



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Application Guidance - Healthy Start temporary extension

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Introduction

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has temporarily extended the Healthy Start scheme to British children (aged under four years old), whose parent/guardian meet the financial eligibility criteria and are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status, or their lack of immigration status.

To qualify for the temporary extension, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- you have a British child, or more than one British child, who is aged under four years old;
- your family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month; and
- you are excluded from claiming public funds¹, as a consequence of your immigration status or your lack of immigration status²

You will be required to provide the relevant supporting documents to demonstrate you meet the criteria in order to be eligible. Please note that if you are eligible for this temporary scheme, you will not be eligible for the NHS Healthy Start Scheme and vice versa. This means you cannot claim under both schemes.

Please ensure you complete the application form and provide information to demonstrate you meet all of the eligibility criteria above.

Foods you can buy with Healthy Start:

Eligible families with children aged under four and over one will receive £4.25 every week per child, and children under one will receive £8.50 every week per child. Healthy Start can be used to buy, or be put towards the cost of, fresh, frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried and tinned pulses, plain cow's milk and infant formula. Healthy Start cannot be used to buy other items not detailed above.

Healthy Start beneficiaries on the temporary scheme will also receive free children's vitamins by post.

¹ [Public funds \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

² See section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Demonstrating Eligibility

Please note the below sets out the evidence that we accept when reviewing applications for the temporary scheme, this is not an exhaustive list. We understand the complexities of being able to demonstrate all three parts of the eligibility criteria. If you think you meet the criteria but do not have the accepted evidence, please contact the team to discuss - Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk. Please note that if you are eligible for this temporary scheme, you will not be eligible for the NHS Healthy Start Scheme and vice versa.

Fraudulent Applications

Please note, anybody found to have knowingly and dishonestly applied for this scheme when they do not meet the eligibility criteria, anyone found to have submitted false documentation, or anyone who fails to notify DHSC of a change of circumstances that affects their eligibility for the scheme, may have action taken against them (such as civil and/or criminal sanctions) and may be required to return any overpayments received under this scheme.

No Recourse to Public Funds or lack of Immigration Status

Where a parent(s) immigration status is subject to a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition, the evidence confirming this needs to be provided with the application form.

This can be evidenced by providing a letter from the Home Office, copies of a Biometric Residence Permit or by sharing your digital status share code. This is not the only evidence we will accept to help demonstrate you meet this part of the eligibility criteria, and we advise you to contact the team to help with any questions you may have.

Where the parent(s) has no immigration status, we understand this is not straightforward to evidence and would advise that the parent(s) or a third party, with appropriate authorisation, contacts the team to discuss the application.

Please note that where a family unit has access to public funds (for example one of the parents has access to public funds), then this part of the eligibility criteria will not be met, and the application will not progress on that basis. Where a family unit has split but still live in the same address and one of the parents has access to public funds, then this part of the eligibility criteria will not be met, and the application will not progress on that basis.

Evidence for NRPF

Accepted evidence

- Home Office letter that clearly states as a result of an application decision the applicant has a condition of NRPF
- A letter from the Home Office that states the applicant is in receipt of Section 95 support scheme
- An in date Biometric Residence Permit card that shows the card holder has NRPF
- Providing the team with your share code which will provide access to your digital immigration status information.

Not accepted evidence

- A letter from a charity or Local Authority that states the applicant has NRPF
- A letter from a Local Authority of charity that states the family are in receipt of Section 17 Support.

In certain situations, you may have a letter from the Home Office on your application that shows you have access to public funds, but when you apply for these (such as Universal Credit) you are rejected. In these situations where you have recourse to public funds but have been denied access, you will more than likely be ineligible for the temporary scheme. We do advise that you contact the team to discuss your application to be certain. Please only contact the team where you meet the other two eligibility criteria, (for example you earn £408 or less per month and have a British Child).

Lack of Immigration Status

Accepted evidence

- Confirmation the applicant has no legal status due to arriving illegally or they are overstaying a visa/visa has expired
- Copy of original Visa that has expired

British child aged under four years old

Children born in the UK to a British or settled parent are automatically British citizens. Children born abroad to a British parent may be British citizens: their status will depend on how the parent in question acquired British nationality. There are special provisions for the children of Crown servants and armed forces.

