

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 21 AUGUST 2023

REPORT ON: AMENDMENT TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR FREE SCHOOL MEAL HOLIDAY SUPPORT

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT NO: 223-2023

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend an amendment to the arrangements for free school meal holiday support.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to approve:

- 2.1 The expansion of the free school meal holiday support payment eligibility criteria to include P4 & P5 pupils of families in receipt of a school clothing grant; and
- 2.2 Increase the value of free school meal holiday support payments for P1- S6 from £2.25 per day to £2.40 per day for 64 days of school holidays.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Scottish Government funding to the Council is included within the 2023/24 Local Government settlement - £890,000 of this is for the provision of free school meal holiday support.
- 3.2 The cost of providing free school meal holiday support to 5,747 children at £2.40 per day for 64 days is £882,739. The number of eligible children can increase/decrease on an ongoing basis as entitlement to qualifying benefits changes.
- 3.3 Any family who becomes newly eligible to receive support during the school holidays would be eligible to receive this support from the date they became eligible.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Government has provided £21.75 million to local authorities in 2023/24 towards the continued targeted implementation of free school meal holiday support for eligible P1-S6 pupils.
- 4.2 The funding is provided to enable the provision of free school meal holiday support to all primary and secondary children on the basis of low income. The current eligibility criteria are where the parent/guardian is in receipt of any of the following benefits:
- Universal Credit (where their earned income is not more than (£726)
 - Income Support
 - Income - Based Job Seeker's Allowance
 - Income – Based Employment and Support Allowance

- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and their income is less than £18,725
 - Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and have an income of up to £8,717
- 4.3 Applications for free school meal holiday support payments are not required, families are identified automatically based on information held by the Benefit Delivery Team. This ensures maximum take up of available support.
- 4.4 As detailed in the Policy & Resources Report 191-2021, Dundee City Council's current criteria for free school meal holiday support payments is as follows:
- P1 - P3 free school meal holiday support is paid to those families in receipt of the school clothing grant at £2.25 per day
 - P4 – S6 free school meal holiday support is paid to families who are eligible for free school meals on the basis of low income at £2.25 per day
- 4.5 This criteria was set in 2020 during the global pandemic for ease of administration and was made when universal free school meals were available to children in P1 – P3 only. No change was made to the criteria with the expansion of universal free school meals to P4 and P5 children in the 2021/22 academic school year.
- 4.6 The proposal is to:
- expand the criteria for free school meal holiday support payments from P1 – P3 to P1 - P5 to those families in receipt of a school clothing grant; and
 - increase the daily payment from £2.25 to £2.40.
- 4.7 Expanding the criteria to those families who receive a school clothing grant in P4 & P5, supports those families most financially vulnerable whilst the increase in the daily free school meal holiday support payment supports all families in receipt of free school meals.
- 4.8 Any family who becomes newly eligible to receive free school meals during a school holiday period would be eligible to receive this support from the date they become eligible.
- 4.9 The Scottish Government has provided funding to the Council of £890,000 for this financial year. This is based on £2.50 per pupil for 60 days of school holidays and equates to £150 per child per year.
- 4.10 Based on Dundee City Council current criteria, and the expansion of universal free school meals to P4 & P5 which includes children receiving a school clothing grant, the cost of providing free school meal holiday support to 5,747 children at £2.50 per day is £919,520.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of the mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

**ROBERT EMMOTT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

21 AUGUST 2023

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Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 223-2023

Document Title: Free School Meal Holiday Support

Document Type: Policy

Description:

Expansion of Free School meal Holiday Support eligibility criteria.

Intended Outcome:

Increased numbers receiving financial support during school holiday periods.

Period Covered: 01/10/2023 to 05/08/2024

Monitoring:

Number of young people awarded a holiday support payment and budget monitoring.

Lead Author:

Catherine Paterson, Snr Manager Customer Services & Benefit Delivery , Corporate Services,

Catherine.paterson@dundee.gov.uk , 01382 431293,

Floor 3, Dundee House

Director Responsible:

Robert Emmott, Exec Director of Corporate Services , Corporate Services

Robert.emmott@dundee.gov.uk, 01382 433633

50 North Lindsay Street

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: Positive

An increased number of young people will be entitled to a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Disability: No Impact

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No Impact

Pregnancy & Maternity: No Impact

Race / Ethnicity: No Impact

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

No

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine:	Positive
Lochee:	Positive
Coldside:	Positive
Maryfield:	Positive
North East:	Positive
East End:	Positive
The Ferry:	Positive
West End:	Positive

Positive Implications: Increased number of young people will receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Positive

Increased number of eligible children can receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Carers: Positive

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Increased number of eligible children can receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Lone Parent Families: Positive

Increased number of eligible children will receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Single Female Households with Children: Positive

Increased number of eligible children will receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Greater number of children and/or young children: Positive

Increased number of eligible children will receive a Free School meal holiday support payment.

Pensioners - single / couple: Positive

There are a significant number of pensioners who are acting as Kinship carers - this change can have a positive impact on these families.

Unskilled workers or unemployed: No Impact

Serious & enduring mental health problems: No Impact

Homeless: No Impact

Drug and/or alcohol problems: No Impact

Offenders & Ex-offenders: No Impact

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: No Impact

Education & Skills: No Impact

Income: Positive

Increased income to the households of families with eligible children.

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): Positive

Increased income to the households of families who are caring for eligible children

Affordability and accessibility of services: No Impact

Fuel Poverty: No Impact

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: Positive

Increased income to the households of families with eligible children

Connectivity / Internet Access: No Impact

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation Positive

Increased income to the households of families with eligible children

Employment Opportunities: No Impact

Education: No Impact

Health: No Impact

Life Expectancy: No Impact

Mental Health: No Impact

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: No Impact

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: No Impact

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: No Impact

Adapting to the effects of climate change: No Impact

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: No Impact

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: No Impact

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: Positive

The proposal is intended to provide increased financial support to a greater number of children throughout the city, supporting the councils objective to reduce child poverty and inequalities.

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: No Impact

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.

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