

Alternative Retailers Network

29/04/22

Healthy Start Scheme

What is the Healthy Start Scheme

Families can get a pre-paid card that is topped up every 4 weeks with credit to buy healthy food.

Healthy Start paper vouchers have now ceased to be issued and have been replaced by Healthy Start cards that can be used in retailers that sell food and accept MasterCard. This includes supermarkets, local shops, Pantries, farm shops and more. They can be used to buy:

- cow's milk
- fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables
- dried and tinned pulses
- first infant formula milk.

Money will be added to the pre-paid card every 4 weeks and can be used in any retailer that accepts MasterCard.

Who is eligible for Healthy Start

Healthy Start is available to those who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four, and are in receipt of certain benefits and have a household income less than £408.

Payments are as follows:

- £4.25 each week of pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year old
- £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4 years old

Checking eligibility and application to the scheme can be done online at

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Info for retailers

- All retailers that accept MasterCard can accept the Healthy Start pre-paid cards.
- If you are a retailer that is already registered to accept Healthy Start paper vouchers, you can continue to accept any vouchers up to their expiry date. The final date for retailers to claim re-imbusement for those vouchers is 23rd October 2022, after that date no re-imburements will be issued.
- If you are a retailer that is not registered to accept vouchers and a customer presents them, you will need to advise them to spend them in a registered retailer such as a supermarket. I would also encourage you to advise them to apply for the pre-paid card online, if they haven't already and refer the customer to the Healthy Start website (link below) for further info and to apply online.
- There is no way to monitor the items that are bought with the card and retailers are not expected to scrutinise what is being bought but we encourage retailers to promote healthy eating where possible.
- Promotional materials including posters and checkout stickers can be found at: [NHS Business Services News \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](https://nhsbsa.nhs.uk) These resources are currently only available in English but will be distributed in Welsh in due course.

For more information on Healthy Start: www.healthystart.nhs.uk