Children born in UK

If at least one of the parents is a British citizen, or Irish citizen living in the UK, then the child is a British citizen. This can be evidenced by providing the British passport for the child, full UK birth certificate or a naturalisation or registration certificate for the British parent(s). For Irish parents, we need an Irish passport or evidence of Irish nationality and proof of address. In both cases, we need the full birth certificate (i.e. showing the parents' details) of the child born in the UK.

Where neither of the parents held British or Irish citizenship, the child will only be automatically a British citizen if, when they were born in the UK, at least one of their parents was settled. This can include:

- 'indefinite leave to remain' (ILR), 'settled status', 'permanent residence status', 'right of abode' or 'right of re-admission'

This can be evidenced by providing information regarding the immigration status of the parent for example their passport or a biometric residence permit.

If one of the parents was in the UK armed forces, then the child is automatically a British citizen. This can be evidenced by providing the passport of the parent and evidence of service in the forces, such as a letter from the Ministry of Defence.

Children of European parents

A child born in the UK after 1 July 2021 to European parents, will become a British citizen automatically where their parent is successful in being granted indefinite leave to remain under the EU Settlement Scheme after the child's birth.

Information about children of EEA nationals can be found on Gov. UK: Check if you're a British citizen: Born in the UK between 30 April 2006 and 30 June 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) <https://www.gov.uk/check-british-citizenship/born-in-the-uk-on-30-april-2006-onwards>

Children born outside the UK

British citizenship is normally automatically passed down one generation to children born outside the UK. A child born abroad to a British parent will become a British citizen by descent. The exception to this is if the British parent themselves holds their nationality by descent from their own birth abroad.

British citizens by descent cannot normally pass on their citizenship to children born outside of the UK (see exceptions below), but a British citizen otherwise than by descent can. It does not affect any other of the rights or duties that go with British citizenship.

A parent who is a British citizen “by descent” cannot normally pass that status on, unless the British parent was in one of the three types of service listed below at the time of the birth:

- Crown service. The recruitment must have taken place in the UK.
- Specially designated service. The recruitment must have taken place in the UK.
- European Community institution service. The recruitment must have taken place in a country which was a member of the European Union.

Generally, parents who were born in the UK or naturalised or registered as a British citizen based on a period of residence in the UK, are British citizens otherwise than by descent.

Children born abroad need to provide their birth certificate and evidence of their parents’ British nationality.

Please do contact the team if you have any questions.

Adopted children

A child who is not already a British citizen becomes a British citizen from the date of an adoption order if:

- the adopter, or in the case of a joint adoption, one of the adopters is a British citizen and the adoption is authorised by a court in the UK.
- it is a convention adoption under the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry adoptions and the adopter, or, in the case of a joint adoption, both of the adopters are habitually resident in the UK

This can be evidenced by an adoption order made by a court in the UK or a certificate showing adoption under the Hague Convention. Furthermore, we need evidence showing the parent is a British citizen.

New-born infant found abandoned

A new-born infant found abandoned in the United Kingdom will be a British citizen. This can be evidenced by documents from the police or Local Authority.

Evidence for British Child aged under four years old

Accepted evidence

- A valid British passport for the child on the application

Not accepted

- UK Birth certificate for the child where both parents are not born in the UK
- UK Birth certificate with only one parent who was born outside of the UK

Single parent with NRPF with a British Child

Where the British child, who is aged under four years old, is in sole custody of the parent who has NRPF, that parent can apply for the temporary extension. This is only when the other parent, who is a British citizen, is not claiming any public funds for that child. We understand that in certain circumstances the child may not have a British Passport.

Evidence for single parents with NRPF who have sole custody of a British child

Accepted evidence where there is no British Passport for the child

- Full UK Birth certificate with both parents on
- British passport for the parent who is a British citizen

Where it is not in the interests of the parent with NRPF to get in touch with the other parent due to personal circumstances (please do advise the team of this when applying), we will work with the applicant to fully understand the situation to see if we can progress any application.

Not accepted evidence

- Full UK Birth certificate with only one parent who was born outside of the UK

Family's earned income is £408 or less per month

Please provide financial statements to demonstrate the family's earned income is less than £408 per month. This can be in the form of a bank statement or a letter from an organisation providing information that demonstrates the family meet this criteria. If the family is in receipt of Local Authority or Home Office support, this may help us understand the current financial situation and we would advise for this to be submitted.

