

Eligibility for Healthy Start for groups who have no recourse to public funds or are subject to immigration controls

Current eligibility for Healthy Start

At present, Healthy Start is restricted to those in receipt of certain qualifying public funds and those with NRPF, or who are subject to immigration controls, who have at least one British child aged under 4.

Do you agree or disagree with the current eligibility criteria for Healthy Start?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

Healthwatch Birmingham would like to see the scheme extended beyond the current eligibility to ensure all children and young families get the best possible start in life

Extending eligibility for Healthy Start

Do you agree or disagree that eligibility for Healthy Start should be extended to non-British children under 4 from families with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

Healthwatch Birmingham would like to see all health inequalities in Birmingham addressed. For children the Healthy Start scheme can help give access to healthy food and get them the best start in life and the scheme should be extended to these children. In Birmingham 28.1% of children live in low income families, compared to 17% nationally.

Do you agree or disagree that eligibility for Healthy Start should be extended to pregnant women with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

Healthwatch Birmingham would like to see the scheme extended. We know it is important for pregnant mothers to receive good nutrition and healthy foods to improve both the health of the mother and the baby. Birmingham has a higher than average infant mortality rate than the national rate. Ensuring improved nutrition and therefore health, is one way of tackling the multiple inequalities and disadvantages that contribute to this problem.

Do you agree or disagree that eligibility for Healthy Start should be extended to mothers with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls with children under one?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

Healthwatch Birmingham would like to see the scheme extended. Birmingham has a high than average infant mortality rate than the national rate. Ensuring improved nutrition and therefore health, is one way of tackling the multiple inequalities and disadvantages that contributes to this problem. We know that there are significantly higher rates of infant mortality in deprived populations, and support any measures to address this inequality.

Extending eligibility for Healthy Start: other groups

Are there any other groups with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls to whom eligibility for Healthy Start should be extended?

- Yes
- No
- **Don't know**

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

Are there any other groups with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls to whom eligibility for Healthy Start should not be extended?

- Yes
- No
- **Don't know**

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

Benefits and challenges of extending Healthy Start

We are interested in views on the benefits and challenges of adding the following groups in to the eligibility criteria for Healthy Start:

- non-British children, under 4, from families with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls
- pregnant women with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls
- mothers with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls with children aged under one

Do you agree or disagree that there are benefits to adding these groups to the eligibility criteria for the Healthy Start scheme?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

Healthwatch Birmingham agree that extending the Healthy Start to more groups will be beneficial, both in the short term for food security, but also for long term positive impacts on health. Proper nutrition during childhood is crucial for enhancing long-term health and resilience, while also helping to prevent malnutrition and reduce the risk of diet-related diseases.

Birmingham's current health and wellbeing strategy focuses on closing the gaps faced due to inequalities; and getting the best start in life. As such health and affordable food is core theme of the strategy, with a focus on increasing the uptake of the healthy start scheme.

Healthwatch Birmingham supports any measures that can help to reduce inequalities that people face due to deprivation.

By extending the scheme to more groups, it will also encourage the newly eligible pregnant women and young families to engage with supportive services in order to access the scheme.

Do you agree or disagree that there are challenges to adding these groups to the eligibility criteria for the Healthy Start scheme?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

We can foresee communication as the main challenge with adding these groups to the eligibility criteria. These are around communicating with newly eligible groups and letting them know

about the scheme, and clear information about how access works with their NRPF status. We know that many people living with NRPF have a cautious approach to accepting any form of public benefit in case it impacts on their immigration or visa status.

If you agree, do you have any suggestions for how these challenges could be overcome (maximum 350 words)?

Clear communication and guidance, accessible in multiple formats to deal with language and literacy barriers will be needed on how to access the scheme. Clear engagement should be made with people who this affects, to continuously improve the quality of communications.

Training for relevant organisations who support the newly eligible groups will also be needed to ensure clear messaging getting to the right people.

Any further information about eligibility

Please provide any further information that you would like DHSC to consider in relation to eligibility to Healthy Start for those with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls (maximum 350 words).

N/A

Further questions for professionals or organisations

Do you work with families that meet the current eligibility criteria for the non-statutory scheme?

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

They are eligible if all of the following are true:

- they have one or more British children who are aged under 4 years old
- their take-home pay is £408 or less per month
- they also cannot claim public funds because of their immigration status (by this we mean they have a NRPF condition) or because they do not have an immigration status (they are in the UK without permission)

If you do, how many families would you estimate you work with that meet the eligibility criteria for the non-statutory scheme?

- 10 or fewer
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- More than 50

Do you work with families with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the non-statutory scheme?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you do, how many families would you estimate you work with that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the non-statutory scheme?

- 10 or fewer
- 11 to 20
- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- More than 50

Please explain why these families do not meet the eligibility criteria for the non-statutory scheme (for example, non-British child or British child aged over 4 years old) (maximum 350 words).

N/A

Equality analysis: extending Healthy Start to include certain groups

The following questions seek your views on whether changing the eligibility criteria for Healthy Start to include certain groups with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls will affect those with:

- the protected characteristic of race
- the protected characteristic of maternity and pregnancy
- any other protected characteristics

What effect, if any, do you think expanding eligibility would have on those who share the protected characteristic of race?

- Positive effect
- Neither positive nor negative effect
- Negative effect
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

What effect, if any, do you think expanding eligibility would have on those who share the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity?

- Positive effect

- Neither positive nor negative effect
- Negative effect
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

What effect, if any, do you think expanding eligibility would have on those who share any other protected characteristics?

- Positive effect

- Neither positive nor negative effect
- Negative effect
- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words.)

N/A

Equality analysis: not extending Healthy Start

The following questions seek your views on whether not changing the eligibility criteria for Healthy Start to include certain groups with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls will affect those with:

- the protected characteristic of race
- the protected characteristic of maternity and pregnancy
- any other protected characteristics

What effect, if any, do you think not changing the eligibility criteria would have on those who share the protected characteristic of race?

- Positive effect
- Neither positive nor negative effect

- Negative effect

- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

What effect, if any, do you think not changing the eligibility criteria would have on those who share the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity?

- Positive effect
- Neither positive nor negative effect

- Negative effect

- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

What effect, if any, do you think not changing the eligibility criteria would have on those who share any other protected characteristics?

- Positive effect
- Neither positive nor negative effect

- Negative effect

- Don't know

Please explain your answer (maximum 350 words).

N/A

Equality analysis: other information

Please provide any further information that you would like DHSC to consider in relation to equality analysis for Healthy Start eligibility for those with NRPF or who are subject to immigration controls (maximum 350 words).

N/A