



Government consultation on eligibility for free school meals and the early years pupil premium under Universal Credit

The Children's Society response (submitted online)

Question 1 – Do you agree with our proposed net earnings threshold to determine eligibility for free school meals and the early years pupil premium under Universal Credit?

No.

The Children's Society

The Children's Society is a national charity that runs local services, helping children and young people when they are at their most vulnerable, and have nowhere left to turn. We also campaign for changes to laws affecting children and young people, to stop the mistakes of the past being repeated in the future. Building on our 136-year history of tackling child poverty, we continue to engage with decision makers to help disadvantaged families get the support they need to escape poverty and give their children the best start in life. In 2016/17 we worked with over 13,000 vulnerable children and young people in our services.

Summary

1. Up to now the Government has allowed all claimants on Universal Credit to receive free school meals. Introducing the proposed net earnings threshold of £7,400 represents a huge step backwards from this position for the following key reasons, which we expand on below:
 - i) A million children in poverty will miss out on a free school meal.
 - ii) It deeply undermines the principle of 'making work pay' and the likely success of Universal Credit.
 - iii) Free school meals bring crucial educational and health benefits, and stop children going hungry.
2. We therefore recommend instead that all Universal Credit claimants should continue to be eligible for free school meals. We also discuss the estimated costs of maintaining this policy and potential options for reducing these costs.
3. Finally, we explore the implications for the pupil premium and measuring the performance of disadvantaged pupils.

Concerns with the proposals

A million children in poverty will miss out on a free school meal

4. Our calculations show that around a million children in poverty in England will miss out on free school meals under the current proposals, almost entirely in working families. It also means that a total of around 1.1 million children will lose out on free school meals compared to if Universal Credit completes its rollout under existing legislation. These

figures are solely for children in Year 3 and above as all infants receive universal infant free school meal provision.

5. If the Government instead continues its policy of free school meals for everyone on Universal Credit, then we can ensure that all children in poverty will be entitled to a free school meal.
6. As with the current legacy benefits criteria, the Government's proposed criteria under Universal Credit will mean that it is children in low income working families who miss out on free school meals. The latest data from the Department for Work and Pensions¹ shows that two thirds of children living in poverty are in working households. Many of these will not be entitled to free school meals under the proposed criteria.
7. Our calculations, using data from the Department for Education's school lunch take-up survey 2013/14² updated by CPI inflation³, show that free school meals are worth around £405 a year per child to a family. This is based on an average cost to parents of a school meal of £2.13 and a school year of 190 days.
8. This cost can represent a substantial proportion of a struggling family's income (even if they are in work) - over £1,200 per year for a family with three children.
9. In addition, free school meals often act as a passport to other support, such as help with school clothing, trips or music lessons, or discounted access to leisure facilities. This means that entitlement to free school meals can be worth significantly more to struggling families than just the direct meal value itself.
10. Free school meals are a significant poverty alleviation tool and this is the primary reason that the Government should ensure that all children living in poverty receive them. The rollout of Universal Credit, which necessitates new free school meal criteria, is the golden opportunity to do this.
11. The existing legislation – which enables all families in receipt of Universal Credit to receive free school meals – achieves this goal. It is disappointing that the Government is proposing to change this situation.

--- Further calculation details ---

12. All the calculations above focus only on children in Year 3 and above as children below Year 3 are covered by universal infant free school meal provision. To do this we apply a percentage of 52% to any primary school pupil number data used and add this to the secondary school data. 52% represents the proportion of the total primary school population in England who are in Year 3 or above, based on national data from the Department for Education⁴.
13. We initially estimate the numbers of children (i) entitled to, (ii) eligible for and (iii) actually receiving free school meals under the current legacy benefits system.
14. According to the Government's consultation document, the proposed £7,400 earnings threshold under Universal Credit would make around 50,000 more pupils than are at present eligible for free school meals, once the policy is fully rolled out. We therefore adjust the figures we obtain under the legacy system for this additional 50,000 in order to present estimates under the Government's proposals.
15. Data from the Department for Education⁵ (after applying 52% to the primary school population as described above) shows the following under the legacy benefits system:

