



Action on Sugar
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Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

Call for the *Commercial Baby Food and Drink Guidelines* to be released

Dear Secretary of State,

We, alongside three baby food companies, are calling for the government to release the Commercial Baby Food and Drink Guidelines. Public Health England (PHE) ran a consultation process on a draft version of these guidelines in November 2020, with a goal for the final guidelines to be achieved by 2023. PHE detailed the evidence in support for these guidelines in their 2019 report 'Foods and Drinks Aimed at Infants and Young Children: Evidence and Opportunities for Action'. The report stated that an unhealthy diet during infancy has a life-long impact on diet and health, and the commercial baby food and drink market can do more to encourage healthier eating habits.

Children aged 1.5-3 years are already consuming too much free sugars - 9.7% compared to the recommended maximum of 5% for those aged 2 years and older. Before the age of 2, infants are already being exposed to free sugars, reinforcing their preference for sweet foods, with the main contributor in children aged 4-9 months old coming from commercial infant foods, in particular fruit-based and cereal-based food.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health recently called for the implementation of these guidelines, and now baby food companies are calling for their release too.

Many baby companies have already been reducing sugar levels over the years in their products. However, to continue this effort and to push sugar reduction and responsible labelling/marketing further, these guidelines must be released immediately. They will create a level playing field among manufacturers meaning the responsible companies wanting to make changes, and who have already made changes, are not put at a disadvantage for doing the right thing.

Parents and children need support to achieve better health, and the baby food industry want and need to be a part of this. We request the release of the *Commercial Baby Food and Drink Guidelines* to unite baby food companies in achieving positive change across the board.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Graham McGregor, Chairman, Action on Sugar

Paul Jaggard, Managing Director, Babease Foods Limited

Dean Brown, CEO, Little Dish

Richard Keir, UK General Manager, Little Freddie