



Department  
for Education

## Universal infant free school meals: capital funding bidding guidance

### About this document

1. From this September, every pupil in reception, year 1 and 2 attending a state-funded school has been entitled to a nutritious, healthy free school lunch. The guidance and funding details for this policy can be found here:

[Universal infant free school meals - Departmental advice for local authorities, maintained schools, academies and free schools: updated September 2014.](#)

2. The Department recognised that delivering this policy would create challenges for some schools and has provided significant financial support. Schools, local authorities and caterers have successfully implemented this policy, with evidence that there is just a small handful of schools unable to offer free meals to all their infants from the beginning of term. The Department's survey of local authorities and large multi-academy trusts suggested that 98.5% of schools would be offering a hot meal option to their infants from the start of the autumn term.
3. The evidence is that there is a very small number of schools which have ongoing implementation challenges that they have been unable to address. The Department has provided targeted support to schools and local authorities through the UIFSM Support Service, and the service is advising a number of these schools on solutions. Building on the successful implementation of UIFSM policy to date, the Department has decided to allocate limited additional capital funding, from the UIFSM budget, to support schools which most need it to support the effective implementation of UIFSM. This document contains guidance for local authorities on the bidding process.

### Key points about bidding process

4. This additional capital funding will be co-ordinated through local authorities, but covers all maintained schools, including those in the voluntary aided sector. Local authorities will therefore need to consult with local partners who would usually receive capital funding through the Local Authority Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP). Governing bodies of voluntary-aided schools are required to make a 10% contribution to the cost of capital works at their schools unless the Secretary of State determines that exceptional circumstances apply. In the case of this limited and

targeted pot of funding, the Secretary of State has made such a determination, and voluntary-aided schools will not be required to make a 10% contribution.

5. Local authorities are invited to bid for additional UIFSM capital funding on behalf of their maintained schools. All bids must:
  - i. Request funding for a specific list of school projects
  - ii. Prioritise these projects;
  - iii. Cost them; and
  - iv. Outline how each project meets the criteria as set out below at paragraph 9.

An application form is attached separately and must be completed for each project.

6. The government will be making an additional £20million UIFSM capital funding available. Because bids may exceed available funding, it is essential that local authorities provide strong evidence in support of their bids.
7. Academies will be able to bid for the funding through the forthcoming Condition Improvement Fund (CIF), which replaces the ACMF. Local authorities should not therefore bid on behalf of academies.
8. We will announce the allocations made through this bidding round in January 2015 and works must be completed by the end of August 2015. A timetable for the bidding process is set out below at Annex A. The funding is intended to address schools which have immediate UIFSM delivery concerns. We appreciate that some local authorities will also be working with schools on longer term projects which will be carried out beyond 2015 and which sit outside this funding. Local authorities should also, as far as is possible, take into account the need to future-proof bids against the possibility that future governments may decide to extend universal provision to other groups of pupils.

### **Assessment Criteria**

9. In assessing bids, the Department will give priority, in the following order, to applications which demonstrate that schools:
  - i. Require capital funding 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 which is not viable in the longer term.
    - Bids may include funding for capital works outside the school (for example, expansion of a kitchen at a nearby school), if this is the best way to provide a hot meal solution.

- ii. 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 or 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.
- iii. 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.
    - Under this criterion, local authorities will need to include evidence of how the proposed solution will increase take up of meals against current levels.

10. Each individual project bid must be made against one criterion, not more, even if the individual issue at the school has some overlap.

11. As part of its assessment of bids, the Department will look at the degree to which proposals represent value for money. Therefore, to support their proposals, local authorities should consider including the following evidence:

- Construction costs per m<sup>2</sup> (for projects which include building works).
- Benefits of the project, including longer term savings.
- Any other sources of funding which will be brought in to support delivery.

We will also consider the cost per meal (e.g. the total capital costs requested, less any other sources of funding, divided by the average number of all meals produced each day).

## **Applications**

12. Local authorities must provide a detailed summary of the scope of works and costs. Costs should exclude VAT, except for voluntary aided schools which should include VAT.

13. Bids must be made for a minimum of £2,500 and a maximum of £250,000 per school. Local authorities or VA school trustees may top up projects over £250,000 at their own cost. They may propose solutions which affect more than one school, scaling up accordingly. The Department wishes to allocate funds as evenly as possible across the schools which need it, so local authorities will need to provide exceptionally strong evidence for bids in excess of £150,000, given that we are expecting to approve very limited numbers of these.

14. The application form asks local authorities to confirm that the projects in question have

not already received funds from DfE and that the plans have not already been agreed. Local authorities must confirm this in order for project bids to be assessed.

15. Local authorities are also asked to confirm that they have allocated the entire amount of UIFSM capital funding already provided to them by the Department. Unless very exceptional circumstances apply, bids from local authorities that are unable to confirm this will not be prioritised for funding.
16. The UIFSM support service will carry out site visits to a sample of schools to check that delivery is on track and that projects are achieving the outputs as set out in bids.
17. Bids must be submitted to the Department to the following email address [Freeschoolmeals.MAILBOX@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Freeschoolmeals.MAILBOX@education.gsi.gov.uk) by close of play 20 November 2014. An application form is attached separately.

## Annex A: Timescale

Action	Date
Bidding round opens	16 October 2014
Local authorities prepare bids	By 20 November
DfE assesses bids	From 20 November
DfE announces allocations	By 20 January 2015

### Deadline

Bids must be submitted to the Department to the following email address [Freeschoolmeals.MAILBOX@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Freeschoolmeals.MAILBOX@education.gsi.gov.uk) by close of play 20 November 2014.

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