
SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Date:</u>	14 May 2025
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Infant Formula
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Further to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee Meeting on 25 March 2025, please see below an update in respect of developments taking place at a national level on the issue of infant formula provided by the Unit Head, Supporting Maternal and Child Wellbeing, Scottish Government:

Update

The Scottish Government is leading the co-ordination of efforts to address infant food insecurity, including access to crisis funding, breastfeeding support and infant formula, where needed. Following detailed discussions with various partners, including COSLA and Child Poverty Leads, it was agreed that although this issue required a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary response, it should be designed to be integrated into income maximisation and existing crisis response pathways. There remains limited data on the number of families affected by this issue, however the importance of ensuring every baby receives the nutrition they need to grow and develop optimally, and is responsively fed, in a sustainable way, is vital to their immediate and longer term health and wellbeing. Our ambition is that no baby is food insecure, regardless of their circumstances, and that is why ensuring that their unique nutritional and developmental needs are considered in any local pathways for supporting families is important.

NHS Grampian were seen as a leader in this work, having developed pathways over a number of years including through their Early Years Financial Inclusion activity. NHS Tayside have designed pathways that work across their three local authority areas, and connected this back to maternity systems (Badgernet) to enable feedback loops from referrals to be monitored. Glasgow City, in conjunction with NHS GGC, have put in place action to enable health colleagues to provide emergency financial responses, where appropriate, through their emergency social work funds (Section 20). This is also being rolled out across other parts of NHS GGC. They have a connection with their wider food offering, particularly for under fives (thrive under five), and continue to explore innovative routes to optimise their responsiveness to this need. NHS Lothian are taking a board wide approach and have started to map out what needs to be in place across and between geographical boundaries, and how their income maximisation infrastructure could support this. NHS Forth Valley have developed processes across all their LA areas, although these differ across each.

We continue to learn from each other. A regular meeting is held, quarterly, for discussions and updates. We are in the process of undertaking a stocktake across Scotland to get an updated position. We also have a short life working group developing principles for implementation of the guide, to help local areas with action. There are no formal notes for any workshop published post the guide launching in February last year. Once we develop principles, and look to refresh the current guide – over the course of 2025 – we will put out further updates.