

SCHOOL BREAKFAST BILL

6 children in every class of 30 are at risk of starting the day too hungry to learn. The School Breakfast Bill will give state funded primary and secondary schools the support they require to provide a free breakfast to pupils, where there is evidence of need, or where a specific request is made. This will ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit fully from the education system and have the chance to reach their full potential, levelling up opportunities for young people across the country.

POLICY PROPOSAL

The School Breakfast Bill will apply to all state funded primary and secondary schools including academies, free schools, special schools, and pupil referral units. The bill will apply to England only, as education is a devolved issue.

The bill will give schools with significant evidence of need the support they require to provide a free nutritious breakfast, that meets School Food Standards, to all children. 'Significant evidence of need' will be defined as schools with at least 50% of pupils in IDACI bands A-F. IDACI, The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index, estimates the number of children living in low income households and bands A-F signify the highest levels of deprivation. Schools will be guaranteed additional funding to cover the costs of food, delivery and additional staff time, which will be incorporated into the National Funding Formula, and scaled to the number of children receiving a free school breakfast.

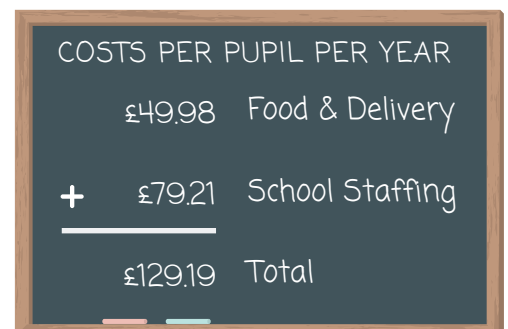
The bill will also place a requirement on the Department for Education (DfE) to provide funding for the food and delivery costs of providing school breakfasts in schools which do not have 50% of pupils in IDACI bands A-F if a request is made by a school. In their requests, schools would need to demonstrate the need within their school and submit a proposal demonstrating a commitment to identify and reach children who stand to benefit most with a nutritious free school breakfast that is provided without stigma.

All schools receiving funds to provide free school breakfasts would be required to adhere to a set of terms and conditions, designed to ensure funding reaches children at risk of hunger. Schools would be required to report on funds spent annually by submitting a report to DfE and publishing the report on their website.

COST

8,723 schools in England fall within the threshold of 'significant need'. Assuming half of all pupils within these schools take up the offer of free breakfast every day, 1,775,230 children would benefit from the policy. This will cost between £88.7m and £229.3m, depending on the extent to which staffing costs are covered by the Government's wider childcare funding commitments.

An estimated additional 446,000 children are at risk of hunger, but do not attend a school meeting the threshold of 'significant need'. A £6.7m fund, which schools could apply to, is proposed to reach these children.



| COSTS PER PUPIL PER YEAR | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| £49.98 | Food & Delivery |
| + | £79.21 School Staffing |
| <hr/> | |
| £129.19 | Total |

The estimated annual cost of this bill is between £95m and £236m, depending on the extent to which staffing costs are covered by the Government's wider childcare funding commitments.



WHY THIS BILL IS NEEDED

1.8 million school age children are currently living in a household experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, where families are compromising on the quantity and quality of the food they consume. This contributes to an educational attainment gap, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds more than 19 months behind their wealthier peers by the time they leave school. These children are twice as likely to leave school without Level 2 Qualifications, limiting their further education and employment opportunities.

IMPACT

An Institute for Fiscal Studies evaluation found that Year 2 pupils in schools with universal free school breakfast provision made two months additional academic progress, compared to children in schools with no breakfast provision.

The University of Leeds found that children who ate breakfast regularly achieved an average of 2 GCSE grades higher than children who rarely ate breakfast. DfE research has found that a child who achieves 1-2 good GCSE's contributes an additional £141,000 to the economy over their lifetime.

Teachers also report school breakfasts lead to improvements in children's behaviour, concentration, social skills, emotional and mental well being and healthy eating habits.

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL): The SDIL raises approximately £340m annually and is hypothecated for programmes benefiting school children's diets and physical activity. DfE currently provides approximately £12m annually for school breakfasts using revenue from the SDIL. Parliamentary Questions tabled in June 2019, revealed that approximately £54m of the revenue raised in 2018/19 was unspent. This unspent SDIL revenue could be allocated to fund the costs of this bill.

Unspent Funds from Free School Meals (FSM): DfE allocated £505m to fund FSM in 2018/19. However, based on the number of children actually taking up free school meals each day, Feeding Britain estimates £88 million of this budget is unspent. On the days that children do not eat their FSM (largely due to absence) their entitlement is wiped from their card and money earmarked for disadvantaged children disappears. This is an example of how the current school food budget could be spent more efficiently to ensure children at risk of hunger have access to a free school breakfast and lunch.