

Maternal and child nutrition

This quick reference guide summarises the recommendations made in 'Improving the nutrition of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children in low-income households'. In particular, the guidance aims to address disparities in the nutrition of low-income and other disadvantaged groups compared with the general population.

It is for NHS and other professionals who have a direct or indirect role in – and responsibility for – the nutrition of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and pre-school children. This includes midwives, health visitors, dietitians and pharmacists. It also includes those working in local authorities and the community, voluntary and private sectors. In addition, it will be of interest to members of the public.

The recommendations are relevant for all women who are pregnant (or planning to become pregnant), mothers of children aged under 5 and others who care for children aged under 5. They are particularly relevant for pregnant women, mothers and children from low-income and other disadvantaged backgrounds.

Women from disadvantaged groups have a poorer diet and are less likely to take folic acid or other supplements than those who are better off. They are more likely to be overweight or show low weight gain during pregnancy and their babies are more likely to have a low birth weight. Mothers from these groups are also less likely to breastfeed and more likely to introduce solid foods earlier than recommended. As a result of many of these factors, their children are more likely to be underweight as infants while also being more prone to obesity later in childhood.

The guidance addresses these issues and complements and supports, but does not replace, NICE clinical guidelines on: antenatal care, diabetes in pregnancy, intrapartum and postnatal care (for details see related NICE guidance, p20).

NICE public health guidance 11

This guidance was developed using the NICE public health programme process.

NICE public health guidance makes recommendations on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health. This guidance represents the views of the Institute and was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available.

The guidance does not cover:

- national maternal and child nutrition policies that are the responsibility of the Department of Health (DH) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA), advised by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition; these include policies on population-based dietary recommendations, food safety, the nutritional content of infant formula and the fortification of foods
- population-based screening programmes
- complementary therapy approaches.

The guidance is not a comprehensive statement on current maternal and child nutrition policy, nor does it give advice on what constitutes a healthy diet. For current dietary advice visit: www.eatwell.gov.uk

'Improving the nutrition of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children in low-income households' includes the full list of recommendations (visit: www.nice.org.uk).

These recommendations complement standard DH and FSA policy and advice on diet and nutrition

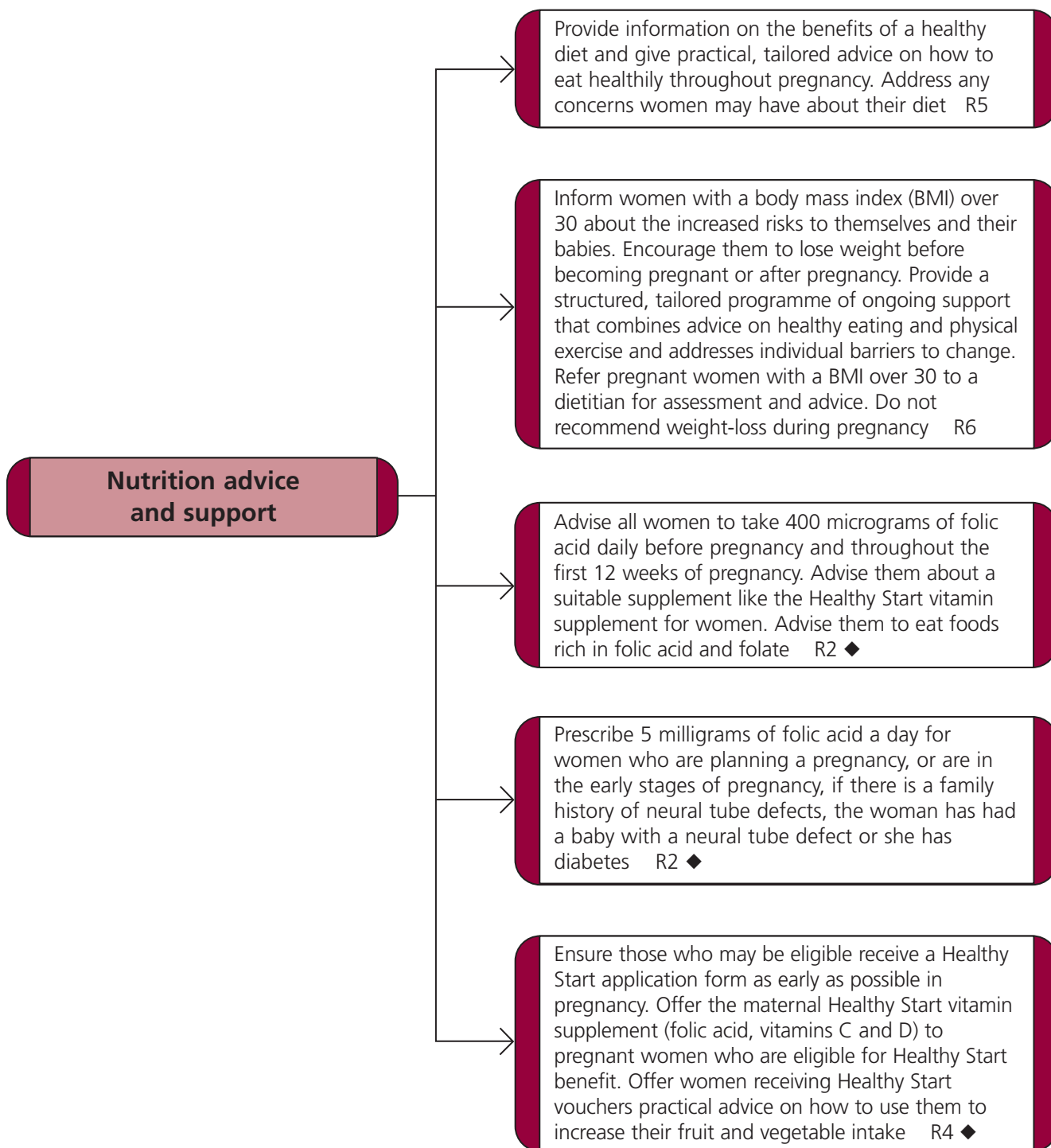
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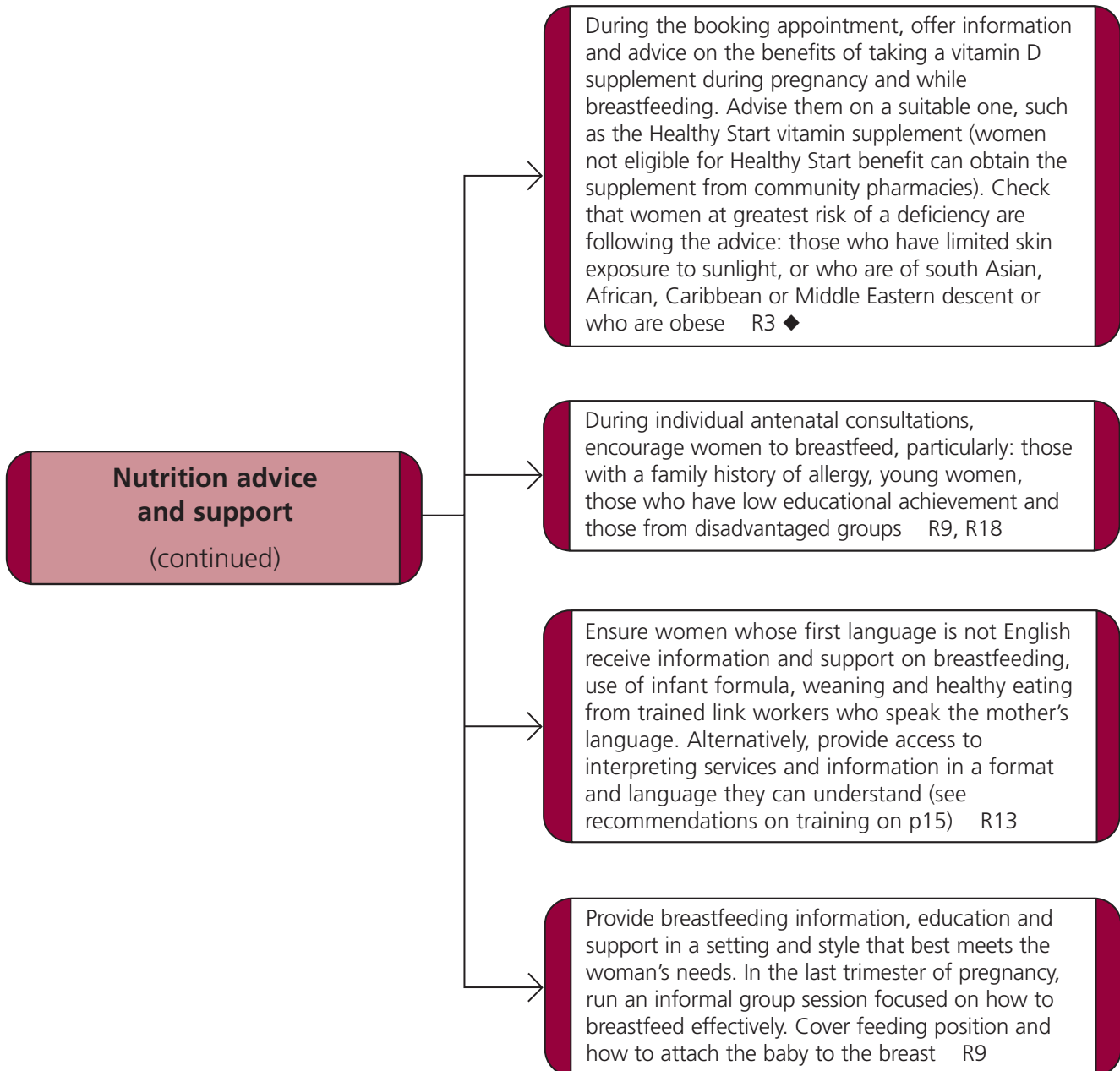
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The 'R' number indicates how the recommendation is numbered in the main guidance document. Where a recommendation is a key priority it is indicated by the priority symbol ◆

