

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Committee: Schools Forum

Date: 8th July 2014

Author:	Head of Commissioning – Economy and Attainment
Wards Affected:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All
Settings Affected:	All Maintained Community and Voluntary Controlled primary and special schools and Voluntary Aided primary schools are specifically affected by this as are Academy primary schools.

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To update the Schools Forum on the allocation of capital funds to increase capacity for schools to meet the new requirement to offer every reception, year 1 and year 2 child a free hot lunch.
- 1.2 To update the Schools Forum on the revenue funding available to support this initiative from September 2014 and on steps required to maintain Free School Meals eligibility

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note that following the receipt of bids from schools the LA has fully allocated all the DfE capital grant allocated and that schools have been asked to contribute 5% towards their costs
- 2.2 To note the estimates of additional funding arising from the UIFSM initiative and arrangements on how revenue funding will operate.
- 2.3 To note the steps proposed to mitigate against schools losing Pupil Premium and other funding arising from the introduction of universal free meals for infant pupils
- 2.4 To note that based on a DfE readiness questionnaire Swindon schools are on track to successfully implement the UIFSM entitlement

3. Detail

- 3.1 As previously reported to the Schools Forum, on 17th September 2013 the Deputy Prime Minister announced that from September 2014 every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 in a state funded school would receive a free hot lunch. The DfE made available funding of £600m nationally of which £450m will be to cover the cost of meals (funded at £2.30 per meal) with £150m earmarked for capital set up costs. With regard to the latter item Swindon was allocated £360,965 for community and voluntary controlled schools and £28,226 for voluntary aided schools and Academies had access to EFA capital for their needs.

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3.2 Forum members agreed to receive a further progress report in July covering the following issues

- The Capital allocations
- The method of reimbursement of revenue funding
- The capture of free school meals eligibility data

Capital Allocation Bids

3.3 At the March 2014 meeting Schools Forum supported the proposed methodology by which the LA would allocate capital finance which was essentially that bids for capital from schools would need to be for dining room extensions, kitchen extensions, kitchen and dining room furniture and equipment. Based on early local and national indications there was a strong feeling that insufficient funding was being made available by DfE and Schools were requested to provide 20% of the overall project cost in their application.

3.4 In total 24 bids were received for projects ranging from £4k to 52K. Some schools were also able to secure additional external funding for equipment through negotiating with external providers. The total amount requested from schools was 5% above the DfE capital provided and a much lower level of school contribution was required than the estimate of 20%. Final bids were £378,224 of which the LA was able to fund £360,965 from the DfE grant. This left schools to meet 5% of their costs and contributions from delegated school funds were fairly modest ranging from £142 to £2,567. Schools were notified of their grant allocations on the 14th May 2014

Revenue funding estimates and methodology

3.5 In addition to the capital allocations the revenue funding has been set at £2.30 per meal. It is expected that this allocation will cover the cost of ingredients, staffing, transportation and utilities used to provide the free hot lunch. It is likely that the LA will pay schools on a termly basis for the number of meals served less the cost of meals taken by pupils which are entitled to FSM on low income grounds for which deprivation funding is already allocated in the local formula.

3.6 Take up of the free hot lunch is expected by the DfE to be up to 85%. As a result there will be significant logistical challenges for schools in accommodating children into the lunch space and time available. It is acknowledged that not all schools provide their own in house / on site catering and that this could have implications for their contractors/providers.

3.7 Information on how to calculate and incorporate the costs and funding of the UIFSM entitlement in school budgets was sent to schools by the LA Finance team in March. Since then further information has been made available as follows