These are not the only documents we will accept to help demonstrate you meet this part of the eligibility criteria and advise you to contact the team to help with any questions you may have.

Evidence for earned income

Accepted evidence

- Scanned copies of recent bank statement
- Confirmation the applicant is not working so has no earned income
- Home Office letter dated within 3 months, in relation to the applicant's immigration status that states there is a no work control in place
- Scanned copy of the applicants Biometric Residence Permit card that has not expired, which shows work is not allowed

Application Process

All applications must be made electronically, we are not able to receive paper applications.

Please note you can apply on behalf of someone but only with written consent from the applicant in the application form. Please make sure you provide this when emailing in the application form or initial questions.

Decisions are based on the applicant meeting all of the eligibility criteria as set out below:

- you have a British child, or more than one British child, who is aged under four years old;
- your family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month; and
- you are excluded from claiming public funds³, as a consequence of your immigration status or your lack of immigration status⁴

Step 1

You will need to email the team to request an application form at Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk

Step 2

Once you have received the application form please complete and gather your supporting evidence to demonstrate you meet all the eligibility criteria for example:

- British passport for your child who is aged under four
- Biometric Residence Permit that shows you have NRPF and is in date
- Recent bank statements to prove you earn £408 or less per month.

Contact the temporary extension team for any questions on your application. We will work with all applicants and third parties prior to the complete application being submitted to help answer any questions. Responses to these questions will be actioned as quickly as possible.

³ [Public funds \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁴ See section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Step 3

Once you have all the supporting evidence and signed and dated the application form, please send these to Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk

Step 4

The Healthy Start temporary extension team will only review fully completed applications, this can take some time and we aim to have a decision to all applicants on fully completed applications within 40 working days. If the application or the supporting documents are missing or do not clearly show the applicant meets all three parts of the eligibility criteria the team will make contact with you in order to progress the application.

The team may also at this stage advise if you are not eligible for the scheme, providing a reason as to why.

Once the application has been reviewed the team will contact you advising of the outcome and next steps.

Successful applicants

For those who are eligible to access the temporary scheme, as they meet all the criteria set out above, their initial payment will be backdated to the point the applicant/or third party first contacted the mailbox on their behalf.

You will receive payments into your bank account every four-weeks and vitamins posted to your address every eight weeks. If you do not have a bank account, please let the team know and we will work with you to help you receive your benefit.

You will also be asked every eight-weeks to confirm the information your submitted with your application is still correct and to update the team on any changes, this could be a change in your personal circumstances meaning you have access to public funds.

You must update the team when your circumstances change. For example your earned income from work meaning you earn more than £408 per month, change of address or change in immigration status meaning you have access to public funds. Where applicable the Department may look to recoup (or recover) funds where applicants have been sent funds but are no longer eligible due to changes in circumstances.

Unsuccessful applications

Depending on the reasons for this decision you may be able to apply if your situation changes, for example you earned over £408 per month but then find yourself earning less. Please do contact the team if you have any questions.

Checklist

In order to process an application, please remember to send all the relevant supporting documents to demonstrate you meet all the eligibility criteria with your completed application form. Please provide copies, where applicable, of:

- Your Passport/Home Office reference number or case ID (if known)
- Home Office Share Code
- Proof of your address
- Your Child (s) Birth certificate
- Your Child (s) British Passport
- Proof of your earned income from the previous month, for example a copy of your recent bank statements*
- Proof that you have No Recourse to Public Funds

Please tick the box where you have provided the relevant supporting documents.

You can find all the information on what evidence we accept in this document to help you demonstrate you meet all parts of the eligibility criteria below.

- you have a British child, or more than one British child, who is aged under four years old;
- your family's earned income is £408 or less per month; and

- you are excluded from claiming public funds⁵, as a consequence of your immigration status or your lack of immigration status⁶

*If you do not have a bank statement, please provide documents that demonstrate you meet the financial criteria. We will contact you as soon as possible if we require further information to help process the application.

Contact the team

You can contact the team at the email address below. We will work to respond to all emails as quickly as we can.

Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk

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⁵ [Public funds \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁶ See section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

www.gov.uk/dhsc

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