

*Worthing Food Foundation - Guidance on infant formula and baby food*

- 1) Providing a dignified service for parents/guardians is critical. Parents of babies can face a double stigma when seeking formula food. Firstly, around the 'breast is best' discourse and secondly in terms of not being able to feed their child. They may also fear the legal consequences of struggling to provide food for a minor. To ensure that babies are fed at a time of financial crisis, parents and guardians need dignified, open, warm and respectful support at times of potentially extreme vulnerability. This requires us to liaise with parents/guardians in a supportive, non-judgemental way.
- 2) We will not provide nutritional advice in relation to formula or baby food unless requested to do so by our clients. This will mean the situation is no different to if the parent/guardian went to purchase the formula or baby food directly from a supermarket.
- 3) All infant formula for food bank clients should only be purchased from reputable suppliers using financial donations. This should be high street, standard non-prescription formula. Purchasing formula and baby food directly from reputable stores will ensure that supply is consistent and food banks can guarantee the safety of the formula or baby food. Where possible, any purchase should be made in consultation with the parent and reflect their specific needs. If possible, consideration should be made of making a direct payment to a client to enable them to purchase the formula or baby food independently of the food bank. We should not accept any donations of infant formula. This message should be regularly and sensitively communicated on public facing social media posts to minimise such donations. Any donations that do arrive after this should be safely disposed of.
- 4) The Food Bank's Infant Food Lead ask, once a request is made, whether babies have feeding allergies. The Infant Food Lead checks on the manufacturers' website every time the parent with an allergic child requests food for a baby. Each packing team has an infant formula packing lead provided with this information. After packing, the infant formula packing lead logs the exact packing details on a password-protected central record.
- 5) Parents/guardians requesting help re infant feeding should always be referred to a health visitor if possible. They should also be signposted to The Healthy Start Scheme.
- 6) Our Infant Food Lead takes charge of fundraising to enable us to support a steady and safe supply of formula and baby food. We will ensure ringfenced or reserve finances sufficient for six weeks of supply.
- 7) Our Infant Food Lead checks in every 4 weeks with any parents/guardians using the food bank for a prolonged period about specific needs around formula and baby food. The Lead also checks in every 2 weeks for any new families to help tailor the provision of baby milk and allow for any additional signposting that may be needed.