POLICY NOTE

The Welfare Foods (Best Start Foods) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021

SSI 2021/221

1. The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by section 13 of the Social Security Act 1988. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

These regulations will make amendments to The Welfare Foods (Best Start Foods) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 (S.S.I. 2019/193) to increase the payment value and uplift the income thresholds for some of the qualifying benefits.

Policy Objectives

2. Best Start Foods provides pregnant women and families with children under the age of three, who receive certain benefits (some of these benefits have an income threshold) with either a payment of £4.25 or £8.50 per week via a payment card to purchase healthy foods. To provide additional support to low income families, these regulations will increase the value of payments to either £4.50 or £9.00 per week.

3. These regulations also make amendments to increase income threshold amounts for certain qualifying benefits. This change will ensure that families on the lowest incomes retain their eligibility to Best Start Foods.

Consultation

4. There has been no specific consultation with stakeholders on these amendment regulations. However, as part of the policy development work for Best Start Foods, the Scottish Government consulted and engaged with a range of stakeholders. This included:

- A public consultation between 5 April and 28 June 2018 on the proposals for Best Start Foods as part of the wider consultation on the Scottish Government's approach to Welfare Foods: *Welfare Foods: a consultation on meeting the needs of children and families in Scotland*.
- A Short-Term Working group comprised of health practitioners, welfare rights experts, Local Government representation and third sector organisations.
- Retailers
- Healthy Start Voucher (HSV) recipients – the Scottish Government engaged with a range of HSV recipients, pre and post consultation and continues to undertake user research.

Impact Assessments

5. It is not considered necessary to carry out impact assessments for this instrument. These Regulations do not seek to substantively change the policy intent of the regulations. As part of the policy development work for Best Start Foods, the following impact assessments were completed:

- Business Regulatory Impact Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Islands Impact Assessment
- Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

Financial Effects

6. No Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) has been completed for these regulations, however one was completed for the principal regulations.

7. Scottish Fiscal Commission has noted these regulations and will include them in their next forecast in August, as the expected costs are below the Commission's £2 million costing threshold and not large enough to merit a supplementary costing publication. Anticipated costs in Financial Year 2021-2022 will be around £0.4 million.

Scottish Government
Social Security Directorate

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