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**Universal Free School Meals -
Good Practice Webinar
Free School Meal Registration and Pupil
Premium**

15 June 2023

AGENDA

UFSM Good Practice Webinar

Thursday 15 June 2023, 12.00-13.00 via Teams

	Item	Timing
1	Welcome	5 min
2	Free School Registration Myles Bremner, CEO Bremner & Co	15 min
4	A School Business Manger Approach Hasib Hikmat, School Business Manger, Olga Primary School Tower Hamlets	10 min
	Islington Approach Debbie Stevenson, Head of Schools & Early Year Finance Services, LB Islington	15 min
5	Questions	15 min
6	Close	5 min

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- To understand different approaches boroughs and schools have taken to enable a successful registration of free school meals.
- To share best practice examples of how boroughs and schools have encouraged encourages, parents, families and carers to register for free school meals.
- To learn how boroughs have worked with schools to get eligible parents to sign up for free school meals.
- To share practical solutions to challenges that universal free school meals has on pupil premium.



Free School Meal Registration

Good Practice Webinar

Myles Bremner
15 June 2023

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FSM Registrations – what's going on?

Some of the national context includes:

- DfE Transitional Protections mean that those already registered for FSM will continue to receive FSM and Pupil Premium until 2025 (and then until end of their stage of schooling)
- Roll-out of London Mayor KS2 universal primary will not affect those already registered
- You should be able to continue existing processes you have in place for KS1
- There is a wider issue of under-registration – but not known!
- Pilots and programmes under-way to explore better processes
 - Gaining explicit consent at different benefits touchpoints
 - Use of opt-out 'right to object'

Advice for Boroughs

Whilst recognising that there is no one size fits all....

- Do you have a best practice process flow agreed with your schools?
- Does FSM registration always flow through with the pupil Common Transfer File?
- How consistent is your passporting of information from your benefits teams to schools?
- Have you considered other benefits contact points or opt-out mechanisms?



"It's been really important for us to work out how different teams come together to ensure schools are properly supported"

Advice for Schools

Let's hear from the brilliant SBM Angela Boilson



The

Whilst recognising that NONE of this is EASY or STRAIGHT-FORWARD:

- Incentivise
- Present it as 'compulsory' and 'universal'
- Make sure your Borough is supporting you properly!

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**HASIB HIKMAT
SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER
OLGA PRIMARY SCHOOL, TOWER HAMLETS**

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ELIGIBILITY CHECKER



Free School Meals
Eligibility Checker

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LGfL 



Free School Meals
Eligibility Checker

08.06.2023 - This issue has now been resolved.

07.06.2023 - We have been informed that there is a problem with the link to the DWP when carrying out eligibility checks. We will keep you updated on this.

Help obtain government funding for your child's school in England!

Did you know the government gives additional funding to schools for those children entitled to free school meals?

Schools use this money to obtain additional staff and resources that help improve the quality of education.

To find out whether your child qualifies for free school meals, and hence whether their school would receive additional funding, please fill in the details requested on this site.



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GLA Good Practice Islington approach

Debbie Stevenson: Head of Schools & Early Years Finance Services

Context

- May 2009: Members agreed Free School Meals would be provided to all primary aged children
- 6 x pilot schools were identified to commence September 2009 – chosen by: demographics; FSM % and meal take-up
- All remaining schools to 'go live' 8 March 2010
- Islington were using paper based forms for FSM assessment

Challenges

- Resources
- Increased meal take-up; capacity to deliver; kitchen equipment
- Potential loss of income to schools, linked to FSM eligibility:
 - Funding Formula
 - Grants
 - *Latterly Pupil Premium*

Islington approach: Overview

- Every primary aged child to be assessed for FSM eligibility prior to roll-out
 - 13,000 on roll
 - Parents to register (and supply income banding)
- Introduce a differing use of language:
 - Application vs Registration = Secondary vs Primary
 - FSM = FSM eligible (National Criteria)
 - Permitted = permitted to have a meal through Islington's UFSM policy as child has been assessed for FSMs under the National Criteria but deemed ineligible
 - Not eligible = child has not been assessed for FSMs and therefore not permitted to have a meal

Islington approach: How (Then)

- Regular communications / advertising with schools & parents
 - Letters / Flyers
 - Registration Forms (incl benefits for completing) – asks for the same information as for FSM eligibility assessment
- Focused engagement with School Business Managers
 - Briefings
 - Small group training sessions – led by LA but with support from members of 6 schools
 - How to record a child's meal uptake in SIMS
- Use of admissions and census data – to cross check returned forms to those listed in the school
 - Schools returned in batches – not individual forms
- Expanded FSM team assessed forms, updated central system and sent regular reports to schools
 - Each school had link FSM officer
- Annual process continued for 2-3 years
- Labour intensive – Resource heavy

Impact on initial roll-out of UFSM

- On average:
 - Return rate of forms: 90% - 95%
 - Take-up of meals: 28% increase overall (58% to 86%)
 - Increase in FSM eligibility: 10% increase (ranged between 0% - 16%)

Islington approach / How (Now)

- Islington use an online system to assess FSM eligibility
 - Linking directly to FSM module and reports
- Registration process applicable to September intakes, plus any in-year starters
- Once a parent has registered: details remain in the system and audited every summer
- FSM eligibility: transitional Universal credits arrangements means FSM eligible pupils will continue to be eligible until 31 March 2025, and then to the end of school phase they are in

Statistics: Now

- On average:
 - Return rate of forms: 85% - 90%
 - Take-up of meals: pre-pandemic 88%, now 84%
 - FSM eligibility: demographically reduced over the period, increasing again since and during pandemic

Key Messages

- Work closely with and fully engage with School Business Managers
- Schools are already working to a process as part of KS1 offer from DfE
- Resources are in place for whichever systems used

Questions

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