

Renfrewshire Pathway for Emergency Infant Feeding



This pathway is based on guidance published by UNICEF¹ and the Scottish Government². Pathways from NHS Grampian, Glasgow and Inverclyde have also been utilised, further developed and localised to Renfrewshire HSCP.

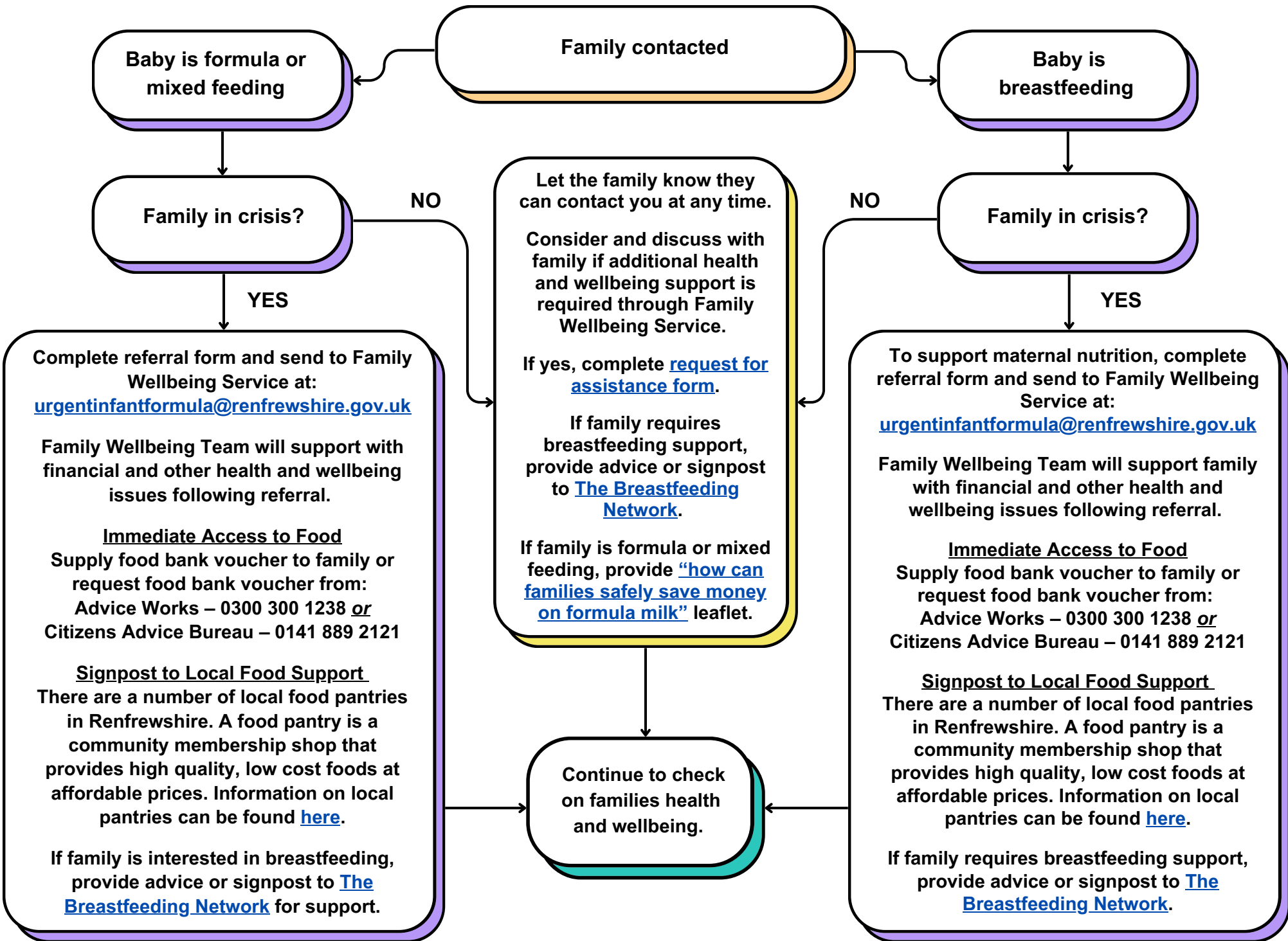
Our focus on children's rights highlights during periods of crisis, babies are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. In challenging economic times there is a need to ensure uninterrupted access to safe and adequate nutrition is available. This pathway is for use for Renfrewshire HSCP and Council staff, community groups and the voluntary sector.

