

## SERVICE UPDATE

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| <b><u>Name of Function:</u></b> | Early Intervention and Community Empowerment                   |
| <b><u>Date:</u></b>             | 12 October 2023  |
| <b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>  | Infant Food Insecurity   |
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This update provides the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee with information on work to alleviate infant food insecurity in Aberdeen, following a presentation on research by Dr Flora Douglas on 30 August 2023.

NHS Grampian are leading the development of a pathway to alleviate infant food insecurity in Aberdeen. This project, a Community Planning Aberdeen improvement project, builds on work in Aberdeenshire and Moray and has been developed in Aberdeen to include breast feeding mothers, and to test a cash first approach. NHS Grampian are working in partnership with Cfine to test the approach in the City.

Health visitors, midwives, and family nurses will refer families to access first stage infant formula, alleviate food insecurity and gain access to income maximisation support. If any family is identified as being in crisis both with first stage formula and/or wider food insecurity, the health professional will have the ability to initiate the pathway.

On referral to Cfine, the process is:

- The parent or carer will be contacted directly by a member of the CFINE Support Advice Finance and Education (SAFE) team to assist them to obtain first stage formula: if required, it will be the same day. This will be in the form of cash rather than supply of formula. The payment is in the form of a Paypoint voucher sent to a mobile phone, which can be redeemed at a large number of local shops across the city. The value of the payment is the cost of the preferred infant formula, and further payments will be made as required.
- The SAFE team member will also support the family to ensure income is maximised and all benefits such as Universal Credit, and Best Start Grant and Foods are applied for and being received;
- The CFINE team member will ensure ongoing support is available to the parent or carer with food insecurity;

- If further assistance is required for relevant resources CFINE will submit a referral to Aberneshsecities. This can include, for example, provision of formula where cash is not suitable, other baby equipment, and nappies.
- The CFINE team member will also contact the referring health professional to reassure that the family have been supported or if they have been unsuccessful in contacting family and require further help to make contact.

The funding to test this approach is from the Council's Cost of Living allocation to Cfine (on behalf of the wider food network) for the procurement of food. The test is providing cash rather than the procurement of formula. Food banks have experienced waste in respect of infant formula due to the wide range of preferred brands and the shelf life of the product.

The project went live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 with the first referral being made on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. There have been a few further referrals at the time of writing, with the process working well at this early stage. Families have received payment within an hour of being referred. The project will continue to be monitored to establish effective delivery of outcomes.