Recommendations for health professionals working with women and young children

Women who are pregnant (or who may become pregnant)





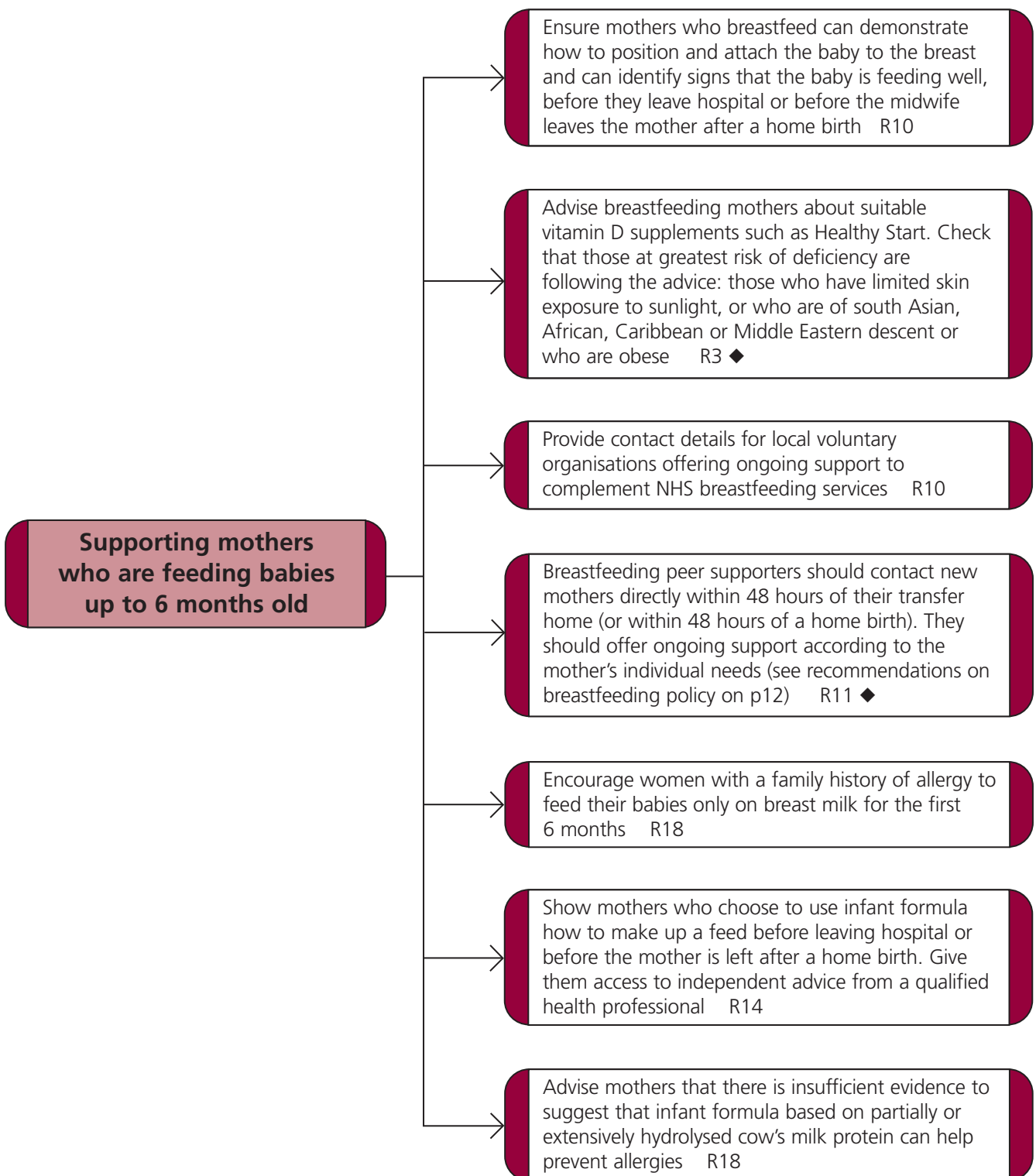
Women who are pregnant (or who may become pregnant) (continued)

Who should take action?