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- Funding will be provided to the LA on 27th June for all maintained schools based on the January 2014 census (assuming 87% of qualifying pupils will take a meal @ £2.30 a meal for 190 days (7/12th then applied));
 - This funding is designed to cover the first two terms of the implementation of UIFSM;
 - The total provision funding for Swindon is £1,667,996
 - Small school transitions funding will be included (those schools where headcount is below 150 pupils) with this initial payment;
 - The EFA will provide funding directly to schools that were academies from 1st April 2014;
 - The final part of the funding will be paid to LA's on 1st April 2015 and will be based on qualifying pupils at October 14 and January 15 census dates, which will be passed on to schools;
 - Where a school's final main allocation is less than the payment made in June 2014, the difference will be deducted from the first payment of the UIFSM grant for the 2015/16 academic year.
 - The forthcoming census data capture will now include a provision to identify which child took a meal;
 - The risk for schools is the recording of the information at census dates, as this could result in a gain or loss of funding compared to the cost of the school providing this service if numbers at that date are considerably different to term time take up.
- 3.8 As part of the capital bidding process schools were asked to estimate how many additional meals they would need to provide as a result of the universal entitlement. From the information announced by the DfE in 3.7 above the schools should be able to estimate the level of meals that need to be provided against their likely revenue funding for the initial two terms to assess the level of impact the UIFSM will have over this period.
- 3.9 In some schools where there is already a relatively high take up of either free school meals (on disadvantage grounds) or paid meals the UIFSM initiative will have had a negligible impact on school catering activities.

Maximising Future FSM Eligibility

- 3.10 Forum Members are advised that for local formula purposes the October census date is of paramount importance to schools as pupil characteristics at this time will influence the level of deprivation funding that they will receive in the following year. Of greater importance is the January census date which is used by the DfE
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to determine Disadvantaged Pupil Premium grant allocations which are currently £1,300 per primary pupil and £935 per secondary pupil. Should any parent that would be eligible for an FSM on income grounds fail to register entitlement as a consequence of the Universal entitlement, this would have a detrimental effect on the school's annual funding.

- 3.11 Communication was sent to all schools on the 3rd June 2014 advising of the process of collecting information that previously related to Free School Meals.
- 3.12 The LA has systems in place to produce FSM eligibility information for every school. Therefore, schools have been requested to collect information on every child receiving the free entitlement, which should pick up those who have not previously declared their eligibility.
- 3.13 We are encouraging all schools to ensure that parents of R,1 and 2 children complete the form. The advantages of doing this are as follows:
- Schools will benefit to ensure that they receive the maximum pupil premium funding possible
 - It allows the LA to continue the checks we carry out 3 times a year to verify continuing eligibility.
 - The LA will be able to advise schools and parents of those children who will continue to be eligible when they move to Year 3 without the need for the parent to complete a new application form.
- 3.14 It is acknowledged that this is an onerous task this year, but in In future years schools will only need to collect the new reception cohort and any additional in-year transfers for the relevant year groups.
- 3.15 As set out in the communication the LA is keen to hear feedback of ways to improve the process for future years and plan to consult on this process before the 2015 round.

Project reporting

- 3.16 The LA were asked to complete a "readiness" questionnaire to the DfE at the beginning of June and were pleased to report that every school delivering the free entitlement is expected to meet the September 2014 implementation date.
- 3.17 As previously reported, it should be noted that the legislation is open to allow for introduction of the free entitlement to Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) pupils in future years.
- 3.18 Academies were able to submit bids to the EFA by the 31st January 2014 for any kitchen and dining room requirements.
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4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no alternative options as schools are required to offer a free hot lunch to every reception, year 1 and year 2 child.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 As this is essentially a financial report the implications are explained throughout the document.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 There are no legal and human rights implications arising from this report.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 Other implications relate to an increase impact on school catering staff, admin staff and teacher to assist with the delivery of the new entitlement. Also benefits relating to healthy outcomes (child obesity) for children by receiving a free hot lunch.

Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.4 Utilisation of the DSG has a direct link to two of the Council's five priorities – "Right skills, right jobs in the right place", "Make the best use of Swindon's resources inside and outside the Council" and "A healthy and caring community".

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 There are no specific proposals in this report, but the hot lunch is a universal offer restricted by age, but regardless of gender, race or sexuality in order to improve health outcomes.

Risk Management

- 5.6 The key risks arising from this report are:

- Capital funding will not be sufficient
- Schools could increase premises and staffing capacity and there is a further increase in a few years alternatively take up of the entitlement is less than expected
- Under-registration of FSM, which will result in a loss of Pupil Premium.

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6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director Resources (Chief Financial and Section 151 Officer), Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) and Board Director Commissioning (Director of Children Services) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 The School Food Plan and the paper submitted to Schools Forum in March 2014.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 None