding | Parent Club**
- First Steps Nutrition Trust UK : <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org>
- [Infant formula and responsive bottle feeding \(unicef.org.uk\)](http://infantformulaandresponsivebottlefeeding.unicef.org.uk)
- [Foreign language resources - Baby Friendly Initiative \(unicef.org.uk\)](http://foreignlanguageresources-babyfriendlyinitiative.unicef.org.uk)
- Formula Choice and preparation [Formula+choice+and+preparation.png \(750x1061\) \(squarespace-cdn.com\)](#)
- Working with young families who are looking to cut costs: [Working+with+young+families+who+are+looking+to+cut+costs+v2.png \(750x1061\) \(squarespace-cdn.com\)](#)
- First Steps Nutrition: [Cost+of+living+briefing+note_May+2022_forwebsite.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)
- [Food Active | Guest Blog: The cost-of-living crisis – it's time to remember infants and young children](#)

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Financial Inclusion information

- Inverclyde HSCP Staff have pathways for referring families for financial inclusion support. Staff should continue to follow their relevant pathway

For wider information around money advice and support:

- Inverclyde Access First 01475 714646
- Inverclyde Advice First 01475 717299/ Triage.advice@inverclyde.gov.uk
- Parentline Scotland [Children 1st Parentline - Parenting Help, Advice & Support | Children 1st](#)
- Inverclyde Life [Directory \(cvsinverclyde.org.uk\)](http://cvsinverclyde.org.uk)
- Barnardos Tel: 01475 728493 [Barnardo's Nurture Service Inverclyde \(Thrive Your Time\) | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)
- [Cash First Leaflets - Independent Food Aid Network UK](#)

This is a draft guideline For more information or to discuss this draft please contact: Catriona.maclean@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or Catherine.tearne@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

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