



Committee and Date

Young People's Scrutiny  
Committee

30<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Item

**7**

Public

## Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)

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### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Coalition Government has announced that, from September 2014, all state funded infant school children (ie those in reception, year 1 and year 2) will be eligible to receive a free school meal. This applies to pupils in maintained schools, academies, free schools and pupil referral units. It does not extend to pupils in maintained nursery schools. Legislation will place a legal duty on schools to deliver this commitment (including powers to extend to additional year groups in the future).
- 1.2 Capital funding of £150 million is available nationally in 2014-15 to upgrade kitchens and to increase dining capacity where required. Transitional funding of £22.5 million is also being made available in 2014-15 to support small schools (ie schools with up to 150 pupils on roll) in addressing the particular challenges they will face. Revenue funding of £1 billion will be made available in 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years to provide a flat rate of £2.30 per meal taken based on actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils.
- 1.3 This report provides Young Persons Scrutiny with information relating to how this initiative will impact on schools in Shropshire and the work being undertaken by Shire Services to ensure schools are prepared for the increase in meals served from September 2014.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the actions being taken and the issues which will face schools implementing this new provision in September 2014.

## REPORT

### 3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 There is a risk that schools may not be in a position to deliver the UIFSM ready for September. Shire Services are committed to ensuring that all the schools which they work with are in a position to fulfil this requirement.
- 3.2 The capital funding that is available has provided an opportunity for schools in Shropshire to improve the kitchen and dining room facilities that they have by using this fund.

### 4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 In the 2014/15 academic year schools will receive revenue funding at a flat rate of £2.30 for each meal taken by each newly eligible pupil. Initial provisional allocations will be based on an estimate of national take-up and then adjusted once the Department for Education has details of the actual number of meals taken by individual schools. Schools will be notified in June 2014 of their provisional full year revenue funding allocation for the 2014/15 academic year. Local authorities will receive the funding for the autumn 2014 and spring 2015 terms around the same time. The allocations will be based on an 87% take-up by newly eligible pupils. Payments for the summer term 2015 will be adjusted to take into account actual take-up.
- 4.2 Capital funding of £150 million in the 2014-15 financial year has been allocated to local authorities to support the roll out of UIFSM. For Shropshire this equates to £662,822.
- 4.3 At a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 the Schools Forum considered and agreed the basis for the distribution of the UIFSM capital grant to eligible schools in Shropshire.
- 4.4 Additional one-off funding from a national allocation of £22.5 million will also be provided for small schools - those with up to 150 pupils on roll – to help with transitional costs. A total of 79 Shropshire schools (62.7%) will qualify for this additional funding, equating to £390,000, the formulae for distributing this funding has been dictated by the Government, and ensures a minimum of £3,000 per school.
- 4.5 The capital funding can only be used for capital expenditure related to the implementation of the UIFSM. Any underspends in the funding could potentially be clawed back for recirculation to other schools in need.

### 5. Background

- 5.1 The School Food Plan ([www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)) presented evidence that the introduction of universal free school meals will lead to positive improvements in health, attainment and social cohesion, and help families with the cost of living. Evidence from pilot projects indicates universal free school meals have significant benefits for individual children and for the broader life of the school.

- 5.2 The Children and Families Bill places a legal duty on state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2. Existing entitlements to free school meals (FSM) for disadvantaged pupils in nursery classes and at key stages 2-4 will continue, based on existing FSM eligibility criteria. Royal Assent was received on 13 March 2014, meaning that the new duty on schools will come into force from September 2014.
- 5.3 The Bill does not change the current position for children who are registered in a nursery class of a maintained school, or in a maintained nursery school. They will continue to receive a free school meal if they meet the existing eligibility criteria and they are in receipt of full-time education or education both before and after the lunch period.
- 5.4 Targeted advice and support will be provided to schools and local authorities through the UIFSM implementation support service. Shire Services is currently in discussion with the service providers to ascertain the support that could be available to schools in Shropshire to assist with this process.

## **6. Operational Considerations**

- 6.1 Shire Services currently provides catering services to 112 Primary schools in Shropshire (87%), which includes 2 Academy schools.
- 6.2 Across these schools it is anticipated that there will be an increase of 3,192 meals served per day, taking the daily number of meals in Shropshire primary schools to 11,138 an increase of 40%.
- 6.3 Shire Services provides a school meals service to 3 Infants schools (Woodfield, Ludlow and Sundorne) which will see a significant increase in the number of meals provided with all pupils eligible for a free school meal from September.
- 6.4 The Area Team for Shire Services have been gathering information from all primary schools, to contribute to a plan which will identify the requirements for schools from September.
- 6.5 This work has involved talking to head teachers and kitchen staff, as well as a review of the kitchen equipment, the capacity of the hall and the lunchtime arrangements.
- 6.6 The following areas have been reviewed:-
- The anticipated increase in the number of meals
  - The number of staff and hours worked in the kitchen
  - The size and condition of the fabric of the kitchen
  - The capacity and condition of the kitchen equipment
  - The size of the hall or dining room where pupils eat
  - The capacity and condition of the serving trolleys and dining room furniture
  - The need for additional light equipment to support the service such as pans, plates and cutlery

The lunchtime arrangements with regard to queuing and cash collection

The length of the lunch break

The current arrangements for pupils who bring a packed lunch

The meals provided to other schools and what impact these additional meals will have

The menu currently being served in the school

Any concerns of the head teacher

- 6.7 Each school has different needs and will have different requirements in order to implement this change. In 16 schools, where they already have a good level of uptake of meals in KS1, there are less than 10 meals per day extra to be produced in September, as a result there is very little support that this group of schools will need to implement the new requirement.
- 6.8 The largest increase in the number of meals being produced is 124 per day. To manage this there will be a need for additional equipment in the kitchen, additional serving trolleys and new staff to be recruited and trained ready for September. This school has also been allocated additional support from the Area Team who will be working in the school for the first couple of weeks in September to support the kitchen staff and to ensure that the service is operating smoothly.
- 6.9 A review of the arrangements at lunchtime was needed to ascertain that the length of the lunch break would be adequate to cope with the increased number of pupils eating. In the vast majority of schools the pupils eating a packed lunch currently share the dining room or hall with pupils eating a hot meal. Whilst seating may not be an issue, it will be important to ensure that the pupils are served quickly to avoid delays at the end of the service to avoid potentially impacting on curriculum time.
- 6.10 There are 21 schools who provide an exported meal to a nearby school which does not have a kitchen. This presents additional issues to be addressed. For example Cleobury Mortimer Primary currently exports meals to 3 other primary schools. In September all 4 schools will see an increase in the number of meals required as a result of the UIFSM. The kitchen will have a total increase of 79 meals, made up of 48 meals at Cleobury and a total of 31 meals at the other 3 schools.
- 6.11 After Easter the Area Team will be meeting with schools individually to advise them of any issues which need to be addressed prior to September and to make recommendations as to how, in our opinion, the capital funding should be spent.
- 6.12 Some schools have already placed orders for additional equipment that they wish to purchase. There is some concern that as this is a national initiative; suppliers may struggle to meet the usual delivery timescales due to the increased volume of orders. Whilst we are seeing a longer lead in time for delivery and installation of equipment we have not had an indication that orders will not be fulfilled ready for September.
- 6.13 Shire Services are committed to supporting schools to ensure that they the requirements of additional meals from September can be met with minimal detriment to the school as a whole.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Universal Infant Free School Meals Report

Schools Forum, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, Prepared by Phil Wilson

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Ann Hartley

**Local Member**

N/A

**Appendices**

None