
Dudley Schools Forum - 16th December 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with information in respect of the universal infant free school meals grants, both revenue and capital, for 2014/15.

Discussed at HTCF – BWG

2. Yes – 10th December 2014.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
4. The Schools Forum Regulations state that with regard to:
 - Financial issues relating to: arrangements for pupils with special educational needs;
 - Arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
 - Arrangements for early years provision;
 - Administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants;

then the Local Authority must consult annually with Schools Forum in order that Forum can give a view and inform the governing bodies of all consultations.

Actions for Schools Forum

5. For Schools Forum to note the contents of the report.

Attachments to Report

6. Appendix A – School Food Plan.
7. Appendix B – Initial Capital Allocations to Schools.
8. Appendix C – DfE letter 16th October 2014.
9. Appendix D – DfE October 2014 additional capital bidding guidance and Application.

Karen Cocker
Children's Services Finance Manager
2nd December 2014

Schools Forum 16th December 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with information in respect of the universal infant free school meals grants, both revenue and capital, for 2014/15.

Background

2. The Government announced in the Spring 2014 that from September 2014, they would provide funding to enable schools to offer a free lunch to every primary school child in reception classes, year 1 and year 2. It is now a legal duty for primary schools to deliver this Government commitment.
3. In addition to making over £1billion in revenue funding available over the next two years, the Chancellor announced in his Autumn Statement that the Government would be making capital funding of £150million available in 2014/15 to support schools in providing free school meals to all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 from September 2014. The details of the capital allocations for universal infant free school meals for each local authority were announced on 18th December 2013.

Revenue Funding

4. The Government's revenue grant funding for the Universal Infants Free School Meal (UIFSM) is £2.30 per eligible pupil.
5. Initial 2014/15 academic year indicative revenue funding allocations have been received from Central Government and have been based on the total pupils in reception classes, years 1 and 2 at January 2014 census less pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in reception classes, year groups 1 and 2 at the meal rate of £2.30 by 190 days and then abated to 87% (the estimated average national take up).
6. Final allocations will be based on the average of pupils eligible for free school meals in reception classes, year groups 1 and year 2 at October 2014 and January 2015 census at a meal rate of £2.30 based on 190 meal days; the relevant census dates for final allocations will be based on are Thursday 2nd October 2014 and Thursday 15th January 2015.

7. Dudley catering services provide catering for most maintained Dudley schools and had initially worked on a target take up of 75%. Evidence from the previous three months trading indicates that the take up of the universal infant free school meal is averaging at 82% with some schools recording a maximum of 100% and minimum take up of others 70%.
8. Those Schools using Dudley catering services will be issued with their Autumn term trading statement in respect of this new requirement from January 2015. However, at this stage Catering Services remain confident that schools will see some headroom within the grant receivable of £2.30 per pupil; the amount will vary with the degree of take up.

School Funding Plan

9. The School Food Plan – West Midlands are advising local authorities of a new support package for schools worth £2,000. This is DfE funded to kick start school meal take up in junior, middle and secondary schools. The package includes training, action plans and expert regional support and is open to schools with take up below the national average.
10. The criteria for eligibility relates to all junior, middle, secondary, PRUs and special schools, including academies and free schools, who meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - an overall take up of school meals lower than 43% of pupils and/or
 - less than 76% of pupils eligible for free school meals are taking up their meal entitlements and/or
 - less than 35% of non-free school meal pupils are purchasing school meals.
11. Appendix A provides information supplied by the School Food Plan. Dudley catering services are already providing a similar support to those schools taking up that traded service, however, the information will be circulated to schools within the next Budget Fact Sheet for their further consideration.

Capital Funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals

12. The Secretary of State announced capital funding grants on 18th December 2013. In respect of the universal infant free school meals capital for financial year 2014/15, Dudley's allocation is £855,308 which includes £81,388 for the voluntary aided schools. A separate grant is payable direct to Academy schools.
13. The DfE set out that it is for the Local Authority to prioritise capital expenditure according to local circumstances and expect that all local authorities will identify ways to use this funding to help schools secure the benefits of universal infant free school meals for their pupils by using the funding to improve school kitchen and dining facilities, and to support creative approaches to meeting the increase in demand for school food, such as through the expansion of hub kitchens.
14. A review of Dudley schools catering arrangements was undertaken whereby a representative from Dudley Catering Services visited all primary maintained schools to assess each school's requirements to comply with the provision of universal infant free school meals. Academy Schools were expected to apply directly to the Education Funding Agency for funding.

