

School Meals Strategy

Establishing a local strategy informed by local needs. The team provides strategic advice and policy leadership for schools and partners in order to extend the quality and provision of school meals with special reference to disadvantaged groups.

In September 2005 the government introduced mandatory nutritional standards, which are set out in the Education Nutritional Standards for School Lunches (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/1777) School Standards and Framework Act 1998: Section 114. The Leeds school meals strategy responds to this government policy.

The School Meals Team due to financial restrictions is represented by the Leeds School Meals Strategy Adviser and is delivered by working in partnership across a range of key partners in the city including NHS and the voluntary sector, and Education Leeds departments including healthy schools and well being programme.

The Leeds school meals strategy responds to the government mandatory policy that aims to transform school food. The Leeds strategy aims to establish a school meals service that meets the needs of children and young people. The development of the policy adopted core social marketing principles that gathered local insights to inform an intervention mix that would establish a sustainable school meals service.

The service plan supports the five Leeds major school meal providers, and a range of partners, but focuses on supporting schools pupils and parents.

The programme of work today focuses on developing policy frameworks and bespoke resources to help family's schools and partners.

Since the policy inception increasing uptake of school lunches has become at the forefront of work by the DCSF to improve eating habits of school age children. It responds to evidence that a healthy lunch can have a positive impact on children's behaviour and on their performance at school. However, changing perceptions of school meals and marketing them as an attractive and healthy lunchtime option continues to be a challenge.

The Leeds strategy adopts a fully engaged and coordinated city wide approach, that is to have a positive impact on the health and economic outcomes of Leeds children and young people.

In April 2009 Ed Balls wrote to regional government offices, local authorities and schools, requesting that school meals should be prioritised. Copies of the letters are available on www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolmeals

Explaining how in partnership with schools, local authorities and parents, the Government is currently embarking on an ambitious programme to transform the quality and take-up of school food. School Food transformation is a central plank in our wider work to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils and to ensure their readiness to learn. It contributes directly to achievement of the 'Be Healthy' Every Child Matters outcome and the Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target on child obesity. Its importance is further recognised by the inclusion of 'school lunch

take-up' as an indicator for the child health PSA and National Indicator Set; and by its place as one of four components of the joint DCSF/DH Healthy Schools Programme.

The Government's ambitions in this area are growing. The 21st Century Schools White Paper proposed as part of the pupil guarantee that every pupil goes to a Healthy School that promotes healthy eating, an active lifestyle and emotional health and well-being. We see eating a healthy school lunch as a key part of meeting that guarantee. Ofsted and DCSF have also published well-being indicators that they expect schools to use in self-evaluation and Ofsted to use when forming judgements on well-being; these include take up of school lunches.

School meals policy is the only Government healthy eating policy. The nutrition standards include robust measurable outcome. From April 2009 the DCSF require LA to collate school lunch uptake data to systematically calculate the national indicator (NI 52) as a measure of health improvement outcomes. Local authorities are required to report on uptake figures annually.

This data is already routinely/termly collected from schools by Education Leeds Finance Team and Performance Management Information Team to meet DCSF requirements. The quality of data and the flow of information are currently being improved as part of the Leeds school meals strategy in partnership with PMIT.

LCC school meals catering service is LA universal service to an estimated 110,000 Leeds children and young people at an estimated cost of £10 million per year.

Under the revised Ofsted inspection framework from September 2009, when assessing a school's performance on the health and wellbeing agenda includes assessment of the pupil's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy learning. This judgement also includes assessment of the ***extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles***, and includes evaluation criteria of progress for an increased uptake of school meals (especially free). It also assesses the ***contribution made by the school to the well-being of those pupils*** – (this also includes assessment of school meal uptake), improvements to the dining room environment social experience and evidence for pupil involvement in decision making. The second judgement is about the ***schools capacity for sustained improvement***. This will also include assessment of the school meals service offer for value for money, and (where applicable) school meals monitored through targets set out in the school catering contract e.g. the catering Service Level Agreements (SLA).

The new Healthy Schools 2009 Enhancement Model – Includes 'Universal' targets that reflect the Leeds health and wellbeing priority for reducing childhood obesity. Improvements to school meals and increasing paid and free school meal uptake can support this new policy framework and provide measurable, meaningful early success indicators.

Narrow the inequalities gap – Increasing free school meal uptake narrows the inequalities gap by reducing food poverty and improves access to healthy and nutritious food for vulnerable families.

School Report Card - Annual risk assessment for all schools, school meals offers improvements to health through increased school meal uptake

Subject Ofsted - From September 2009 unannounced Ofsted visits will include healthy eating as 'subject focused' assessment. The assessment will consider evidence of: compliance towards nutrition standards; monitoring school meal uptake;

an increase of free school meal uptake; and evidence that school meals is embedded in the schools curriculum and other activities.

Valuing diversity - A full account of policies includes diversity. The Leeds Cultural and Religious School Food Policy provide guidance to schools, and include minimum requirements informed by Leeds community faith leaders. The policy supports schools wishing to promote inclusion, promote diversity and foster community relations and demonstrate how their school meals service reflects diversity of their schools children and young peoples dietary needs.

The 2009, Ofsted inspection framework takes into consideration the governor's role in ensuring the schools comply with the standards and assesses school meal uptake against the health and well being outcomes, evidenced in the schools SEF section C. The impact of schools addressing school meals supports the new inspection framework. From April 2009 the CAA will provide collective accountability to local people for the use of public money. The CAA will focus on outcomes in the Local Area Agreement. CAA 2009 assessment Block C covering 15 core judgements across children services judged **Be Healthy** and the uptake of school meals.

The service is assessed direct to School meals team on 9th Floor west Merrion house. It is supported by a comprehensive web portal:
www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolmeals.

The policies and programmes of work developed and implemented are considered exemplar and are utilised by other local authorities.

The May 2009 head teacher survey found that school value the service and support of the school meals team , and have begun utilising the evidence based policies and toolkit to help them achieve their health goals.

