

## Minutes of Forum Meeting

**10am - Thursday 24 February 2022**

### Present:

Amanda Ryan	BPHA (Chair)
Kim Daisley	Citizens Advice Bedford
Wendy Jephcote	Autism Bedfordshire
Len Simkins	Autism Bedfordshire
Carol Madden	Money Advice at St Andrews
Caroline Cook	Mind BLMK
Georgia Bowers	Bedford Borough Libraries
Paulette Rennie	Bedford Community Self-Help Group
Laura Waller	Public Health
Amanda Thaxter	Carers in Bedfordshire
Samantha Conder	Macmillan Welfare Rights
Emma Branch	The Counselling Foundation
Richard Skinner	Noah Enterprise
Elliott Stephenson	Grand Union Housing Group
Shenaz Sufi	Noah Enterprise
Martin Trinder	CVS Beds (minutes)
Adam Wilson	Noah Enterprise
Becky Solesbury	Project 229
Brian Cunningham	BRASS

### Apologies:

Maureen Sheridan	Sight Concern Bedfordshire
Chera Gilbert	Disability Resource Centre
Trevor Moisey	Three Rivers Church, Bedford

### 3. Minutes of last Forum meeting (18<sup>th</sup> November 2021) and matters arising

The minutes of the last Forum meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

### 4. Presentation – Laura Waller – Senior Public Health Officer

Laura gave a presentation of the Healthy Start Scheme.

A copy of the slides can be found at the end of this presentation.

Laura is very happy to attend other meetings to promote the scheme - email [Laura.Waller@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.Waller@bedford.gov.uk)

Amanda thanked Laura for coming to the meeting.

## 5. Information Exchange

The following attendees gave verbal updates on services at their organisation:

- Becky Solesbury - Project 229
- Wendy Jephcote - Autism Bedfordshire
- Emma Branch - The Counselling Foundation
- Caroline Cook - Mind BLMK
- Carol Madden - Money Advice at St Andrews
- Amanda Thaxter - Carers in Bedfordshire
- Samantha Conder - Macmillan Welfare Rights
- Shenaz Sufi / Adam Wilson - Noah Enterprise
- Paulette Rennie - Bedford Community Self-Help Group
- Elliott Stephenson - Grand Union Housing Group
- Brian Cunningham - BRASS
- Martin Trinder - CVS Beds
- Kim Daisley - Citizens Advice Bedford
- Amanda Ryan - BPHA
- Georgia Bowers - Bedford Borough Libraries

Further details were later provided on some of the information. See below.

**Elliott (GUHG)** explained the role of the Financial Wellbeing team in helping customers with welfare benefits and debt advice. More details at <https://www.guhg.co.uk/help-advice/benefit-and-money-advice-services/>

Project Mackenzie is a scheme to help young people into work - <https://www.guhg.co.uk/support/project-mackenzie/>

**Martin (CVS Beds)** highlighted the forthcoming Funding Fayre on 15/16/17 March <https://www.cvsbeds.org.uk/news/2022/02/21/2022-funding-fair-online/>

**Kim (Citizens Advice Bedford)** highlighted that they can now offer direct referrals to welfare benefits support. A form is available. Email [kim@bedfordcab.org.uk](mailto:kim@bedfordcab.org.uk)

## 6. Mutual Assistance

- Brian and Georgia will talk further about the Libraries being involved in Refugees Week
- The Library service have some leaflet stands and other bits of furniture – email [Georgia.Bowers@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Georgia.Bowers@bedford.gov.uk)
- CAB have some office furniture looking for a new home – email [kim@bedfordcab.org.uk](mailto:kim@bedfordcab.org.uk)

## 7. Update on BAF's other services and activities, including training.

- Len provided an update – see the attached report.
- Training – BAF's training needs were discussed. Further trainers are needed from BAF members to keep BAF's training offer sustainable. A funding bid could be considered for future training programmes and possibly incorporating other BAF support services.

- Directory of services – Amanda is looking at options.
- BAF is 25 years old – plans for cake at the next meeting.

### **8. Dates/frequency/format of future meetings**

There was agreement to meet three times a year, with the summer meeting in-person. Other meetings will remain online.

