



**Schools Forum**  
Date: 26 March 2015  
Time: 8:30 a.m.  
Venue: Shrewsbury Training and Development Centre

Item  
  
Public

Paper  
  
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## UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS CAPITAL GRANT

### Responsible Officer

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## 1 Summary

- 1.1 Since September 2014 a legal duty has been placed on schools to provide a free school meal for infant aged children (i.e. those in reception, year 1 and year 2). This duty applies to pupils in maintained schools, academies, free schools and pupil referral units. It does not extend to pupils in maintained nursery schools.
- 1.2 To support the implementation of this policy capital funding of £150 million was made available nationally in 2014-15 to upgrade kitchens and to increase dining capacity where required. Other transitional funding was provided to support small schools (i.e. schools with up to 150 pupils on roll) in addressing the particular challenges they face. Revenue funding is also being made available in the 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 At their meeting on 20 March 2014 Forum approved the model for distributing the capital funding allocated to the authority in 2014-15. The report included a provision to potentially claw back any underspends in the delegated capital funding for redistribution to other schools in need of additional funding. This report updates Forum on the application of the capital grant and seeks their views on how to address any identified underspends.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To receive an update on the application of the capital funding delegated to schools for the implementation of the statutory universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) policy and to consider what should happen with any reported underspending of this capital grant, taking into account the recommendation from the Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board to claw back and redistribute the funding.

## REPORT

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer a free school meal 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. This new duty on schools came into force from September 2014.
- 3.2 In the financial year 2014-15 capital funding of £150 million was allocated to local authorities to support the roll out of UIFSM. Shropshire Council was allocated a total of £662,822 in capital funding to upgrade kitchens and to enhance dining capacity where required.
- 3.3 At their meeting on 20 March 2014 Schools Forum were presented with a model for equitably distributing the capital grant to qualifying schools. The model took into account the difference between the existing take-up of school meals and the likely increases in numbers taking a meal from the implementation of a universal provision. This made it possible to calculate for each individual school the likely additional pupil numbers they would need to cater for from September 2014 and to use these numbers to pro-rata the capital funding. Forum approved the model.
- 3.4 The report included a provision for underspends in the delegated funding to be clawed back from any schools not applying the funding fully, with a view to it being redistributed to schools where there is an identified need for additional capital resource in order to fully implement their statutory responsibility. Schools were advised of this provision in the letters they received in late March 2014 informing them of their individual school allocations.

### **4 Application of UIFSM Capital Grant**

- 4.1 The Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board, at their meeting on 28 January 2015, considered a report on the individual school allocations of capital funding and spend to date, as reported on SAMIS. The Board authorised officers to contact schools in receipt of UIFSM capital grant to inform them of their current position and to ascertain if this was an accurate record. They were advised of the Board's desire for any uncommitted capital grant to be clawed back and redistributed. This communication went out to schools in early February 2015.
- 4.2 At the time of writing the identified underspend of capital grant is around £82,000, spread across 34 schools. The individual levels of underspend range from £26 to £7,749.

- 4.3 An additional £20 million capital funding was made available nationally in October 2014 by the Department for Education. Local authorities were asked to bid for this funding which was aimed at enhancing kitchen and dining facilities. Shropshire Council submitted a total of 10 bids at a value of over £500,000, none of which were successful.
- 4.4 At the Learning & Skills Capital Programme Board, it was recommended that some of the capitalised £500,000 Dedicated Schools Grant savings in 2014-15 be targeted to fund a number of the projects for which national funding was bid for. To date approximately £300,000 of this work has been commissioned. Any clawed back funding will be added to this capital budget for further work on enhancing kitchens and dining facilities in schools which are struggling to fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- 4.5 Schools Forum are asked to consider what should happen with the reported underspending of this capital grant, taking into account the Capital Programme Boards view that the funding be clawed back and redistributed.