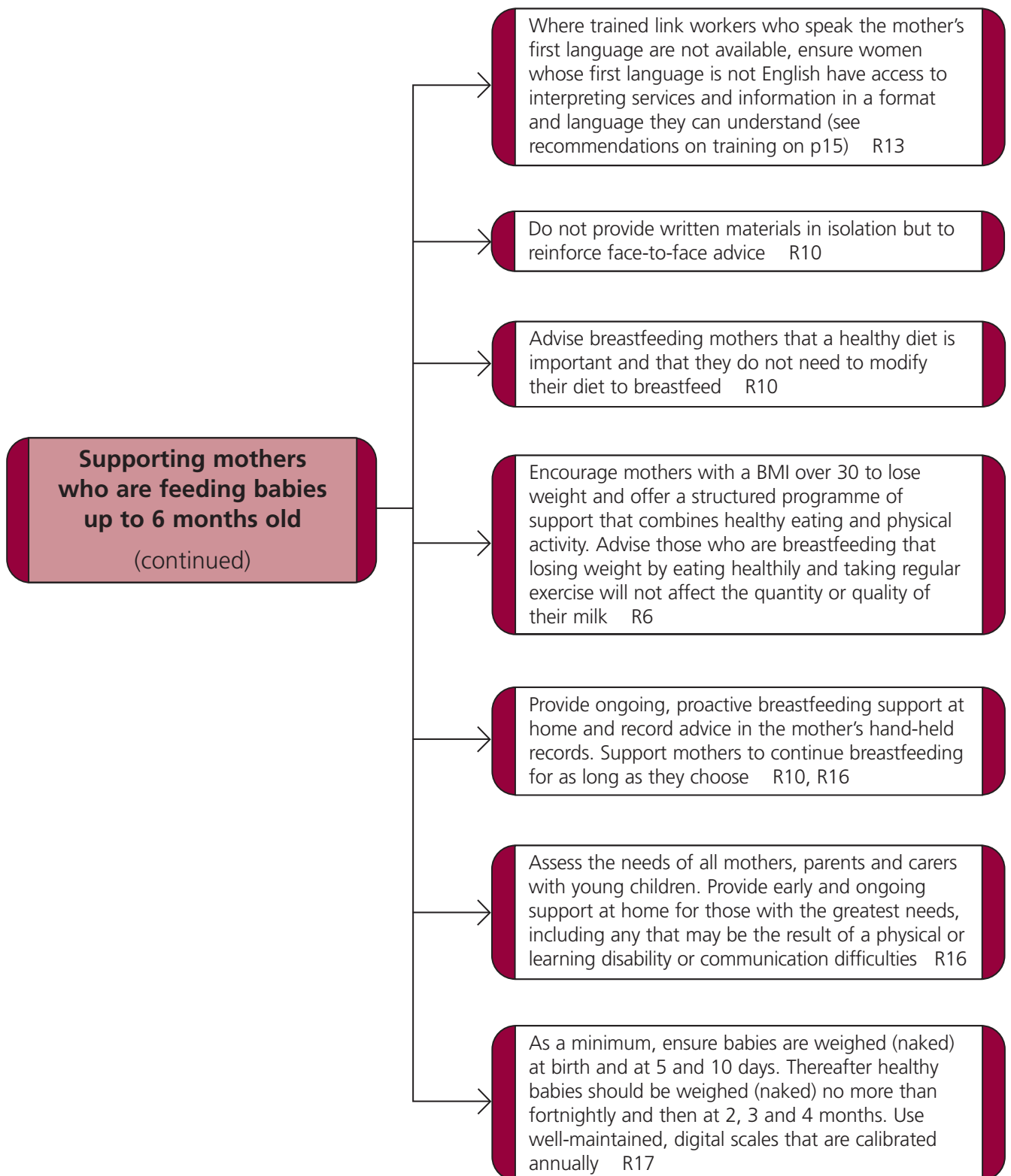
These recommendations are for health professionals, including (where relevant):