#### **Future meetings:**

- Thursday 30th June 2022 - 10am - venue TBC
- Thursday 3rd November 2022 - 10am - virtual
- Thursday 23rd February 2023 - 10am - virtual




### **9. Any other business**

None

**Date of next meeting** - Thursday 30th June 2022 - 10am - venue TBC

**Giving families a healthy start**  
**NHS National Healthy Start Scheme**

**Laura Waller**  
Senior Public Health Officer  
Shared Public Health team across Bedford Borough, Central  
Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils

**Overview**

- Who are we and what do we do?
- What is Healthy Start?
- Local data
- How Healthy Start is changing
- Contact details
- Next steps – suggestions in the chat
- Questions
- Slides and FAQs will be shared

## Who are we?

- Public Health Team- shared team across BB, CB and MK councils
- Helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from threats to their health



## Weight management services

### [MoreLife](#)

- **Maternity programme**
  - For pregnant women to manage weight in pregnancy
  - New mothers who want support to lose weight post birth (up to 1 year)
- **Family programme**
  - For families who want support to make healthy choices
- **Adults programme**
  - For adults living with obesity
  - Digital/face to face/app/ one to one/group.



## What is Healthy Start?

[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

- Government scheme for those who are at least 10 weeks pregnant, parents, carers and young children in low-income families, to help them buy healthy food and milk and get free Healthy Start vitamins.
  - Fruit, veg and pulses- fresh, tinned, frozen, dried
  - Cows milk and infant formula



## What can a family receive?

Recipients	Amount per week
Pregnant women (from 10th wk)	£4.25
Those with children from 0-1 years old	£8.50
Those with children between 1- 4 years old	£4.25

*Money stops when a child is 4, or if family no longer receive benefits*

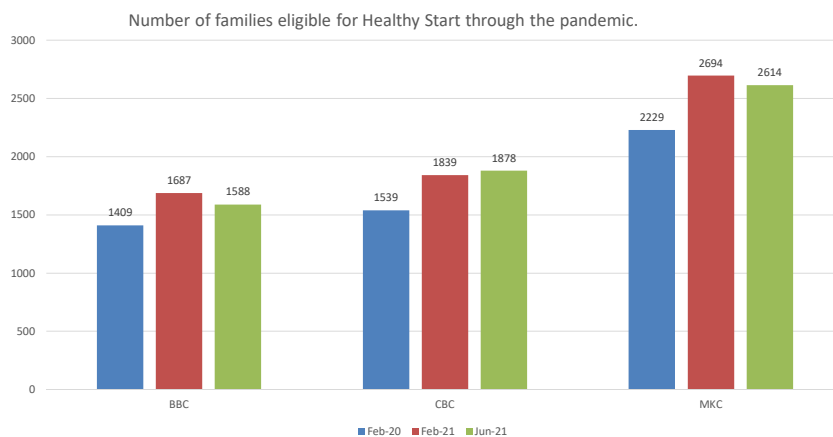


## What does this look like in real life?

Beneficiary	Children	Amount per week	Amount per month
<b>Gemma (28)</b> <i>(on qualifying benefits)</i>	24 weeks pregnant and boy aged 2	£8.50	£34
<b>Hetal (32)</b> <i>(on qualifying benefits)</i>	Boy aged 7 months and girl aged 3	£12.75	£51
<b>Isha (17)</b> <i>(not on benefits)</i>	14 weeks pregnant	£4.25	£17



## Number of local families eligible



## Missed families



Bedford Borough

**636**



Central Bedfordshire

**812**



Milton Keynes

**1083**



## Healthy Start is changing

### Old scheme- HARD

Paper application form, signed by MW or HV and then posted

Paper vouchers received in the post every 4 weeks

Only registered shops accept the vouchers

Retailers have to claim money back from the government

Vitamin vouchers redeemed for vitamins

### New Scheme- EASIER

Online eligibility check which is linked to the DWP

Pre-paid master-card, topped up automatically every 4 weeks

All shops selling food who accept Mastercard

Retailers receive money as with any other debit transaction

HS card to be shown to receive vitamins







## FAQs

- Can I apply online now? – wait for your letter
  - If cant apply online- call/translation service
- Paper vouchers used until March 2022
- To check balance - cash machine/HS helpline (*can't use to withdraw cash*)
- Balance rolls over if not spent (unlike paper vouchers)
- Shopping will need to be split
- Not 'monitored'
- Cant be used for online shopping



# What next?

AIM- to get all eligible families to sign up to HS



1. Follow @NHSHealthyStart on twitter and Facebook
2. Get your organisation to follow and re-share updates
3. Access promotional materials and guidance documents  
<https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/>
4. Spread the word with target populations...
  - Funded two year olds
  - Pupil premium/free school meal children with younger siblings
  - Corner shops in deprived areas
5. Sign up to National Healthy Start Showcases (next slide)

