

Healthy Start Vouchers – Applications Made Simpler

27/04/2020

Families can now apply for Healthy Start food vouchers without a health professional's signature on the form, as was previously required.



[Healthy Start](#) is the UK's food welfare scheme for pregnant women and young children in low-income families. The vouchers, worth £3.10 per week, can be used to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables, milk or infant formula, and vitamin coupons are issued in addition. The application process and other issues have limited their reach, with uptake between 51% and 62% in Greater Manchester's boroughs, [charted by GM Combine Authority](#). This means many families are currently missing out, costing close to an estimated £4m per year across GM.

However, the regulations around the application process have now been changed, so Healthy Start application forms (which can be found [here](#)) no longer require a health professional to complete and sign Part B. These new regulations are welcome during the Covid-19 pandemic, as families at risk of food poverty desperately need support to buy healthy food, and health professionals are already at capacity.

"Low-income families need to be able to access all available support during this time of economic and social upheaval, so the timing of the new regulation is very welcomed as they will enable pregnant women, parents and carers to apply without having to seek out a health professional. Simplifying the application process is something that's been needed for years and we are so glad to see it happening now, when it is vital to improve food access for our most vulnerable families," says [Maddie Guerlain of Sustain](#).

We are calling on relevant agencies across Greater Manchester to do all they can to make more residents aware of the scheme, and help eligible residents to apply. There will be a [Food Power webinar at 11am on Tuesday 28th April](#) for those wanting to find out more, including an update on upcoming digitisation plans and case studies from two food partnerships on how they've been working to increase take up locally. The webinar will be recorded so if you cannot attend the live session, you can register anyway to receive a link to the recording later in the week.

[Find out more about Healthy Start vouchers and how to apply here.](#)

Contact details:

Tom Skinner

Co-Director - Greater Manchester Poverty Action

tom@gmpovertyaction.org

0787 234 6388