



WORDS FROM WESTMINSTER
Friday 14th February 2014

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HoC: Oral question to the Schools Minister concerning free school meal entitlement – 10.02.14

Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough) (Lab): Many children who are entitled to free school meals do not receive that benefit, often because parental embarrassment or a lack of English mean that the application is not made. Will the Minister ensure that those children are passported through on the basis of benefit assessments already made in respect of those families?

David Laws (Schools Minister): This is a very important issue, because take-up of free school meals is quite low in some parts of the country. We are working with local authorities to improve the identification of the children who are so entitled, with some considerable success. As we introduce universal infant free meals, we will also look at ways in which we can make this more automatic for all the pupils who are entitled to extra funding for free school meals and the pupil premium.

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HoC: Written questions to the Secretary of State for Education – 10.02.14

John Woodcock (Lab, Barrow and Furness): To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the number of schools in (a) Barrow and Furness constituency and (b) Cumbria that will require additional staffing expenditure to allow the introduction of universal free school meals. [186785]

David Laws (Minister for Schools): This information is not held centrally.

In his autumn statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced over £1 billion of revenue funding for universal free school meals for pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 between 2014 and 2016. This funding, which includes special provision of £22.5 million for small schools in 2014-15, will be used by schools to pay for the cost of producing school lunches for newly eligible pupils, including staffing costs.

John Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what estimate he has made of the number of schools in (a) Barrow and Furness constituency and (b) Cumbria which will require capital investment to allow introduction of universal free school meals.

Mr Laws: This information is not held centrally.

In his autumn statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £150 million of capital funding to support schools in implementing the policy of universal free school meals for pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.

The details of the capital allocations for universal infant free school meals by local authority were announced on 18 December (1) .

£21 million of the available funding has been added to the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund, to which academies are able to bid to improve their kitchen or dining facilities.

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HoL: Written question to the Government concerning capital funding for schools – 10.02.14

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to ensure value for money in the allocation of capital funds to schools to deliver the free school meals initiative. [HL5138]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools (Lord Nash) (Con): The Department for Education has allocated £150 million capital in 2014-15 to support schools in providing the universal infant school meals entitlement from September 2014.

Column: 105

Funding for maintained schools will be given to local authorities, rather than directly to schools. Authorities will then decide how best to target their funding according to local need, but we would expect them to consider the value for money offered in each case in the same way that they do for other projects they manage.

Funding for academies will be delivered through the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund, to which academies may bid if they need to upgrade kitchen or dining facilities. In assessing all bids to the Fund, the Education Funding Agency looks to ensure that the project being proposed achieves good value for money.

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Welsh Assembly: Question to the Minister for Finance concerning extra funding to Wales as a result of the Barnett consequential from the UK Government's FSM policy – 13.02.14

Aled Roberts (North Wales): How much in total revenue and capital funding will the Welsh Government receive over the next two years 2014-2016 as a result of Barnett consequential from the UK Government's policy on free school meals for all infants? (WAQ66402)

The Minister for Finance (Jane Hutt): The revenue and capital funding being received by the Welsh Government over the next two years; 2014/15 and 2015/16, as a result of Barnett consequential from the UK Government's Autumn Statement is as follows:

Financial Year	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Revenue	66.7	74.1
Capital	9.8	41.1

These numbers comprise a number of positive and negative consequential and those relating to the UK Government's policy on free school meals for infants are:

Financial Year	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Revenue	25.8	36.5
Capital	4.0	0.0

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Press Release: Free school dinners take next step at Southwark – 10.02.14

Schools in Southwark have been getting top tips on how to get the best from their catering companies, find the best deals and think about local produce.

The tips and advice were part of a council event to move its successful Free Healthy School Meal initiative forward.

Southwark Council already offers a free healthy and hot school meal to every pupil, from reception to year six, who attends one of its primary schools in the borough.

Uptake is currently at around 92 per cent, which is almost twice the national average, and the council has spent the last few years investing around £500,000 into school kitchens and dining rooms so they are able to cater for the increased demand.

Now, as schools in the rest of the country are preparing to implement free meals for four to seven-year-olds, Southwark is taking its own initiative a step further - supporting schools to make better

catering choices and get both best value for money, and the healthiest food they can. Around 16 schools attended the council's first ever catering support event to hear from experts at the Children's Food Trust on the technical and legal aspects of running a successful catering contract, and on getting the best from their suppliers.

Councillor Dora Dixon Fyle, cabinet member for children's services, said: "We have already shown the rest of the country that it is more than possible to offer a free, hot and nutritious meal to all of our pupils, and we know the quality is there because of the numbers of children we have enjoying them.

"But our work doesn't end there. Now we want to ensure schools have the right information and support to run their catering contracts, meet any requirements under contract law, get the best value, and start to think about where the food is coming from, using local suppliers for example."

Jane Howard, Bursar at Southwark Park Road primary school, said: "The whole tendering thing can be quite intimidating but it is good to come to an event and see what other schools are doing."

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