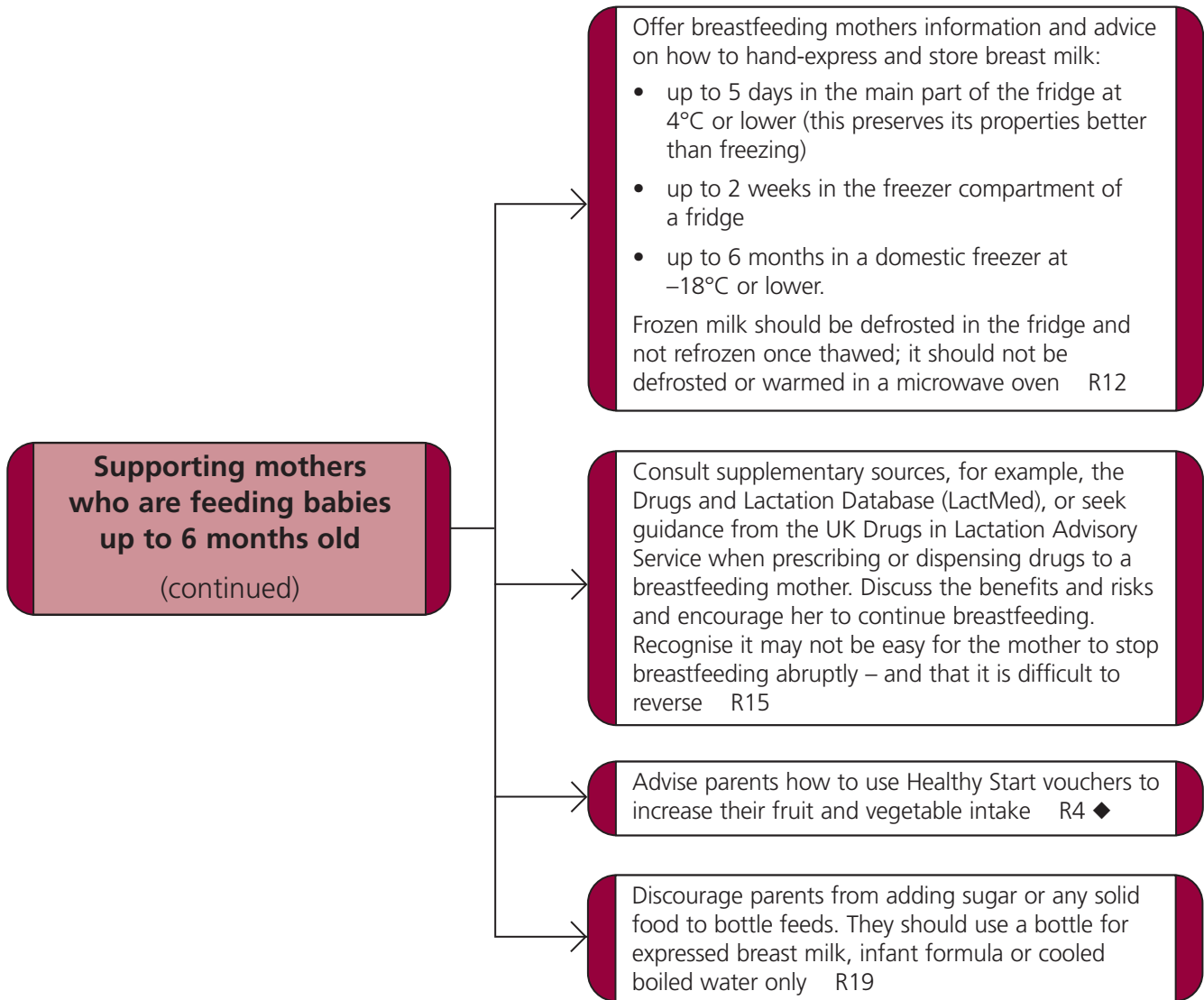
- midwives, obstetricians, GPs, health visitors, dietitians, public health nutritionists, pharmacists and paediatricians
- those who work with women who could become pregnant, particularly those working in gynaecology, sexual health, contraceptive and family planning services, fertility clinics, GP surgeries and community health centres, on weight management programmes (commercial or voluntary) and for school health services
- commissioners and managers in PCT and NHS trusts responsible for maternity, children's and primary care services.

Mothers and their babies



Mothers and their babies (continued)



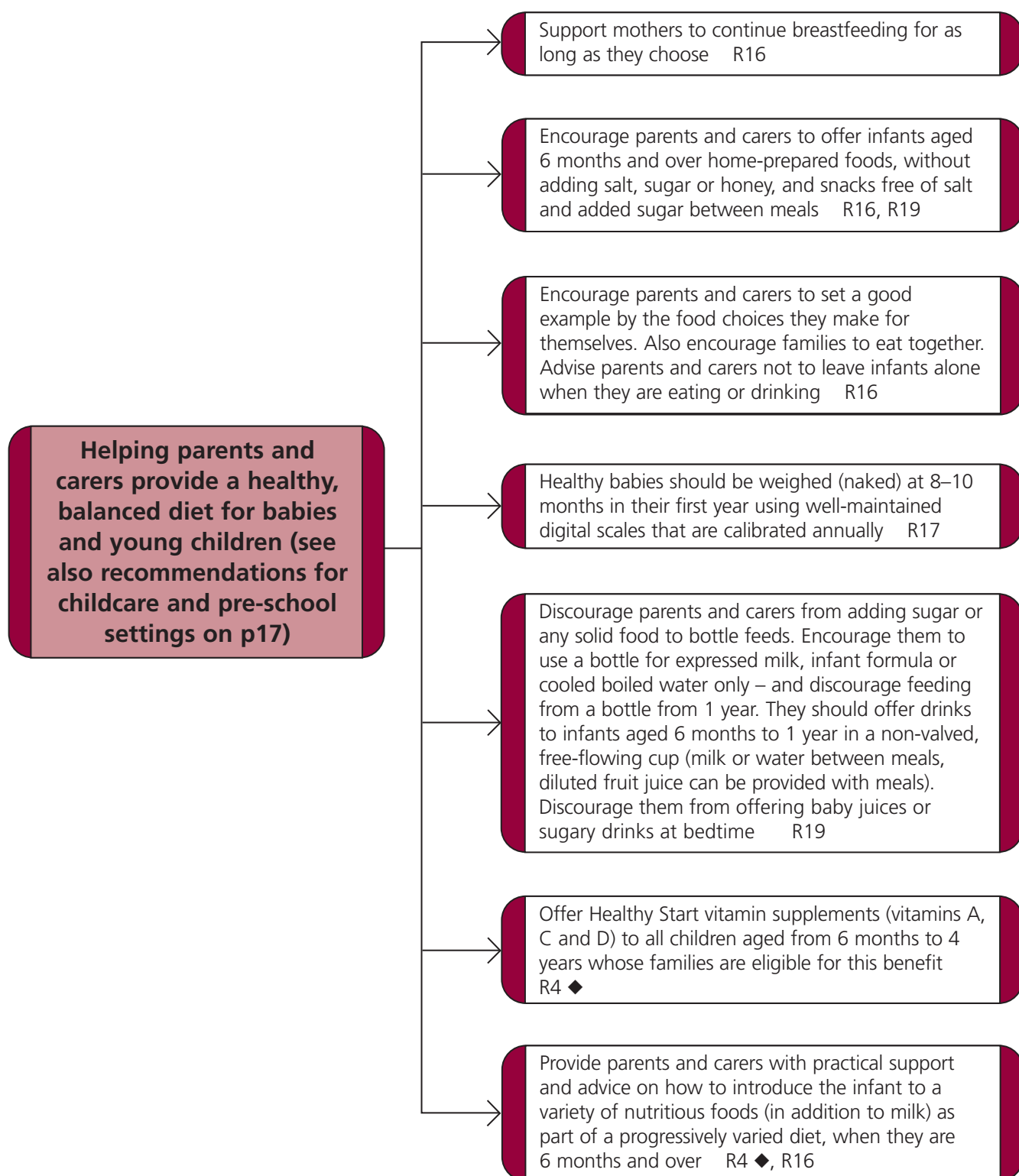


Who should take action?

