

Infant Feeding / Emergency Support

This pathway is for staff who encounter families in need of emergency formula milk in Blackburn with Darwen (BwD)

Initial considerations:

- Is the family eligible and in receipt of the Healthy Start Scheme?
- Applications of Healthy Start claims are irrespective of receipt of benefits, providing the family unit earns less than £408 per month from any other source. There has been a recent change in terms of people with no recourse to public funds (2021) Check: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>
- Healthy Start provides weekly money to buy food or Infant formula milk.
- Access to free vitamins drops in BwD (all families).

Good communication between agencies is key for families to receive the correct support.

We want to ensure families are fully supported and linked to agencies in the community who can offer support around a whole range of issues e.g finances, health and well-being, housing, social activities etc.,

To ensure families are not given help that is short term and unsustainable.

All points of contact with the families of BwD should consider communication with other agencies in support of meeting outstanding needs.

- **Food banks**
- **Faith Groups**
- **Community Groups**
- **0-19 Health Visiting Team**
- **Homestart**
- **Voluntary organisations**
- **Specialist support networks eg. ARC**

N.B if there are significant concerns regarding baby/ child that cannot be met through the pathway then a referrals to children's advice duty service (CADS) should be made.

Support Monday to Friday 9-5pm

Household Support Fund application process (Bwd Help Hub)

- Application submitted (applications can come direct from families, professionals & supporting organisations) www.blackburn.gov.uk/cost-living-support/household-support-fund
- Triaged within 1 working day of receipt via telephone contact with the family.
- Access to household essentials can take 3-10 days though families in crisis will be prioritised/ individual cases considered.
- Referral to Homestart service hello@home-start-bnd.org.uk 01254 692613 for additional support/ arrangement of 1st stage infant formula milk.
- If crisis identified- Health Visiting team notified via Single Point of Access CFHS.lscft.nhs.uk or telephone 01254 585000 (option 2).

Health Visitor support following referral:

- Wider assessment of need and 'Early Help' support following family seeking help to access formula milk.
- Advice re safe preparation of feeds, responsive, paced bottle feeding, safe introduction of solid foods, maximising breastmilk and re-lactation support.
- Opportunities to refer to Family Hub/Early Help services i.e Family support, transforming lives etc.

Infant Formula Support Out of hours 01254 587547

For families accessing Universal and / or Level 2 Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- Initial support from **Household support fund and** their wider network of support*
- Thereafter, a referral via Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) will be made to secure money via pay point to purchase formula, and to ensure ongoing support for families if required.

Families above Universal and/or Level 2 Common Assessment Framework (CAF) services

- Initial support from **Household support fund and** their wider network of support and the Family Plan prior to any financial support from Children's Social Care.

*** Considerations/ Questions before referral to Children's Advice and Duty service in an emergency**

- What have we done to investigate if the family has no money?
- Have we worked with family to explore family members lending them money?
- Has the family asked their neighbours?
- Has the family contacted the Help Hub?
- When is the next benefit payment?
- Referral to food bank to free up money to buy milk?
- Are other services involved?
- Are there additional risks, welfare concerns identified which will not be addressed through use of this pathway?

Formula feeding

If mum is offering breast and formula milk signpost her for support as increasing her milk supply and reducing/stopping formula feeding may be an option.

When baby is on Infant formula milk – please consider the following

- **First stage formula (number 1) of any brand is adequate for the first year of life**

It is ok to swap brand – do not have to stay brand loyal - but must only have 1st stage formula (the least expensive brands are much the same as most expensive, all have to comply with regulations)

Bottles should be made up one at a time with water that is freshly boiled and 70 degrees or hotter to kill any bacteria which may be in powder (powder milk is not a sterile substance)

Guide to bottle feeding baby in a responsive way can help them feel settled and secure. Responsive Paced Bottle feeding.

[Infant formula and responsive bottle feeding \(unicef.org.uk\)](https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/)

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Children over 1 do not need formula milk and can have water or full fat cow's / plant based milk to drink

In the absence of guidance, agencies responsible for co-ordinating emergency response and volunteers working on the front line are often not aware that donations of formula milk can put babies at risk. Risks from donated formula milk include inadvertently distributing products that are unsuitable for babies under six months or for babies with special nutritional needs, as well as distributing milk that is contaminated or out-of-date. There is also a risk that donations will be inappropriately provided to parents of breastfed babies, which can undermine the protective effect of breastfeeding and cause parents to become dependent on a continued supply of formula milk.

Protection of breastfeeding

Breastfeeding protects infant and maternal health in the short and long term. Protecting and supporting breastfeeding will provide immune support for the infant and protect against food insecurity should there be infant formula supply chain interruption or financial hardship going forward. To protect breastfeeding and to safeguard infant health, all families requesting infant formula through emergency food aid need to have evidenced based support and information.

A balanced diet is equally important to all mums whether breast feeding or not. Reassure breast feeding mums that breast milk is still nutritionally the best. Even if her diet is less than perfect it won't affect the quality or supply of breast milk.

- Contact Blackburn with Darwen Family Hub's for information on free breast pump loan scheme to maximise breast milk
- [ELHT Infant Feeding page](#) – infant feeding tab (includes information on starting solid foods) and [HLSC infant feeding section](#)
- [Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative - Maximising Breastmilk and Re-lactation](#)
- Refer to breastfeeding groups in BwD FH/CC see attached flyer (a group on every day of the week, this will help mums maximise breastmilk)
- Local Mother Support Groups – [BwD Breast Intentions Facebook peer support group](#)
- [National Breastfeeding Helpline](#) 0300 100 0212 – daily 9.30am-9.30pm
- <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-infants-new-mums>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/>
- <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/> - available in different languages

Importance of Vitamin D

Vitamin D is important for healthy bones, teeth and muscles

The Department of Health recommends that:

- Babies from birth to 1 year of age who are being breastfed should be given a daily supplement containing 8.5 to 10 micrograms (µg) of vitamin D to make sure they get enough. This is whether or not you're taking a supplement containing vitamin D yourself.
- Babies fed infant formula shouldn't be given a vitamin D supplement if they're having more than 500ml (about a pint) of infant formula a day, because infant formula is fortified with vitamin D and other nutrients.

Children aged 1 to 4 years old should be given a daily supplement containing 10µg of vitamin D (All babies in BwD are eligible for free Vitamin D supplements)

Moving on to solids/weaning foods

- Infants are not recommended to have solid foods until around six months of age and families should be advised to talk to their health visitor if they feel they want to offer solids before this age.
- Babies do not need specialist baby food and can be given minimally processed family foods.
- Always check that any baby food is supplied is in date and that pouches and jars are sealed and present no risk to infant health. Food marked as suitable for babies from four months of age should not be distributed as this contradicts UK health policy.
- Baby snacks are not needed and can undermine the development of good eating habits among infants and young children
- [Solid foods DOH](#)

Reference [UNICEF Guide for LAs](#) Best contact details are:

Date October 2023

