



**Haringey** Council

**Agenda Item  
10**

**The Children and Young People's Service**

**Report to Haringey Schools Forum – Thursday 11th November 2010**

**Report Title:**

**Arrangements for Free School Meals including the Standards Fund  
School Lunch Grant.**

**Authors:**

**Andrew Bashford,  
Client Catering Manager, the Children and Young People's Service,  
Tel: 020 8489 4639  
e-mail: Andrew.bashford@haringey.gov.uk**

**Purpose**

**To inform Forum members of the arrangements in place for providing  
free school meals and the arrangements for the School Lunch Grant.**

**Recommendations**

**That the Forum notes the current arrangements for free school meals  
and the School Lunch Grant.**

**1. Background.**

1.1 The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002 require that the Forum is consulted annually on the arrangements for free school meals.

## 2. Arrangements for Free School Meals

2.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to provide free school meals to the children of parents who are:

- Entitled to income support,
- Entitled to Income Based Job Seekers Allowance,
- Entitled to Child Tax Credit where annual income does not exceed £16,190 and not entitled to Working Tax Credit.
- Entitled to support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

2.2 The Children's Services Student Finance and Entitlements Team currently process applications at four Customer Service Centres. In addition, twenty three schools are now piloting a scheme to process applications on site. A further school, St John Vianney Catholic Primary will join this scheme in the near future. Eligibility may be backdated in certain circumstances and is subject to an annual review.

2.3 All school meals service providers can offer both new and existing parents the chance to sample a school meal in several schools where current FSM take up is low. This is a proven effective method of increasing take up.

2.4 Data collected in April 2010 for the Government's National Indicator 52 "Take up of school lunches" 2009/10, shows meal take up in Haringey as follows:

- Overall Primary School take up: 59.6% (a 5% increase from 2009)
- Overall Secondary School take up: 52.9% (an 8.2% increase from 2009)
- FSM take up in the Primary sector currently averages 94.4%
- FSM take up in the Secondary sector currently averages 85.2%

2.5 Schools will arrange for eligible pupils to receive free school meals from their meals provider. The meals provider will then charge the school for all meals taken and not paid for at the point of delivery. Currently the Catering DSO charges schools £2.32 for a meal. Schools meet this cost from their delegated budget shares, supplemented by the income raised from pupils and staff not entitled to free meals.

2.6 The budget to pay for free school meals and a subsidy on primary school paid meals was delegated to schools between 2000/01 and 2001/02. The allocation of these budgets between schools is on a formula basis as 'The Financing of Maintained Schools (England) Regulations'

precludes an allocation based on actual or estimated costs. The full cost of free School Meals, based on numbers taking free meals at the January count, are provided for in school budgets and should be, more or less a neutral cost to schools. Primary schools also receive a subsidy, equivalent to 22p per meal, for pupils taking a paid meal.

- 2.7 Forum conducted a major review of school meals funding in 2008. In this, and in subsequent discussions, the Forum has underlined the importance of maximising school meal take-up.

### **3. Standards Fund School Lunch Grant. (SLG)**

- 3.1 Each Authority receives a share of the £80m available for each of the three years 2008/9, 2009/2010, 2010/11 based on 70% pupil numbers and 30% Free School Meal numbers. It is a ring-fenced grant to be used only for costs detailed in 3.3 below.
- 3.2 Haringey has been allocated £393,450 in 2010/11 .This is a 3% increase against the 2009/10 allocation. It is our understanding that the School Lunch Grant will not available after 2011.
- 3.3 The grant is to help manage the direct costs (such as ingredients, employee and equipment costs) of providing school lunches; to improve healthier school lunch take-up and assist in keeping meal prices down.
- 3.4 Local authorities are required to consult with their Schools Forum on how the grant is to be used. The Forum agreed on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to allocate the Grant as follows:
- £134,400 to continue a programme of kitchen improvements and marketing of the service in accordance with the revised conditions of grant.
  - £10,300 allocated to PSC to help offset known inherent difficulties with PSC meal payments and free school meals registration
  - £249k allocated to schools to help reduce the price of a school meal. Following consultation with the Schools Forum the allocation was pro-rata to schools' AEN allocations so that the greatest support could be targeted at school populations likely to be in the greatest need. For primary schools, this funding is withdrawn if the school charges parents more than the recommended maximum price (£1.90 from April, rising to £2.00 from September).
- 3.5 These arrangements were introduced in April 2010. The meal uptake figures reported above (2.4) are encouraging, giving us some indication that reduced prices have helped. In January 2010, 42.6% of schools charged at or below the recommended maximum price of £1.90. From April, with the subsidy incentive to keep prices below the recommended

level, 53.2% of schools were charging at or below the recommended price (still £1.90).

In September 2010, 90.3% of schools were charging at or below the (inflation-adjusted) recommended price of £2.00. Summer Term School Lunch Grant has been withheld from 29 schools charging over the recommended amount.

3.6 We understand, from initial announcements following the 20 October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, that School Lunch Grant will no longer be ring-fenced as a specific grant to reduce meal costs, from April 2011. We will brief Forum further on this once fuller details are available.

4. **Recommendation**

That the forum notes the current arrangements for free school meals and the School Lunch Grant.