

### What is Best Start Foods?

Best Start Foods is a weekly payment of £4.25 via a smartcard for eligible families to purchase healthy foods. All pregnant women under the age of 18 and pregnant women and families who receive certain benefits will be entitled to Best Start Foods up until that child turns three. Best Start Foods will replace Healthy Start Vouchers in Scotland in Summer 2019. You will be able to apply for both Best Start Foods and Best Start Grant on the same application form from Summer 2019.

### Who is Social Security Scotland?

Social Security Scotland is the new agency that will deliver 11 benefits being devolved to the Scottish Government.

The transfer of these benefits from the UK Government to the Scottish Government will happen in stages over the next four years.

At the end of the transfer process we will be delivering benefits to provide additional support for those on low incomes, for people who have a disability and carers.

Social Security Scotland's head office is in Dundee and there is a second major base in Glasgow. Once we are fully operational, will also provide a local presence across Scotland. We want our clients to be able to access our services as close to their homes as possible and in a way that suits them.

You can find out more about Social Security Scotland online at [socialsecurity.gov.scot](http://socialsecurity.gov.scot).

For information on Best Start Grant please visit [mygov.scot/pregnancy-and-baby-grant/](http://mygov.scot/pregnancy-and-baby-grant/) or call 0800 182 2222.



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

A guide to

# Best Start Grant



 [socialsecurity.gov.scot](http://socialsecurity.gov.scot)

 @SocSecScot

 Social Security Scotland

Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.

## What is the Best Start Grant?

The Best Start Grant is a package of three payments that will give extra money to lower-income families during the key early years of a child's life.

The three payments include:

**A Pregnancy and Baby Payment**, available by Christmas 2018 - will help with expenses in pregnancy or having a new child, for example maternity clothes, a pram or additional heating. This replaces the DWP's Sure Start Maternity Grant.

**An Early Learning Payment**, available by Summer 2019 - will help with costs during nursery and early learning years to support child development, for example travel costs, trips out and toys for home learning.

**A School Age Payment**, available by Summer 2019 - will help with the costs of preparing for school, for example a school bag, after school activities such as swimming or football, or helping with the cost of school trips.

## How much is Best Start Grant?

**Pregnancy and Baby Payment** - pays £600 for a first child, and £300 for other children. There will be an extra £300 if you have a multiple birth.

**Early Learning Payment** - A payment of £250 when a child reaches the age of 2 or 3 years.

**School Age Payment** - A payment of £250 around the time a child would usually start school.

## How many children qualify for Best Start Grant in each family?

There is no cap on the number of children it will support.

## When do applications open for this new benefit?

Applications for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment will open before Christmas. The other two elements will be available before summer 2019.

## How long after applying will people have to wait to get their Pregnancy and Baby Payment?

Clients should receive their money within 5-10 days of Social Security Scotland receiving a correctly completed application form, along with

any supportive evidence that is needed.

## What is the window for claiming the Pregnancy and Baby Payment?

You can claim the grant when you reach 24 weeks pregnant and before your baby is six months old.

## How can you apply?

We will be taking applications via our freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222, in paper form or online at [mygov.scot/pregnancy-and-baby-grant/](http://mygov.scot/pregnancy-and-baby-grant/)

## What evidence will be needed to verify pregnancy?

If permission is given, we will use baby box data to verify pregnancy or other evidence such as the MATB1 form or a birth certificate. We will also do a number of electronic checks for ID, residency and qualifying benefits. Health professionals will not need to sign a Best Start Grant application form as they are required to for the current Sure Start Maternity Grant.

## Will this affect other benefits?

Best Start Grant will not affect your other benefits or tax credits and the grant does not need to be repaid.

## Who is eligible?

The mother of the child, her partner, or someone who has a young mother dependent on them, are eligible if they get certain benefits.\*

People aged under 18 do not need to be on a qualifying benefit. Neither does anyone aged 18 or 19 who is still in full time education or training and dependent on someone else i.e. a parent or carer is claiming child benefit, child tax credit or universal credit child for them. For these young parents, there is a choice about whether they apply in their own right or the person they are dependent on applies.

\*Universal credit, Income support, Income-based jobseeker's allowance, Income-related employment and support allowance, Pension credit, Housing benefit, Child tax credit and Working tax credit.

## What are the other rules?

- there is usually only one grant paid per child
- you need to be living in Scotland
- if you have taken on responsibility for a child under the age of 1 you can also qualify.