15. This review indicated that the capital funding of £855,308 would not be sufficient to address all areas of need therefore priorities for the funding were agreed at the Universal Free School Meals Working Group which included Headteacher and officer representation to ensure that each pupil in key stage 1 would be able to access a free school meal should they wish to take it up. The outcomes of the review are detailed in Appendix B.
16. On 16th October 2014, Mr David Laws the Secretary of State for Schools issued a communication in respect of an additional bidding round for capital funding. This is attached at Appendix C. The funding is to ensure that in all instances the meals being provided are of as high a quality as possible. To help in this, the Department is making an additional £20million of capital funding available for new projects aimed at enhancing kitchen and dining facilities
17. The DfE invited local authorities to submit prioritised bids for funding to support the delivery of UIFSM in particular schools, including voluntary aided schools by Thursday 20th November. Local authorities that wished to bid were asked to confirm that they have allocated the entire amount of UIFSM capital funding they have received from the Department to date in support of UIFSM implementation. Bidding guidance and the criteria by which the bids will be assessed was provided with the application form; attached at Appendix D
18. The criteria for submitting a bid on behalf of Dudley schools is as follows:
- Capital funding is required in order to provide hot meals, or in order to continue providing hot meals. As a minimum to be assessed against this criterion, Local Authorities will need to confirm that schools are not currently able to offer a hot meal option to infant pupils, or that schools have put a hot meal solution in place that is not viable in the longer term. Bids may include funding for capital works outside the school (e.g. expansion of a kitchen at a nearby school), if this is the best way to provide a hot meal solution.
 - Schools are currently delivering UIFSM in a way that has a significant adverse impact on other areas of school life. As a minimum to be assessed under this criterion, Local Authorities will need to show that one of both of the following applies:
 - There is an adverse impact on the delivery of areas of the school curriculum.
 - There is an adverse impact on provision of meals to other groups of pupils.
 - Schools are bringing in 250 meals or more per day (for pupils of all ages) and present strong evidence that the proposed solution will improve the quality of food/increase take up.
19. Bids needed to detail the scope of works and costs and be a minimum of £2,500 and a maximum of £250,000 per school however, bids over £150,000 needed to be supported with exceptionally strong evidence to be successful.
20. Each individual project bid must be made against one criterion, not more, even if the individual issue at the school has some overlap. The allocations from this

bidding round will be announced in January 2015 and works must be completed by August 2015. Local Authorities were also as far as possible asked to take into account the need to future proof bids against the possibility that future governments may decide to extend the universal provision to other groups of pupils.

21. Contextually for Dudley all primary schools are able to provide hot meals for the UIFSM take up, however, for Netherton Cof E primary school their arrangements are not viable in the longer term and for Lutley primary school they are delivering UIFSM with a significant adverse impact on other areas of school life. Whilst there are a number of schools who deliver more than 250 meals per day it would be difficult to evidence a new kitchen or new equipment would increase take up so this option was not a consideration in the bidding opportunity.
22. A summary of the Dudley is summarised below. Forum will be advised of the outcomes in due course.

Additional Capital Funding Bid November 2014 - UIFSM

School	Reason for submission of bid	Value
Lutley Primary School	To create an extension enabling the creation of a new dining hall and internal reorganisation of accommodation and services to ensure the existing hall and new hall can be used simultaneously to deliver meals at this three form entry school. The school currently only has one hall and this hall is being used to deliver meals, the sports curriculum and assemblies. The rollout of the UIFSM initiative is therefore causing disruption and conflict with delivering the curriculum.	£240,000
Netherton C of E Primary School	To install a new kitchen in the existing main school hall. Currently meals are being transported through a teaching area causing disruption of the school day. The dishwasher facilities can also only be accessed through internal steps through a teaching area or via external steps which poses as health and safety risk of transporting plates and equipment etc.	£230,000

Finance

23. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013.
24. Schools Forums are regulated by the regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

25. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

26. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

27. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

28. In respect of the Government's new initiative "Universal Infants Free School Meals" grant, Schools Forum to note:

- The estimated take up of the free school meal based on Dudley Catering Services latest information;
- The allocation of the initial £855,308 capital grant made available to Dudley maintained schools, as detailed in Appendix B
- The recent capital bid submitted in respect of two Dudley maintained schools.



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