These recommendations are for health professionals, including (where relevant):

- midwives, obstetricians, gynaecologists, GPs, health visitors, midwifery and health visitor support workers, dietitians, dentists, dental hygienists, public health nutritionists, pharmacists, paediatricians, paediatric nurses, nurses working in special-care baby and neonatal units, nursery nurses, and those working in contraceptive services, weight management programmes (commercial or voluntary), GP surgeries, community health centres and drug and alcohol services
- commissioners and managers responsible for maternity, children’s and primary care services
- the child health promotion programme (CHPP) team and children’s centre teams.

Families and carers of babies over 6 months and pre-school children



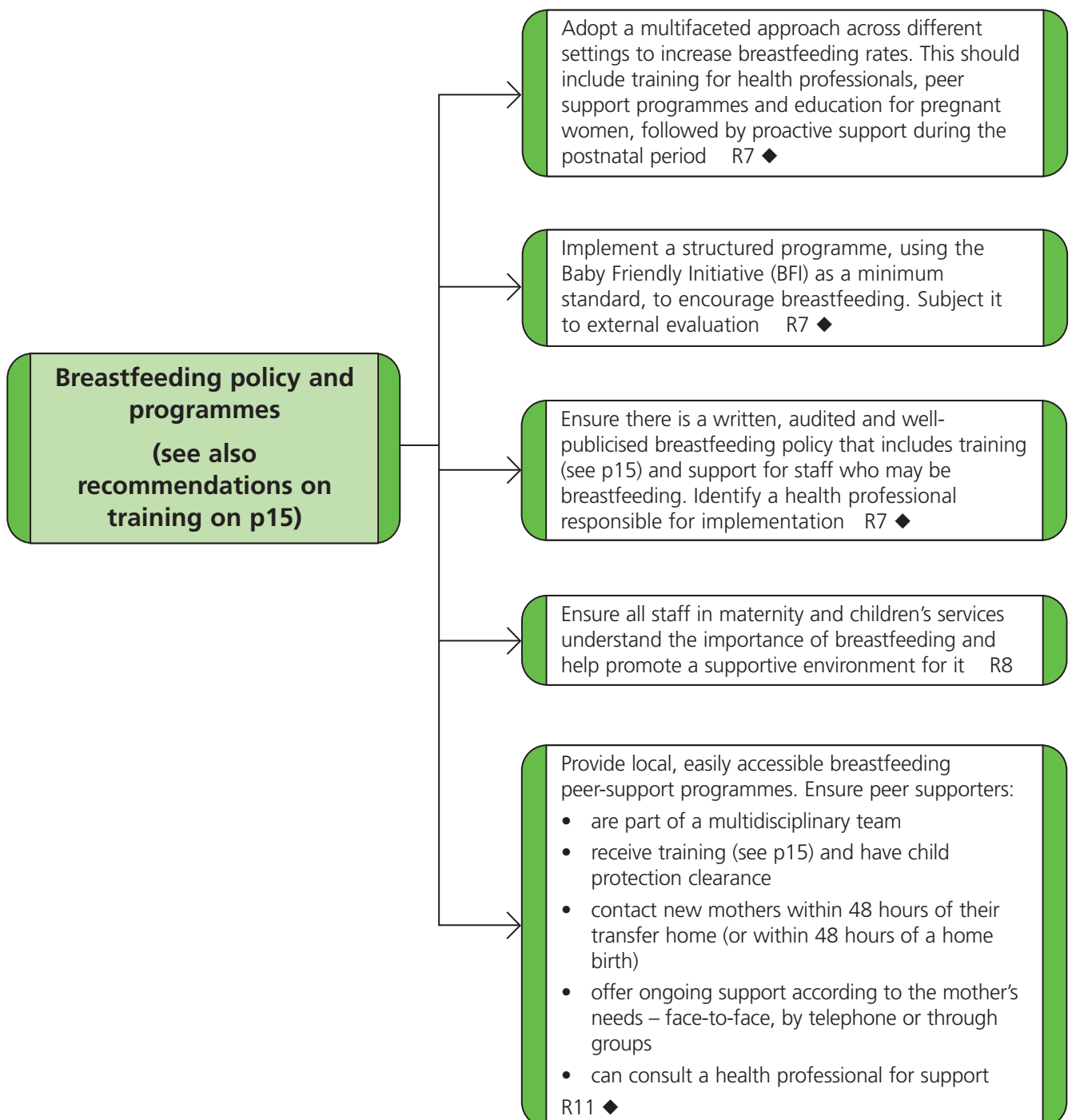
Who should take action?

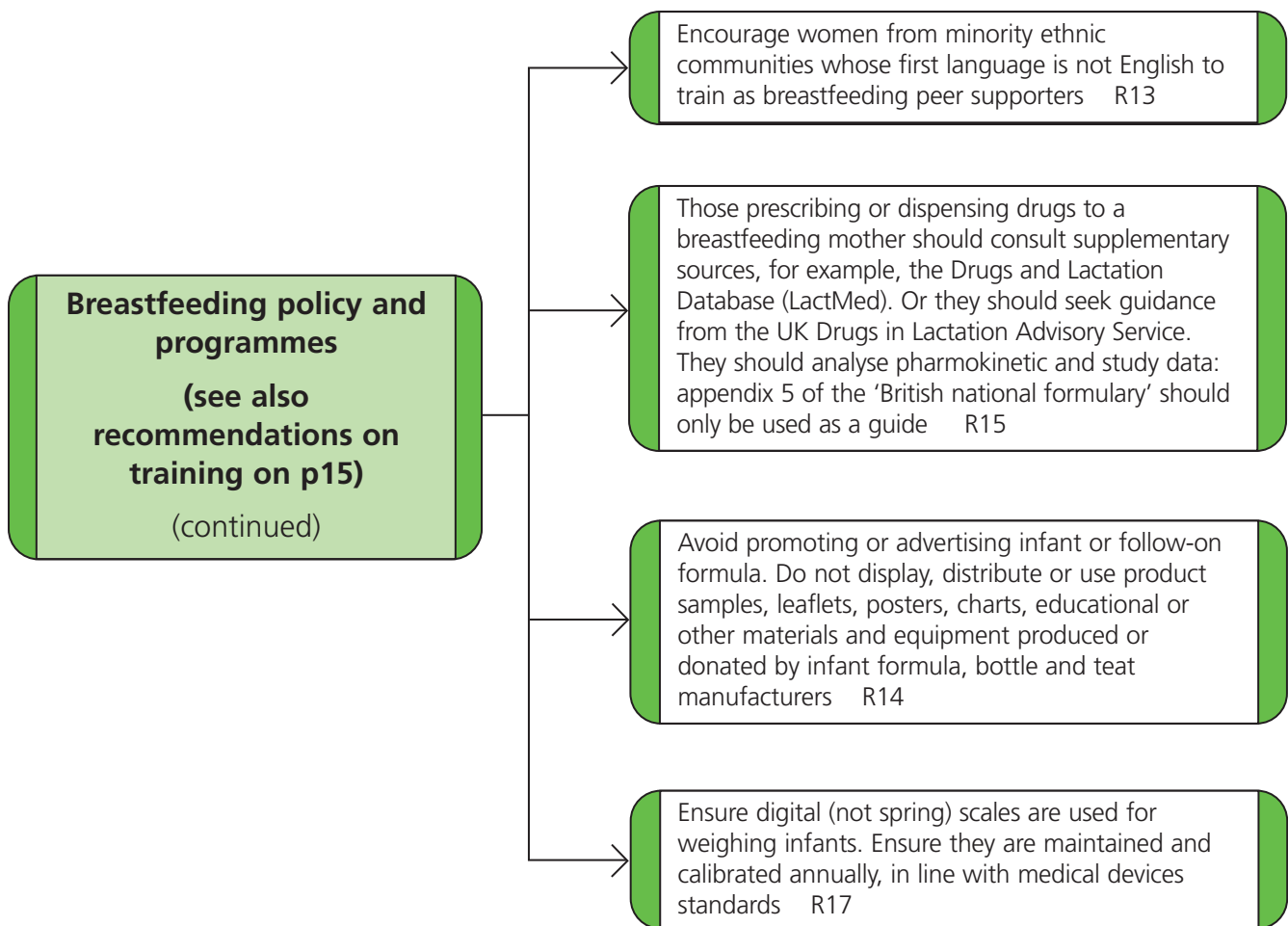
These recommendations are for health professionals, including (where relevant):

