

Schools in Calderdale are benefiting from an additional £685,000 pupil premium funding as 586 children are identified as eligible for free school meals.



Action by Calderdale Council means almost 600 more children are now getting free school meals in the area who had not previously claimed them.

Officials realised many families had not taken up the offer for a free school dinner so managed to track them down to make sure they were getting what they are entitled to receive.

And this means the council is receiving an extra £685,000 worth of extra Government funding for the scheme.

Over the last two months the Revenues and Benefits Service has used housing benefit and council tax reduction records to identify a number of children who were eligible to receive free school meals, but were not currently claiming. Thanks to this research exercise, an additional 586 children are now receiving the free meals.

Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Marcus Thompson, said: "This not only benefits the families of these children, but also the schools they attend as for every pupil who receives free school meals, their school receives extra funding from central government, known as pupil premium."

Schools receive pupil premium funding for each child registered as being eligible for free school meals. The school receives £1,300 for each pupil in reception year to year 6 and £935 for pupils in year 7 to year 11.

The pupil premium funding is always spent in ways to directly benefit pupils, particularly those children who are vulnerable and need more support. This could be by employing additional staff to support pupils or providing financial support for educational visits or after school clubs.

By identifying the 586 pupils who were eligible for free school meals, the schools they attend have received additional funding of £685,000.

Cllr Thompson added: "I'm delighted with how successful this exercise has been. It's great news that the benefits service has managed to identify so many families who were not claiming what they were entitled to.

“This will obviously benefit the families of those pupils who were previously paying for their school meals, but it’s also a huge boost to the schools they attend.”

For more information about free school meals and the eligibility criteria, visit [www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/benefits/schoolmeals](http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/benefits/schoolmeals)

**Source: The Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**[http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/calderdale-council--free-school-means-8874748#ICID=sharebar\\_twitter](http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/calderdale-council--free-school-means-8874748#ICID=sharebar_twitter)**