



Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Ashley Dalton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention
House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA.

20th October 2025

CC:

Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education
Peter Kyle, Secretary of State for Business and Trade
Emma Reynolds, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

To the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Minister Dalton

Re: DHSC response to the CMA's recommendations on the formula market

I am writing on behalf of the undersigned organisations and individuals to urge you to publish the Department of Health and Social Care's response to the Competition and Markets Authority's recommendations from its Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Market Study Final Report (14 February 2025)[i], without further delay. We understand the response has been agreed following consultation with the devolved nations and is ready for release. We enclose our joint letter of 10 April, in which we called on the Department to accept and act on all 11 recommendations[ii].

Unjustifiably high infant formula prices continue to be a serious concern, especially for some low income families who may use harmful coping strategies, such as watering down formula or introducing foods before 6 months of age[iii]. The CMA confirmed that the high prices are driven largely by the maintenance by commercial milk formula companies of 50-75% profit margins[iv].

First Steps Nutrition Trust's latest infant formula price monitoring data, collected in late September / early October[v], shows that:

www.firststepsnutrition.org

Studio 3.05, The Food Exchange, New Covent Garden Market, London SW8 5EL

Trustees: Rob Percival, Marjon Willers, Ellen Diccico, Gabrielle Owtram,

Dr Vicky Thomas, Dr Marko Kerac

Director: Dr Vicky Sibson

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- The prices for 9 out of the 12 infant formulas available on the market have not fallen, despite the CMA's findings and recommendations.
- The average cost of branded infant formula is currently £12.89 for a 800g tin, only 10p lower than in May 2025. This compares to £6.99/800g for supermarket own-brand infant formula.
- Since March 2021, the difference between the least and most expensive products has increased from £8.51 to £11.01, with a range currently of £6.99 to £18. This is despite all infant formulas being nutritionally equivalent, by law.
- Only 4 of the 12 infant formulas cost less than the £8.50 weekly Healthy Start allowance for a baby under one. Two of these are supermarket own-brand products, which are less widely available than branded formulas in stores and online.
- The cost of formula for a 10-week-old baby ranges from £7.58 a week to £19.32 a week depending on the product, even though all infant formulas provide comparable nutrition and there are no health and nutrition benefits of any additional, non-mandatory ingredients.

In short, the infant formula retail offer remains dominated by expensive products, prices remain higher now than before the cost-of-living crisis and most are not affordable with the Healthy Start allowance.

Infant formula remains an expensive and yet essential food item for many babies, while the commercial milk formula industry continues to maintain enormous high profit margins. Commercial milk formula company pricing and marketing strategies are inextricably linked. Across the board, these companies continue to exploit weak enforcement mechanisms and loopholes in our regulations on marketing[vi].

On behalf of the 38 members of the Baby Feeding Law Group and the signatories below, we are urging you to publish the DHSC's response and initiate long-overdue action to improve the accountability of commercial milk formula companies. This is essential to protect infant health, and to support the Government's commitments to raising the healthiest generation of children ever and giving all children the best start in life.

Yours sincerely

Dr Vicky Sibson, Director, First Steps Nutrition Trust



Dr Catherine Pererira-Kotze, Secretariat, Baby Feeding Law Group UK



Dayna Brackley, Partner, Bremner & Co

Sharon Breward MBE QN IBCLC, Chair Wales Infant Feeding Network (WIFN)

Dr Hannah Brinsden, Head of Policy and Advocacy, The Food Foundation

Barbara Crowther, Children's Food Campaign Manager, Sustain

Judith Dennis, Head of Policy, Maternity Action

Sabine Goodwin, Director, Independent Food Action Network UK

Dr Kawther Hashem, Head of Research and Impact, Action on Salt and Sugar

Gerard Hastings OBE, Professor Emeritus, Stirling University

Katharine Jenner, Executive Director, Obesity Health Alliance

Dr Marko Kerac, Clinical Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Caroline King, Retired Neonatal Dietitian formerly at Imperial College NHS Trust

Dr Beckie Lang, Chief Executive, HENRY

Clare Law, Director, Better Start

Nigel Rollins, Professor Maternal and Child Health, Queen's University Belfast

Patti Rundall, OBE, Policy Director, Baby Milk Action, IBFAN UK

Dr Helen Stewart, Officer for Health Improvement, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Cllr Dr Wendy Taylor, Chair of the Local Government Association Health and Wellbeing Committee

Chris van Tulleken, Professor of Infection and Global Health, UCL

Marianne White, Chair, Scottish Infant Feeding Network

[i]<https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/infant-formula-and-follow-on-formula-market-study>

[ii]<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/6815413662f9f50421419c37/1746223415147/Joint+letter+to+Ashley+Dalton+on+the+CMA+recommendations+100425+final+.pdf>

[iii]<http://www.infantfeedingappg.uk/inquiry-report/>; <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/TFF+Nourishing%20children%20early%20years+DIGITAL.pdf>; <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=MR%2FZ503575%2F1>:

papers in preparation

[iv]<https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/infant-formula-and-follow-on-formula-market-study> (page 41)

[v]<https://infantmilkinfo.org/costs/>

[vi]<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f75004f09ca48694070f3b/t/68790ec6d05d5f54d0dd02c1/1752764109649/Current+Formula+Marketing+Practices+in+the+UK+Why+the+Government+should+accept+the+11+CMA+recommendations+FINAL.pdf>