- GPs, health visitors, midwives, obstetricians, nursery nurses, the CHPP and children's centre teams, paediatricians, dentists, dental hygienists/assistants and community pharmacists
- NHS trust and PCT commissioners and managers.

Recommendations for commissioners and managers

Local breastfeeding policy





Who should take action?

These recommendations are for:

- NHS trusts responsible for maternity care including PCTs and commissioners and managers of maternity and children's services
- GPs, paediatricians, community nursery nurses, midwives, health visitors and pharmacists
- GP surgeries, community health centres and drug and alcohol services.

The Healthy Start scheme

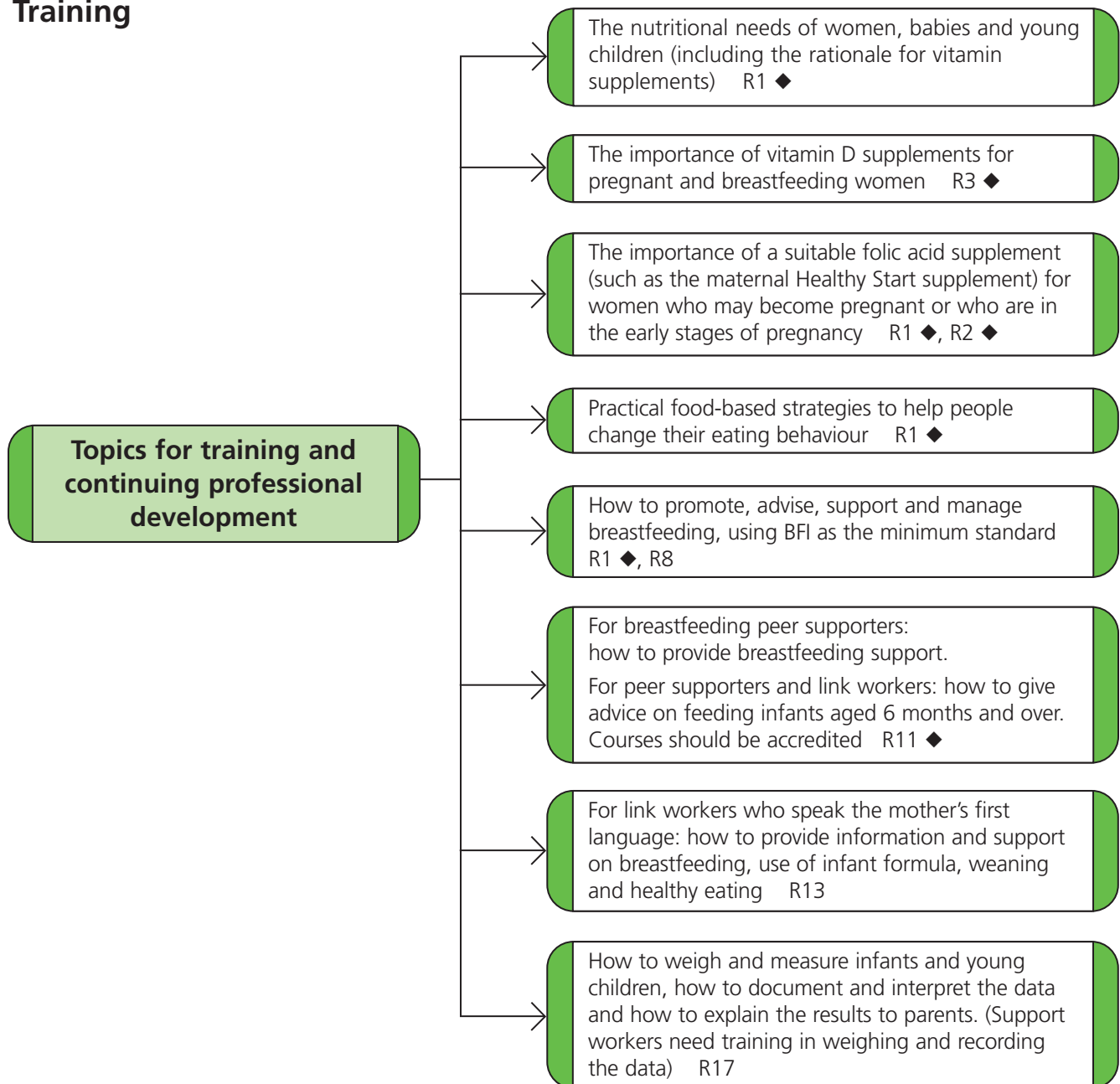


Who should take action?

These recommendations are for:

- PCT commissioners and managers
- GPs, midwives, health visitors, obstetricians, paediatricians and community pharmacists.

