



# Ensure every child has a Healthy Start

Food Poverty Action Aberdeen  
Interim report, November 2019

## Best Start and Smile Community Food Pantry

The Best Start and Smile Pantry brings families together in one space to access fresh fruit and veg, purchased with their Best Start Foods Card, which has replaced the Healthy Start scheme in Scotland. CFINE are offering a dignified alternative to food banks with a relaxed shopping experience.

Members of The BSSP steering group include NHSG Best Start, NHS Childsmile, ACC Communities Team and Fareshare Grampian. Representatives from each organisation come to the pantry to provide information and guidance, as well as a programme of events including healthy cooking, cooking on your Best Start Food budget shop, Baby steps and Oral Health. In addition, CFINE's SAFE team are on hand to offer advice on financial issues. We also stock Healthy Start vitamins with additional vitamin D, which has been popular with families who do not access vitamins elsewhere.

In the first two weeks 29 families have come along to shop, have a cuppa and a chat, and receive the benefits of good healthy food, company, advice and support from fellow members, staff and volunteers in our cosy waiting room. Our cover girls, Emily and Rowanne enjoy cuddles and companionship while mum shops and siblings play in the toy area.

Across the city we have advertised the new Best Start Card and families are reporting that they have received their cards or are waiting for them. The new Best Start cards have been described as "very easy to use and more dignified than using a voucher."

## Challenges

To overcome the difficulties we have had in identifying those eligible for Best Start Foods, using the information received from Social Security Scotland we have flooded community settings, NHS partners, GP surgeries, Health Visitors, local newsletters, community magazines and radio with information on Best Start and the Best Start Pantry.

## Next steps

In 2020 we are running a programme of cooking classes at the Pantry, including healthy cooking on a budget, child friendly and weaning classes, as well as providing advice and information around oral health, breastfeeding, healthy weight and other diet related issues.



Best Start buddies Emily and Rowanne at the Pantry

***"For a £3 per year membership fee and £2.50 a week, members receive over £20 worth of meat, fish, chicken, chilled and ambient goods."***

Nicky McKay, Pantry Development Worker

## Outcomes

The alliance has benefited from the individual and collective experience of the members. Their active involvement will benefit the project as people will receive advice and information first hand from the expert in their field. Long term, we hope to continue to provide a way forward out of food poverty.

This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.  
[www.foodpower.org.uk](http://www.foodpower.org.uk)