[Laura.waller@Bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.waller@Bedford.gov.uk)



# Health Professional, Local Authority and supporting organisations guidance



- What is NHS Healthy Start?
- Who can apply?
- The application process
- The prepaid card
- Healthy Start Vitamins
- Collecting Healthy Start vitamins
- The process for vitamin distributors
- Promotion and campaigning
- Important contacts



NHS Business Services Authority, a catalyst for better health

## Contact details

### Local support

Laura Waller – Senior Public Health Officer

- [Laura.waller@Bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.waller@Bedford.gov.uk) (BB, CB and MK)
- 01234 276 896

### NHS Healthy Start

- Website- [Get help to buy food and milk \(Healthy Start\)](#)
- Telephone- 0300 330 7010 (to apply over the phone or if you are under 18)
- Email- [Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk) (to support those with no recourse to public funds)

### National NHS HS monthly briefings

- [nhsbsa.healthystartdigital@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.healthystartdigital@nhs.net)



## Update on BAF projects and activities

### Bedfordshire Benefits Network

These network meetings, for benefit advisers, are provided as an extra service by BAF. They are generally very well attended with an average attendance of about 20 per meeting.

Two BBN meetings were planned for 2021/22. The first meeting was held online last September.

The next meeting will be at 10.00am on **16<sup>th</sup> March**. This will be a face-to-face meeting in Bedford and will be the first physical event organised by BAF for 2 years.

### Advice Strategy – Central Bedfordshire

The Advice Strategy work has now ended in Central Bedfordshire, after being a major BAF project for 12 years. A final report on the project work has been produced and will be available on BAF's webpages.

New partnership arrangements between CBC and the advice sector were discussed at the last BAF meeting in November. These proposals were later agreed with CBC, and the plan is to launch a new **Central Bedfordshire Social Welfare Advice Partnership**.

### Advice Bedfordshire CIC

Advice Bedfordshire is BAF's trading company, and is used in BAF's project and training work.

The 2020/21 Company accounts were submitted to Companies House in December 2021 and then to HMRC in January 2022.

The current balance in the Company's account is **£1,235.53**.

## BAF training

### 2021 training

BAF organised a series of new, online Universal Credit courses in 2021:

- 2 programmes (4 sessions in each programme) of full Universal Credit training for advisers
- 2 short courses ("Overview of UC") for support / community workers

BAF received two grants from The Harpur Trust last year to run the above training.

Feedback from all the 2021 training was very positive.

The course content for both courses is now "on-the-shelf" and, with minor amendments, can easily be run again in the future.

Regarding the "Overview of UC" course, the course developers (Elliott and Len) can offer support to anybody from BAF agencies who wants to train up to be able to present this session in the future – either in-house at their own agencies or externally on behalf of BAF.

## Future BAF training

BAF hopes to be able to provide some more training in 2022.

After the successful online training work in 2021, it is recommended that a blended approach to training should be used in future. Some courses (especially short, information-based courses) would be well-suited to online presentation, whereas other training (including skills and discussion type courses) would be better if presented using the more traditional, face-to-face, training format.

BAF's future training needs were discussed at the last Benefits Network meeting and at the recent BAF Steering Group meeting.

Ideas / issues that came up in the discussions included:

- Two people from the Benefits Network may be interested in presenting some courses or information sessions for BAF in the future.
- Ideas for future training (from the Benefits Network) included:
  - Disability benefits – including PIP and carers' benefits
  - Pensioner benefits - including Pension Credit
  - Bereavement benefits
  - Updates on the proposed new social care assessment rules
- BAF's Steering Group felt that future training should include other subjects as well as benefits training. Other subjects could include:
  - Basic immigration rights eg an overview of the main rules and an explanation of the key technical terms
  - Money/debt advice
  - Housing issues
  - Employment rights
- If funding were available, BAF could also look at some wider types of training and support. For example:
  - Train the trainer course
  - Advice skills courses (BAF already has a skills programme "on the shelf")
  - Quality checks for local organisations (BAF already has a quality mark for community advice services, Q-cas, "on the shelf", and some BAF members have successfully gone through the Q-cas process in the past)

We can discuss the above at the BAF meeting today.

A recommendation from the discussions could be that BAF looks into trying to obtain some funding for a package of services to support BAF members (and to attract new members) covering: a wide-ranging training and support programme; facilitation of the Benefits Network; creation of a new Advice Directory; updating of the Q-cas quality mark; improved BAF communications eg use of social media, new website etc.

Obtaining some funding for this work would all be very appropriate in 2022, given that this is BAF's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.