Training

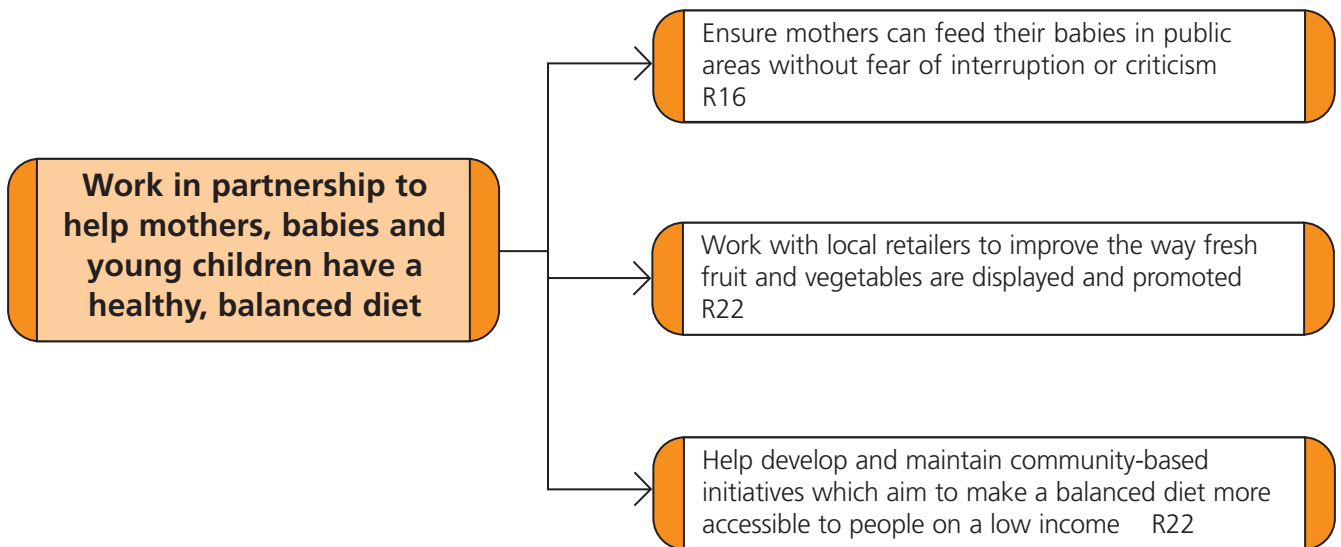


Who should take action?

These recommendations are for professional bodies, skills councils and others responsible for setting competencies and developing continuing professional development programmes for health professionals, nursery nurses and support workers. They are also for commissioners and managers of maternity and children's services, NHS trusts responsible for maternity care, PCTs, GP surgeries, community health centres, fertility and contraceptive services, school health services, public health nutritionists and dietitians, and staff involved in training.

Recommendations for public, community, voluntary and private sector organisations

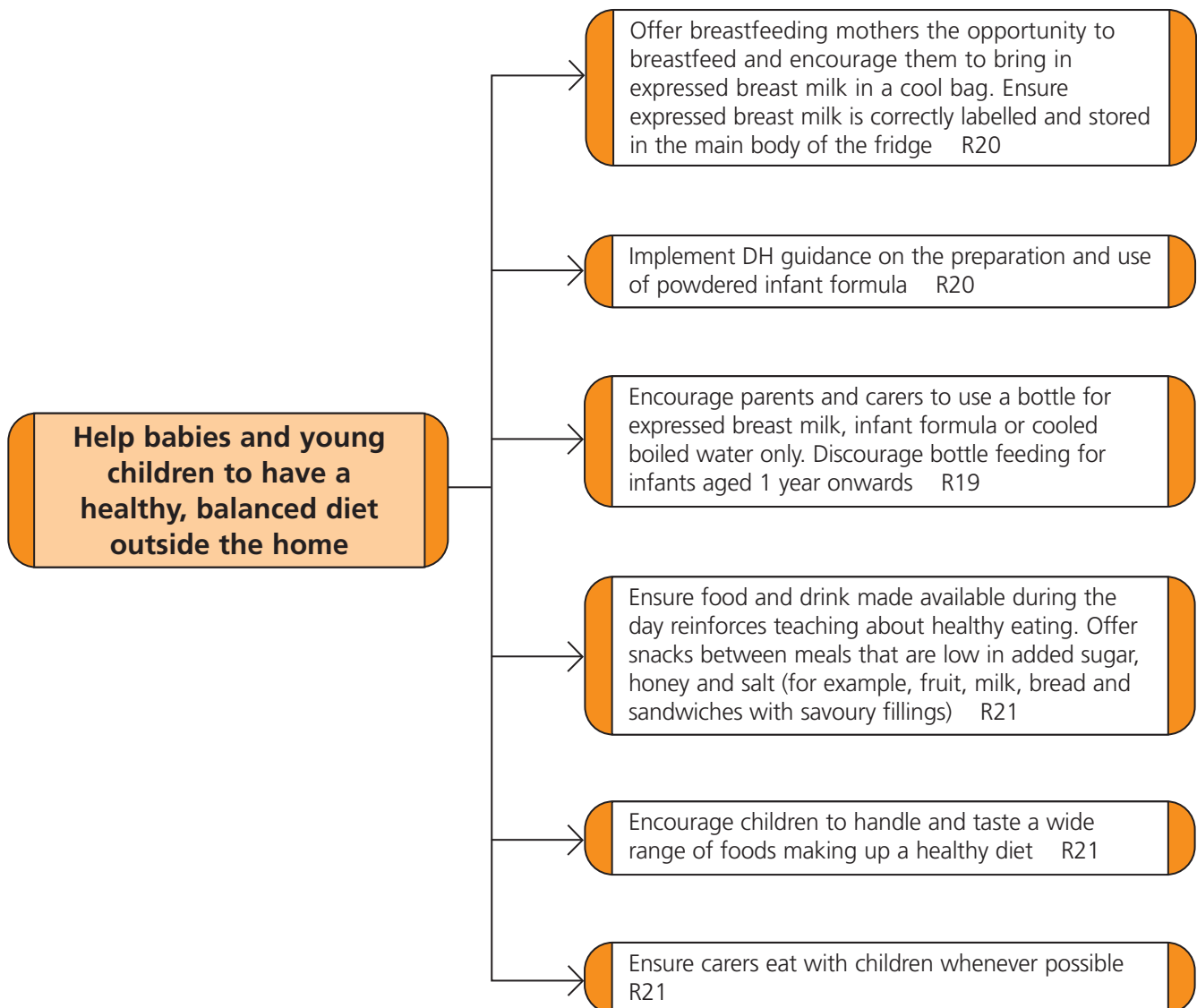
Wider community initiatives



Who should take action?

