

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO
THE HEALTHY START SCHEME AND WELFARE FOOD (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS 2007**

2007 No. 505

1. Introduction

1.1 This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Health and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Description

2.1 The Healthy Start Scheme and Welfare Food (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (“the Regulations”) amend the Healthy Start Scheme and Welfare Food Amendment Regulations 2005, S.I. 2005/3262 (“the 2005 Regulations”). They uprate the maximum income level for determining whether a person who also satisfies other conditions is eligible for benefit under the Healthy Start scheme introduced by the 2005 Regulations.

2.2 The Regulations are subject to a negative procedure.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None.

4. Legislative Background

4.1 The Regulations effect an annual uprating of the 2005 Regulations, amending the income threshold included in the regulations from £14,155 to £14,495,

4.2 The increase is in line with tax credit up-rating levels that will apply from 6 April 2007.

5. Extent

5.1 This instrument applies to Great Britain.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

- 7.1 The Welfare Food scheme was established in 1940 as a wartime measure but was subsequently targeted at children in low-income families. It latterly provided free milk, infant formula milk and vitamins to approximately 720,000 claimants (pregnant women and children under 5 years old) in families on qualifying benefits.
- 7.2 Section 13 of the Social Security Act 1988 now provides powers by regulations to make a scheme or schemes to provide benefits for improving the nutrition of pregnant women, mothers and children. The new Healthy Start scheme was introduced across Great Britain from 27 November 2006 and provides fresh fruit and vegetables as well as liquid milk, infant formula milk and vitamins to eligible beneficiaries.
- 7.3 The increase in the income limits will apply to the Healthy Start scheme from 6 April 2007.
- 7.4 Data for the purposes of establishing entitlement to Healthy Start (HS) benefit is provided to the Department of Health by HMRC on a four weekly basis. This means that entitlement to HS benefit is reviewed every 4 weeks. Where a family's annual income, calculated in accordance with tax credit legislation, exceeds the set income level, entitlement to HS benefit is automatically removed.
- 7.5 If the income limit for HS benefit was not increased in line with general tax credit increases some low-income families currently receiving HS benefit would no longer qualify.

8. Impact

- 8.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment is not required as the impact of these Regulations on the private or voluntary sector is expected to be negligible.

9. Contact

- 9.1 Angela Walker at the Department of Health, Room 703, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG. Tel: 020 7972 1377 or e-mail: Angela.Walker@dh.gsi.gov.uk can answer any query regarding the instrument.