- There is a wide range of evidence regarding the health benefits of breastfeeding including protection from infections and viruses³. Breastfeeding can protect against food insecurity, should there be an interruption to the infant formula milk supply chain or financial hardship. Services should take all steps possible to promote, protect and support continued breastfeeding. This includes ongoing provision of support from Midwifery, Health Visiting and Family Nurse Teams and signposting to local and national support services.
- To protect breastfeeding and to safeguard infant health, all families that request infant formula through emergency food aid need to have a meaningful conversation on infant feeding with an appropriate health professional as above. This will include all aspects of care including supporting initiation and continuation of breastfeeding, supporting mixed feeding or re-lactation or safe and responsive bottle-feeding.
- If formula feeding, the baby will require ongoing reliable access to powdered infant formula for the first year of life and facilities for safe preparation e.g. washing and sterilisation of bottles and equipment. Where families do not have the facilities for safe powdered formula milk preparation, they may need to be provided with ready to feed formula milk (sterilisation equipment for bottles and teats still required). All families should be signposted to information and support on formula feeding: [Formula Feeding: How to Feed your Baby Safely / Formula Feeding \(Parent Club\)](#)

Current Infant Feeding Recommendations: Breastmilk or First Stage (whey-based) formula milk is all the nourishment an infant requires in the first 6 months of life. Solid foods should start to be introduced around 6 months of age⁴. Breastfeeding should continue along with the introduction of solid foods for up to 2 years of age or beyond. Formula fed babies should continue on first stage formula milk until 12 months of age, when they should be introduced to pasteurised full fat cow's milk. There is no need to introduce "hungry baby" or "follow-on formula" milks.

Cost of Formula Milks: All infant formula milks must meet UK minimal compositional requirements; therefore, all brands are nutritionally adequate and have a similar composition. There is no advantage to purchasing a more expensive brand. For example, the cost of feeding a 2-3 month old baby powdered infant formula over 30 days can vary in cost from £33.00 to £91.20. The least expensive brand of formula milk costing £8 (at the time of writing) was found at a budget supermarket. Ready to feed formula can cost between around £23 and £38 per week. Choosing a lower cost formula can have a positive impact on household income in the long-term. More information: [Costs | Infant Formula](#)

Powdered Infant Milks are not Sterile: To protect infant health, all infant feeding equipment should be thoroughly washed and sterilised and feeds made up with water at a temperature of 70°C or above, following national guidance: [Formula Feeding: How to Feed your Baby Safely](#)



Family contacted

Baby is formula or mixed feeding

Baby is breastfeeding

Family in crisis?

Family in crisis?

NO

NO

YES

YES

Complete referral form and send to Family Wellbeing Service at:
urgentinfantformula@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Family Wellbeing Team will support with financial and other health and wellbeing issues following referral.

Immediate Access to Food

Supply food bank voucher to family or request food bank voucher from:
Advice Works – 0300 300 1238 *or*
Citizens Advice Bureau – 0141 889 2121

Signpost to Local Food Support

There are a number of local food pantries in Renfrewshire. A food pantry is a community membership shop that provides high quality, low cost foods at affordable prices. Information on local pantries can be found [here](#).

If family is interested in breastfeeding, provide advice or signpost to [The Breastfeeding Network](#) for support.

Let the family know they can contact you at any time.

Consider and discuss with family if additional health and wellbeing support is required through Family Wellbeing Service.

If yes, complete [request for assistance form](#).

If family requires breastfeeding support, provide advice or signpost to [The Breastfeeding Network](#).

If family is formula or mixed feeding, provide ["how can families safely save money on formula milk"](#) leaflet.

Continue to check on families health and wellbeing.

To support maternal nutrition, complete referral form and send to Family Wellbeing Service at:
urgentinfantformula@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Family Wellbeing Team will support family with financial and other health and wellbeing issues following referral.

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If family requires breastfeeding support, provide advice or signpost to [The Breastfeeding Network](#).

REFERENCES:

1. UNICEF (2022) [A Guide For Local Authorities And Health Boards Supporting Families With Infants Under 12 Months Experiencing Food Insecurity](#) (last accessed August 2024).
2. Scottish Government (2024) [Guide to Responding to and Preventing Infant Food Insecurity in Scotland](#) (last accessed August 2024).
3. Victora CG, Bahl R, Barros AJD et al. for The Lancet Breastfeeding Series Group Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect. Lancet. 2016; 387: 475-490.
4. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. [Starting Solids](#) (last accessed August 2024).