

Update on Implementation of Recommendations arising from School Meals Scrutiny Review

Recommendation as approved by the Cabinet in May 2014	Update as of March 2016
<p>i. That the School Services Team/ Benefits Team carry out an annual check to identify those parents who are entitled, but not registered for FSM, and write to them to encourage them to claim.</p>	<p>This check has been carried out for the last three years. It has resulted in an increase in the number of parents submitting applications for free school meals, enabling the schools to be able to claim additional funding through the pupil premium. The challenge of universal infant free school meals means all pupils in the first three years of compulsory education are now entitled to free school meals (it is not linked to low income). This does mean that some parents see no reason to apply for free school meals in those first three years, not realising that free school meal pupils attract pupil premium funding for the school.</p>
<p>ii. The Local Authority should consider whether there is a role for it to act as advisor and/or broker/facilitator of innovative arrangements between those schools not in York's Local Authority contract.</p>	<p>Over the last few years the Local Authority has seen more schools withdraw from the central school meals contract delivered by ISS Education. Some schools have chosen to use other catering providers or have taken school meals catering in-house. The School Services Team (School Meals) have continued to make closer links with those schools not in the central contract, this has resulted in the majority of schools buying back the Local Authority's School Meals Catering Monitoring Service. They recognise the expert advice and support those staff offer and are willing to pay for this service.</p>
<p>iii. Schools should be encouraged to be more flexible in when and how often parents can pay for school meals to ensure those on a low income are not excluded.</p>	<p>The introduction of universal infant free school meals have assisted in removing the stigma of identifying which pupils are on free school meals and those that are not. Alongside this more schools are now using on-line payment systems meaning it is now almost impossible to identify pupils who pay for meals and who do not.</p>
<p>iv. Catering providers who provide school meals in primary schools, be approached to work with the LA and schools to reduce the price of meals for</p>	<p>The central school meals contract re-negotiation following the introduction of universal infant free school meals allowed the price of meal being charged for Key Stage 2 pupils being reduced from £2.25 to £2.00 (This began in September 2014). We have managed to hold the</p>

<p>those pupils in key stage 2, taking account of the expected significant increase in number of meals provided</p>	<p>price at £2.00 since then. However the introduction of the living wage is likely to mean an increase in the school meal price from April 2016. As more schools move away from a central contract we are likely to see an increasing variation in school meal prices across all York schools.</p>
<p>v. Closer working relations be developed between the LA, schools and catering providers across York to promote the benefits of eating a healthy school meal - this to be run alongside the commencement of free school meals for all pupils in key stage 1.</p>	<p>The current central catering contract is due to expire in July 2017, the indications are that we will move away from a central school meals catering contract. As indicated earlier however it is envisaged that schools will continue to want to buy-in those specialist services (including catering) offered by the School Services – Catering team. This should enable all York schools to continue to offer healthy school meals. Different schools will offer different things in terms of choices, but is clear UIFSM has not seen any deterioration in the quality of food being provided.</p>
<p>vi. LA to monitor the introduction of free school meals in key stage 1 to look at the impact on primary schools with particular emphasis on space within the kitchen, access to appropriate equipment, the impact on the school day, and the possible knock on effects on key stage 2, with a report to Scrutiny in 12 months time</p>	<p>The introduction of free school meals in key stage 1 has inevitably seen an increase in the number of pupils eating a school meal each day. The average take-up across those primary schools in the central City of York contract (KS1 & 2) for the 2013/14 was 36%. In 2014/15 following the introduction of universal infant free school meals the average take-up increased to 59% (across KS1 & KS2). During 2014/15 the take-up in KS1 was 79% compared with 43% in KS2, unfortunately we have no comparable data for 2013/14.</p>