

[Response to the Biometrics Commissioner's annual report 2018](#)

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[Affordable Housing supply boost as Homes England receives longer term funding for strategic partners](#)

Homes England's 23 Strategic Partners will be able to bid for grant funding which, if successful, will extend their existing deals from March 2024 to March 2029 – demonstrating how long-term funding certainty enables the delivery of more homes.

The bidding process requires existing strategic partners to demonstrate how they can achieve ambitious plans to build affordable housing and contribute to the wider new build supply this country needs.

Addressing Homes England's strategic priorities, including the use of brownfield sites for development, engagement with local SME contractors, working with smaller housing associations and the use of Modern Methods of Construction will be the key to a successful bid.

Chairman of Homes England Sir Edward Lister said:

"The £1bn in additional grant funding will give our strategic partners more flexibility and longer term funding certainty so that they can build the affordable homes their communities need over the next 10 years. I welcome today's news and urge our housing association partners across England to get involved."

Since July 2018, Homes England has agreed 23 Strategic Partnership deals with

28 housing associations, giving them the investment, flexibility and resources they need to deliver a range of affordable housing including social rent, supported living and shared ownership homes.

The funding is part of a £2 billion affordable housing package announced by the Prime Minister in September 2018, which is being awarded equally to Homes England and the Greater London Authority.

ENDS

For more information please contact Patsy Cusworth, PR and Media Manager, on 020 7393 2261 Email: patsy.cusworth@homesengland.gov.uk

[Chief Inspector publishes 2018-19 Annual Report](#)

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[Baby food industry needs better products and clearer labelling](#)

The main findings of the report [Foods and drinks aimed at infants and young children: evidence and opportunities for action](#) show clear inconsistencies between national infant feeding advice and how some commercial baby food and drink products are presented:

- some foods marketed as healthy snacks are amongst those with the highest sugar content
- sweet snacking is being encouraged
- misleading product labelling and marketing encourages the introduction

- of solid food before official advice recommends
- some product names don't reflect the balance of ingredients
- products do not always provide clear feeding instructions

Snacking foods account for more than one third (34.5%) of the total market, and the highest sugar content is found in processed dried fruit snacks which shouldn't be marketed as suitable for children to eat between meals. Growth in the finger food/snacking market, by 11% in 2017 to 2018, indicates that these foods are increasingly considered an expected and appropriate part of an infant's diet. However, some sweet snacks, can contain as much sugar as confectionery. The highest sugar levels are seen in fruit and vegetable-based (47.5g), and sweet finger foods (17.0g) per 100g.

Of the 1,120 baby food and drink products reviewed for the report, more than 1 in 4 (28.1%) are targeted at 4 month olds despite advice from the [Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition \(SACN\)](#) that introducing solid foods should not happen until around 6 months of age.

To push change in the products, the review recommends that the food industry and government:

- improves the nutrient content of products
- ensures clear, consistent and honest labelling and marketing of products
- ensures that products high in sugars are labelled as not being suitable for eating between meals
- restricts the use of implied health claims on baby food products

It also recommends:

- putting in place a recurring survey of early years feeding practices to further the evidence base
- prioritising consumer awareness campaigns around early years feeding

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE, said:

This shows the food industry could do more to support parents in making the best food choices for their children. Snacking and sweet foods are being promoted while parents are being encouraged to introduce solids earlier than recommended.

Early years feeding is crucial in shaping future taste preferences and healthy habits. With children of all ages consuming too much sugar action is needed to address these practices. The baby and toddler food industry must be careful not to break the trust of parents.

1. PHE's review '[Food and drinks aimed at infants and young children: evidence and opportunities for action](#)' includes:

- UK and international recommendations and advice for feeding infants

- and young children aged 6 to 36 months
 - dietary requirements, recommendations and intakes for sugar, salt and energy
 - use, role in the diet, and impact of consumption on health outcomes, of commercial baby foods and drinks
 - consumer views on commercial baby foods and drinks
 - characteristics of the UK baby food and drink market, including types of products, recommended age of use, packaging and labelling, and nutrient composition
 - stakeholder views on the scope for action to improve commercial baby foods and drinks
2. The available evidence demonstrates there is a need for action, showing that infants and young children are eating too much sugar and salt, and energy intakes are exceeding requirements. Around 1 in 5 children aged 2 to 4 years are overweight or obese, and 12% of 3 year olds have visible tooth decay.
 3. Support is available to parents and carers looking for trusted advice through the [Start4Life](#) website and the '[weaning hub](#)', with PHE set to launch a new campaign in 2020 helping people throughout pregnancy, birth and parenthood.
 4. Official guidance recommends that parents introduce single fruit and vegetables as first foods at around 6 months to help babies accept a wide range of different tastes. Currently, sweeter products consisting of mixed fruit, mixed vegetables or mixed fruit and vegetables, make up 85% of fruit and vegetable first foods.
 5. [Evidence](#) shows that 75% of children (aged 4 to 18 months) were exceeding UK energy requirements, and this continued following the introduction of solid foods.
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[Civil news: avoid delays to single counsel family notifications](#)

We need your help to ensure all the necessary information is being submitted when notifying us that a single counsel family case is high cost.

Why are you telling us this now?

A lot of information is being missed out when notifications are submitted in the Client and Cost Management System (CCMS).

What does this mean?

The Very High Cost Case team is having to make enquiries to fill in the missing information. This inevitably causes delays.

What sort of information is missing?

When making your notification in CCMS that a case is high cost you should check that you have confirmed:

1. case is still ongoing
2. actual or projected costs calculated at prescribed rates will exceed £25k
3. current costs
4. whether the case falls under the Care Case Fee Scheme (CCFS) or relates to other proceedings
5. if the case falls outside CCFS, whether application is being made for it to be considered under the scheme
6. in a single counsel case, whether application is being made for the case to be treated on an exceptional basis

You should note that only cases subject to CCFS can access the immediate cost increase to £32,500 upon presentation of the signed contract documentation.

Support is available

Training and detailed guidance is available on GOV.UK if you need to check you are following the notification process correctly.

Further information

[Family high cost cases](#) – to find out more about the notification process and view training modules