

A Council's Approach to Delivering Free Healthy School Meals

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**Free Healthy School Meals
Project Lead**

Timetable

- Development phase Jan – Jul 2011;
- Reception & Year 1 roll out Sept 2011;
- Years 2 – 4 roll out Sept 2012;
- Full roll out Sept 2013.

Free Healthy School Meals Development Phase

- The purpose of the development phase was to:
 - plan the effective roll out and look at potential issues that may arise;
 - develop a registration system which allows the identification of those families eligible for Government funded free school meals, to ensure schools continue to receive maximum income from central Government;
 - identify through an audit, the capital investment required to support all schools to deliver the anticipated increase in take-up;

Free Healthy School Meals Development Phase

- as accurately as possible assess the cost of implementing the policy across a 3 year period;
- develop the required organisational and governance structures to support effective and efficient implementation;

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What we did

- we tested the programme in 10 primary schools with reception and year one pupils;
- we commissioned an audit of school kitchens, this was completed June 2011;
- a simple application form was designed for the schools to send to parents;
- an electronic toolkit was designed to support headteachers and governors.

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200326/free_school_meals_programme

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What happened

- take up reached 87% in the development phase;
- schools were advised and consulted about the process that we would use for the roll out in September 2011;
- a figure of £1.90 per child per day was decided;
- schools are paid once a term based on the number of meals served, less the number of pupils entitled to govt-funded free school meals.

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How are we doing

- all Primary settings offer free school meals to the whole school;
- we have committed £500k in additional funding to increase the capacity to provide meals;
- we have redesigned our FSM processes;

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How are we doing

- we have paid schools termly based on take up of meals;
- we still pay £1.90 per meal to the schools;
- our take up levels based on reception to year 4 in 2012/13 reached 92%. However, reception was 95%.

Challenges

- ensuring the parents continue to apply for entitled free school meals;
- fitting all the children into the lunch space and time available;
- supporting schools with contract arrangements when their contract comes up for renewal.

Future Plans

- as the volume of meals provided has increased, we are planning how to ensure schools have 'cash flow';
- from Spring 2014 we will pay 75% of normal cost up front and reconcile based on actual numbers;
- from Autumn 2014 we plan to pay a figure based on current take up, monthly with the DSG monies and reconcile the balance annually.

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