



## Ensuring all children have a Healthy Start

### Application guidelines for financial support 2019

We think everyone in the UK should be able to afford to buy healthy food from stores that are local to where they live. However, we know that many people struggle to do this.

Healthy Start is a government programme to support low-income pregnant women and young children's access to fruit and vegetables, milk and infant formula (as well as vitamins). However, over the last seven years average national uptake of the vouchers has dropped from 80% to 66%, meaning low income families are missing out on millions of pounds of support. This money also goes unspent in retailers, including markets or other local shops.

Food poverty alliances can help improve understanding and uptake of the vouchers by working with the third sector, community and commercial retail, local authorities, schools, children's centres and health professionals. This year's Food Power theme will focus on Healthy Start vouchers for fruit, vegetables and milk and their ability to improve people's access to healthy food. Financial support will be for alliances to implement a piece of work from their own food poverty action plan (or similar) that focuses in this area. A core part of our programme is about sharing and learning among alliances, so documenting activities for others to learn from will be a key part of these projects.

We are looking to support alliances that focus on increasing uptake among households who are eligible for Healthy Start but not currently using the vouchers. We encourage alliances to identify the number of families who are not using the vouchers by analysing local uptake data, to explore what barriers may be affecting lower uptake and to then develop targeted approaches to reach families in their area accordingly. Projects may include some of the actions below, but this list is not exhaustive and we would support pilot ideas as well.

- Calculate the underspend and publicise this to influence key decision-makers, locally or nationally
- Run focus groups with experts by experience to understand barriers to voucher uptake/use and what solutions they would propose to reach more families and children
- Partner with other organisations, such as Alexandra Rose, to top-up the value of vouchers
- Work with retailers to ensure a good and culturally appropriate range of healthy products is available alongside increased promotion of the vouchers
- Train staff or volunteers in community settings about the scheme, such as at food banks, early year's settings, job centres, financial advice services or other places where knowledge is low
- Work with the local council to designate a Healthy Start champion to ensure joined-up working across sectors and geographies
- Create promotional materials for community service providers and/or parents, potentially translated into languages relevant to communities who typically have lower uptake
- Increase the number of retailers accepting vouchers, potentially in new settings such as street markets
- Ensure vouchers are accepted and promoted within community food retail projects (e.g. veg box schemes, community pantries, social supermarkets, food co-ops, etc.)
- Work with retail associations or companies to pilot Healthy Start promotion schemes, e.g. increased signage in store, special boxes of food priced at £3.10, added value boxes for sale (£4 of food for £3.10)

For more resources and case studies, visit our webpage on [alliance action for Healthy Start](#) or listen to our [webinar about local groups taking action](#).



## Eligibility of projects

We will aim to fund a variety of projects across the four nations and to support a mix of urban and rural settings. Proposed projects must focus on Healthy Start vouchers for fruit, vegetables and milk and improving food access, and be based on an action point(s) within the alliance's food poverty action plan (or similar). The plan may still be in draft form or published, but the action point should be explicitly referenced in the application. Projects must take a joined-up approach to the issue, involving other relevant partners within and beyond the alliance as appropriate. We would expect the local council, including a council officer with responsibility for Healthy Start, to be a key partner. Applications should include a plan for sustainability beyond the funded period.

The Scottish Government is currently developing a new Welfare Foods package, which will include Best Start Foods – a system to replace Healthy Start but continue to provide targeted financial support for low income pregnant women and families to purchase healthy food. We welcome applications from Scottish alliances and appreciate that some flexibility in the approach will be needed as this new package is rolled out. More about Welfare Foods can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

We expect alliances applying for this financial support to have already done a baseline level of research into Healthy Start locally. Applications should include information about

- Current uptake rates in the proposed areas to target, including number of eligible recipients, number of entitled recipients and resulting (approximate) number of people missing vouchers who would be targeted in the proposed project ([email Maddie](#) for figures from last 3 months)
- If applicable, the local Healthy Start coordinator/champion and any work to date
- If the area has a multi-agency/sector steering group for early year's or infant health

## Eligibility of organisations

Food Power financial support is for UK food poverty alliances which are members of Food Power. The alliance must be able to receive financial support into a designated bank account and manage all legal and financial requirements. The local food poverty alliance should steer the delivery of work.

## Match funding and in-kind support

Alliances are encouraged to identify match funding and/or in-kind support up to or exceeding the value of the amount you are applying for. This could include a range of support, such as direct funding, a commitment of time, meeting space or help with communications or marketing. We are open minded as to what form this could take; it is important for it to be meaningful and evidenced in the application.

## Financial arrangements

Payment will be made in two instalments, with 50% in advance and 50% halfway through the work. The first instalment will be provided on receipt of a signed agreement and invoice. The second instalment will be provided on written evidence of progress and a second invoice. All claims should be invoiced and made to Sustain.

Should the financial support be used to pay for staff time, the employer will need to agree to this application being submitted and be willing, and have all legal and financial arrangements in place, to manage an employee. Where an alliance cannot act as the employer, an alliance can apply jointly with an organisation that can manage the employment of staff. We expect the strategic steer of that person's work to come from the food poverty alliance.



## Reporting to share learning across the network

Recipients of financial support must submit brief quarterly updates via the members' area. These are partly to monitor spend but they are also an effective way to stay in touch with alliances, gather learning to be shared more widely, offer support as needed and hear feedback on the programme. The updates include four questions and a template is provided for the 'snapshot' case study. Updates are used by the Food Power team and peer mentors as relevant. We publish [snapshots on the Food Power website](#) and publicise them in other ways. The schedule for reporting is below.

Reporting	Deadline
Update on activity up to 3 months	End of month 4
Update and interim snapshot case study of activity up to 6 months	End of month 7
Brief update on activity up to 9 months	End of month 10
Update and final snapshot case study of activity across 12 months	End of month 13

## Application process

Applications will open on 14 January 2019 and should be [submitted online via the Food Power member's area](#) by **5pm on Friday 1 March 2019**. Please do not submit any materials other than what is requested as these will not be considered. If you are unsure what to submit, please get in touch.

We expect there to be significant interest in this financial support and to receive more applications than we can support. Applications will be assessed by a sub-group of the Food Power programme board and a representative from the Big Lottery Fund. The decision will be final. As part of our joint working agreement, staff from the Menu for Change programme will provide feedback on applications from Scotland but will not be part of the decision-making sub-group. We may ask for further information as part of the decision-making process. We aim to deal with all applications in a friendly and efficient fashion. If we fall short of these aims, please let us know. We can provide limited feedback upon request to unsuccessful applicants.

## Timeline

Application period opens	14 January 2019
Deadline for applications	5pm 1 March 2019
Communication of decisions to successful and unsuccessful applicants	No later than 29 March 2019
Activity due to start	No later than 1 May 2019
Activity due to end	No later than 30 April 2020

*Food Power values your feedback to help evaluate and improve our programme. Progress reports on activities benefiting from Food Power financial support will be shared with the external evaluators at Cardiff University.*

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