These recommendations are for NHS trust and PCT commissioners and managers, commissioning agencies, local authorities, local businesses, voluntary agencies and local strategic partnerships that fund or provide community projects.

Childcare and pre-school settings

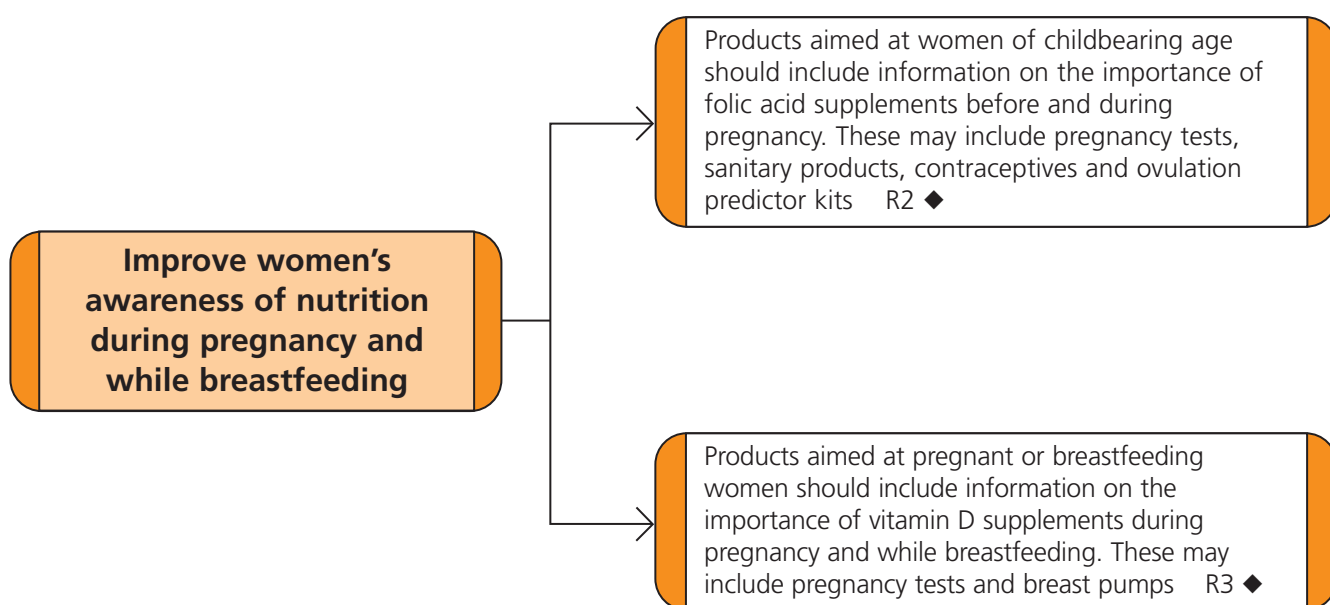


Who should take action?

These recommendations are for:

- those working in pre-school day-care settings such as nurseries, creches and playgroups, including teachers, teaching assistants and nursery nurses
- home-based child carers
- health visitors, GPs, dentists and dental hygienists.

Manufacturers of goods for women



Who should take action?

These recommendations are for manufacturers of goods for women of childbearing age and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Glossary

Diet In this guidance, the term 'diet' refers to the habitual eating patterns of individuals and groups of people who are not slimming or eating to manage or treat a medical condition.

Follow-on formula Under UK law, follow-on formula may provide the liquid component of a progressively varied diet for healthy infants aged over 6 months.

Healthy eating There is no standard definition. However, it is widely accepted that 'healthy eating' means following a diet which is low in fat (particularly saturated fat), sugar and salt, and high in fruit, vegetables and fibre-rich, starchy foods. More details are available from the Food Standards Agency at www.eatwell.gov.uk

Hydrolysed infant formula Infant formula (see below) containing protein which has been broken down (hydrolysed) either partially or more extensively. Hydrolysed infant formula is more expensive than other infant formula and is usually available on prescription.

Infant formula Under UK law, infant formula is the term used to describe a food intended to satisfy, by itself, the nutritional needs of infants during the first months of life. The DH advises that infant formula may be used on its own for the first 6 months.

Low birth weight Low birth weight is defined by the World Health Organization as less than 2500 grams.

Neural tube defects The neural tube in the fetus develops into the brain and spinal cord. Neural tube defects occur when the brain, skull and/or the spinal cord and its protective spinal column do not develop properly within the first 4 weeks after conception. The most common neural tube defects are anencephaly (which results in stillbirth or death soon after delivery) and spina bifida (which may lead to a range of physical disabilities including partial or total paralysis).

Weaning Weaning or 'complementary feeding' is the transition from an exclusively milk-based diet to a diet based on solid foods.

Implementation tools

NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. For details, visit our website at www.nice.org.uk/PH011

Further information

Ordering information

You can download the following documents from www.nice.org.uk/PH011

- A quick reference guide (this document) for professionals and the public.
- The guidance, which includes all the recommendations, details of how they were developed and evidence statements.
- Supporting documents, including evidence reviews and an economic analysis.

For printed copies of the quick reference guide, phone NICE publications on 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote N1489.

Related NICE guidance

Antenatal care: routine care for the healthy pregnant woman. NICE clinical guideline 62 (2008). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG062

Diabetes in pregnancy: management of diabetes and its complications from pre-conception to the postnatal period. NICE clinical guideline 63 (2008). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG063

Antenatal and postnatal mental health: clinical management and service guidance. NICE clinical guideline 45 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG045

Atopic eczema in children: management of atopic eczema in children from birth up to the age of 12 years. NICE clinical guideline 57 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG057

Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels. NICE public health guidance 6 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/PH006

Intrapartum care: care of healthy women and their babies during childbirth. NICE clinical guideline 55 (2007). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG055

Obesity: guidance on the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children. NICE clinical guideline 43 (2006). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG043

Routine postnatal care of women and their babies. NICE clinical guideline 37 (2006). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG037

Division of ankyloglossia (tongue-tie) for breastfeeding. NICE interventional procedure guidance 149 (2005). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/IPG149

Fertility: assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems. NICE clinical guideline 11 (2004). Available from: www.nice.org.uk/CG011

Updating the recommendations

NICE public health guidance is updated as needed so that recommendations take into account important new information. We check for new evidence 2 and 4 years after publication, to decide whether all or part of the guidance should be updated. If important new evidence is published at other times, we may decide to update some recommendations at that time.

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