



Healthy Start Scheme
Update- October 2020

Immediate update and change

From 1st October 2020 new foods have been added to the list of foods that Healthy Start Vouchers can be spent on.

The new foods that have been added to the list are:

Canned fruit in juice
Canned vegetables in water
Canned pulses in water
Dried pulses

Just a reminder of the foods the vouchers can still be spent on:

Cow's milk
Vegetables
Fruit
Frozen fruit and vegetables
Infant Formula milk that can be used from birth

Decrease in uptake since lockdown

Unfortunately since March the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers has dramatically decreased across Leeds.

The rate of uptake recorded across Leeds in September was 56%.
This compares to a pre lockdown rate of 79%.

This decrease in uptake is not unique to Leeds, there has been similar drops in uptake recorded across the UK as a whole.

Barriers to uptake

There have been reports locally and nationally of delays to vouchers being received by recipients after application and also when updating address.

The application process at present is either through completing a paper form and posting off, or via a [digital form](#) however this also requires printing and posting off.

With lockdown and less face to face medical appointments and visits to organisations or venues that hold the Healthy Start applications, there has been a reduction in applications being completed.

If you are in contact with families that would benefit from the scheme and would like a batch of Healthy Start application form leaflets for your centre or organisation, please get in touch



and we can arrange delivery of some leaflets. These also contain pre-prepared envelopes for sending them off.

Digital Roll Out

Digital roll out has been delayed until an estimated date of October 2021.

In the meantime, NHS Digital are looking at ways to simplify the eligibility of the service, for example allowing pregnant women to apply for relevant benefits together. Individuals should not have to reapply as they move through from pregnancy to parenthood. This will take some time to come in, however in the future this will become automatic, and happen once the child's DOB is registered with the Government.

There are no immediate plans to change the vitamin element of the scheme but they are in the early stages of reviewing this and looking at ways to align the vitamin element with the planned online Healthy Start application.

In changes for retailers, they will no longer need to register when the service goes live in October 2021. This is provided they have a card reader (Chip and Pin machine).

Consultation

In the meantime Healthy Start are consulting with beneficiaries to hear their experience of the scheme. Please feel free to share the following link with any beneficiaries you are in contact with:

<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=159661449180>

Added value to vouchers

Iceland have been the first retailer to commit to adding value to the vouchers by giving any Healthy Start recipients who shop in Iceland a £1 bag of frozen vegetables from 11th September. Iceland are to date the only retailer who have actioned adding value to the vouchers, following a call for action through the [National Food Strategy Part 1](#) Nothing concrete has yet been agreed with the other retailers, but this is being progressed by the National Food Strategy Team.

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If you would like to get in touch or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me. More than happy to have a chat about the scheme or how we may be able to link up.

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Please note my working day is Fridays.

