

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health
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Clare Haughey
Convener
Health and Social Care Committee

3rd December 2025

Dear Convener

COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY (CMA) INFANT FORMULA MARKET STUDY – FOUR NATION RESPONSE

I am writing to let you know that the four nation Government [response](#) to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [market study](#) into the UK infant formula and follow-on formula market has been published. The CMA's report sets out recommendations for action to deliver better outcomes for parents who depend on infant formula to feed their babies. The response is a joint response from the Scottish, UK and Welsh governments, Food Standards Scotland, the Department of Health and Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.

This response complements the range of measures already taking place in Scotland to support new parents and carers on their infant feeding journeys, including our five year [plan](#) for infant feeding and breastfeeding, country wide accreditation of the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative and our continued commitment to protect all parents from inappropriate marketing of infant formula. Scotland will play an important and leading role in addressing Infant Food Insecurity given our Government's core mission to eradicate child poverty.

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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Getting the right nutrition at the start is crucial for a baby's healthy growth and development. While we remain fully committed to supporting breastfeeding, which brings significant benefits for mothers and babies, we recognise that some families cannot, or choose not to, breastfeed. For families that do not exclusively breastfeed, infant formula is an essential item. The CMA make a strong case that action is needed to give parents and carers the confidence to choose lower priced products and encourage manufacturers and retailers to compete more on price.

There are already regulations that require all infant formula and follow-on formula manufacturers to comply with robust nutritional and compositional standards, alongside rules on how formula milk products are labelled, presented and advertised to protect parents and carers from inappropriate claims or promotions. This means all infant formula sold on the UK market is safe, when used appropriately, and meets the nutritional needs of babies, regardless of the price or brand.

In this joint UK response to the CMA's recommendations, the four nations set out a strong package of non-legislative measures. This package seeks to support parents and carers to make better-informed decisions if they need, or choose, to use infant formula and place downward pressure on the price. It focuses on ensuring comprehensive and accessible information in healthcare and retail settings, and places emphasis on encouraging retailers to voluntarily implement measures to better enable product comparison and stimulate competition between brands. In Scotland we will consider existing enforcement processes and update and clarify guidance to strengthen adherence, where needed.

The UK Government has also committed to reviewing existing infant formula legislation to ensure retailers can accept food bank vouchers, gift cards and loyalty points as part or full payment for infant formula – an important tool particularly for low-income households on whom high prices impact the most. The Scottish Government and Food Standards Scotland will work closely with the UK Department of Health and Social Care and the other Devolved

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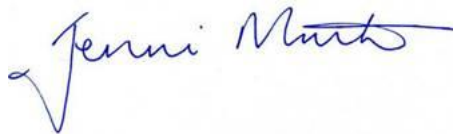
Governments on guidance clarifying what is permissible under the existing legislation in Scotland and across the UK. This is expected to published shortly.

Whilst there are important measures to welcome, I have also reiterated to the UK Government the need to do more to address challenges which necessitate a strong four nation response. This is particularly relevant for how and where retailers are located geographically, and where baby food and infant formula prices are further inflated in different parts of the UK. This has a particularly acute impact on rural and island communities in Scotland who already face higher prices for groceries, and I am considering how we might take rapid action to both assess and address mitigating this for families.

The Scottish Government will continue working with the UK Government and Devolved Governments, and we will keep this package of measures under review to consider whether further action is required in the future to give every baby the best start in life.

I hope the Committee will find this update helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Jenni Minto MSP

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