

## **FFA policy on infant formula provision:**

FFA (JH) met with (SB) the Healthy Start lead for Bristol City Council Children and Families Public Health Team.

Healthy Start is a card which has money on it (like a credit card) which you can apply for if you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or if you have a child under 4 years. You can use the card to buy infant formula, cow's milk and fruit and veg. This is means-tested aimed at those on Universal Credit or Child Tax Credits or if you're low paid. You can also apply for Healthy Start if you're not a British citizen but your child is. Healthy Start is being extended to families with no recourse to public funds.

BCC is very clear that food banks or similar should not provide infant formula. BCC was also very clear that where a family has either none or limited supply of infant formula then this is always a safeguarding issue for the baby and other children in the family.

The key principles that Bristol City Council work on are the following:

- They have a duty of care for the safeguarding of all infants under 12 months affected by family hardship, however they are fed.
- Provision of infant feeding support during financial hardship or food crisis should conform to the World Health Assembly International Code of marketing of breast milk substitutes.
- The development of pathways of wrap around care which enable families to access additional services to meet ongoing need.
- Bristol is currently developing a pathway which will be similar to the Camden example (document previously circulated).

FFA partners:

If one of our partners becomes aware that families have either no or a limited supply of formula milk our partners need to refer to the local health visiting team who can provide wrap around care, can safeguard the infant and provide emergency payments. Families presenting in crisis will usually have multiple problems with lack of formula milk only being one of them. If a family presents late in the day or on a Friday, then the family should be referred to First Response (Children's Social Care) who are able to give emergency payments.

Our partners should be aware of this and know how to access wrap around care for families. Bristol City Council is currently providing training for community partners. Our two partners who are Children's Centres will be signed up to Baby Friendly Accreditation and will be aware of the referral process. All of our partners should be aware of the Healthy Start Scheme and should encourage all the families they work with to sign up. There is evidence now, however, that the Healthy Start Scheme does not provide enough financial support to buy all the formula that families need as the cost of formula has rocketed.