



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Ashley Dalton MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Public Health and Prevention*

*39 Victoria Street
London
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Paulette Hamilton
Acting Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
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2 September 2025

Dear Paulette,

Commercial baby food guidelines

The voluntary industry guidelines for commercial baby food and drink were published on Friday 22nd August. These guidelines set out targets for businesses to reduce levels of sugar and salt in products available in supermarkets that are aimed at babies and young children aged up to 36 months. The guidelines also set out actions businesses should take to improve the labelling and marketing of these products.

The intention of these guidelines is to ensure that, once reformulated, commercial baby foods and drinks will more closely align with government advice on introducing solid foods, and will contribute to improving babies' dietary intakes and protect dental health. Changes made by businesses to product packaging to bring them in line with the labelling guidelines will also help support parents and carers to make more informed choices at the point of purchase.

Products included are those defined in the [Processed Cereal-based Foods and Baby Foods for Infants and Young Children Regulations 2003](#) as 'processed cereal-based foods' and 'baby foods'. The guidelines also include those products which fall outside of these definitions but are marketed at, or labelled as suitable for, babies and young children aged up to 36 months.

The guidelines aim to address the issues highlighted in a [2019 government evidence review](#), which demonstrated that babies and young children are eating too much sugar and salt, and energy intakes are exceeding requirements. The 2019 review also highlighted clear inconsistencies between government feeding advice and some commercial baby foods and drinks in terms of the types of products available, their ingredients and nutrient composition and the labelling and marketing of products.

There have been two phases of work to develop these guidelines, first in 2019 to 2020, then in 2023 to 2024, both of which included a substantial programme of stakeholder engagement. Other sources of information considered when setting the guidelines included

data on the baby food market and individual products, and the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) reports [‘Feeding in the first year of life’](#) and [‘Feeding young children aged 1 to 5 years’](#). The [World Health Organisation’s Nutrient and Promotional Profile Model](#) (NPPM) recommendations, alongside [Food Standards Authority of Ireland guidance](#). Current government feeding advice and relevant existing legislation, were also considered.

Industry’s progress toward implementing the sugar and salt guidelines will be monitored by the government. Businesses have 18 months from publication of these guidelines to deliver the required changes i.e. by February 2027. The metrics to be used to make this assessment will now be considered.

Progress by businesses toward meeting the labelling guidelines, and compliance with legislation, will also be monitored by government. If businesses fail to implement these guidelines the government will consider additional or alternative measures.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ashley Dalton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ASHLEY DALTON MP