- There are 5,794,000 pupils in England in Year 3 and above.
 - 801,000 of these are 'eligible for and claiming' free school meals. This means they are entitled and actively register a claim for free school meals.
 - 640,000 of these actually took a free school meal on school census day. We refer to these as 'receiving free school meals'.
16. We also estimate the number of children entitled to claim free school meals under the current legacy benefit criteria (including those who don't register). There are extensive criteria but families are normally entitled if they are not eligible for Working Tax Credit – this means that they are working under 16 hours per week (or 24 hours for couples) and their income is under £16,190 per annum.
17. Based on tax credit data from HM Revenue and Customs⁶ there are 2,308,000 children in families in the UK receiving only untapered child tax credit or the child premium on income support. This represents a good estimate for the number of children entitled to free school meals. According to data from the Department for Work and Pensions⁷ there were 13,600,000 children in the UK for the same period. This means that approximately 17% of children are entitled to free school meals. Applying this proportion to the total school population above shows that around 983,000 children in England in Year 3 and above are entitled to free school meals under the current legacy benefits system.
18. The figures above imply that currently only around 81.5% of children entitled to free school meals actually register for them (to become 'eligible and claiming') and that only around 79.9% of these actually take up their free school meal. This means that overall only around 65.1% of children entitled to free school meals actually receive them.
19. Our previous research⁸ showed the main reasons why take-up rates for free school meals are so low. It found considerable stigma attached to the receipt of free school meals, meaning many children do not take up their meal due to teasing, bullying and a feeling of being looked down on by others. The quality of meals or limited choice is also an issue for some, whilst participation in lunchtime activities excludes some children from being able to eat their meal.
20. Adjusting the figures above where relevant for the projected 50,000 increase in children eligible for free school meals under the Government's proposals results in the following estimates under Universal Credit with a £7,400 earnings threshold:
- 5,794,000 pupils in England in Year 3 and above.
 - 1,045,000 of these entitled to free school meals.
 - 851,000 of these eligible for and claiming free school meals.
 - 680,000 of these receiving free school meals.
21. Data from the Department for Work and Pensions⁹ shows that 29% of children in England are living in poverty (with poverty defined as having equivalised household income after housing costs of less than 60% of the contemporary median). Applying this to the pupil population above implies that approximately 1,680,000 children in England in Year 3 and above are living poverty.
22. Comparing the above estimates of the number of children in poverty with the number of children receiving free school meals shows that around 1,000,000 children living in poverty will miss out on a free school meal under the Government's proposals. This is very similar to the number of children in poverty who currently miss out under the legacy benefits system.

23. For our calculation that around 1.1 million children will lose out on a free school meal compared to if Universal Credit completes its rollout under existing legislation, see paragraphs 63 to 65.

--- Migrant children who cannot access free school meals ---

24. It should be noted that even our proposal to extend free school meal eligibility to all families claiming Universal Credit would not help many children living in the most acute levels of poverty. Access to free school meals and associated welfare support is often entirely out of reach for two groups of children. These are children in families whose immigration status is unresolved (making them 'undocumented'), and children in families with the legal right to remain in this country but with a condition attached of having 'no recourse to public funds' ('NRPF').

25. Our previous research¹⁰ found that there are 144,000 undocumented children living in England and Wales. These children and their parents often face stark levels of destitution and safeguarding risks. Children who are undocumented are not entitled to receive any passported benefits such as free school meals, free childcare for two year-old children and other support available to low income families on the basis of welfare entitlement. However, some local authorities use discretionary funds to provide school lunches even though they are not entitled.

26. Children with parents who have limited leave to remain in the UK are also not entitled to access free school meals because their parents cannot access mainstream welfare benefits as a result of the NRPF condition. Our practice and research in this area has shown that most of the families with limited leave to remain and NRPF are working households.

27. Our research found that some schools were known to be cooperative and supportive of such families, for instance by funding free school meals from discretionary funds. However, this depends on the individual school and is more challenging for those in areas with larger numbers of these families.

28. Destitution remains a stark reality for undocumented migrant children and those living in families with no recourse to public funds. Without further reform to the way free school meals are accessed, these families will continue to receive no help with their food costs, even under our proposals to maintain free school meal eligibility for all children in families claiming Universal Credit.

The proposal deeply undermines the principle of 'making work pay'

29. The second key reason why the Government's proposal is problematic is that it introduces a significant work incentive problem into the Universal Credit system. This problem exists neither in the legacy benefit system, nor at the moment under Universal Credit where currently all claimants are eligible for free school meals.

30. The Government insists that Universal Credit will support families into work, ensuring they are always better off for every hour that they work. In the foreword to the white paper on Universal Credit, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions at the time said: "Universal Credit: welfare that works marks the beginning of a new contract between people who have and people who have not. At its heart, Universal Credit is very simple and will ensure that work always pays and is seen to pay. Universal Credit

will mean that people will be consistently and transparently better off for each hour they work and every pound they earn.”¹¹

31. But this proposal deeply undermines that objective. In fact, many families will actually end up on a lower overall income as a result of taking on additional work.
32. A family with three children currently earning just under the proposed £7,400 income limit would lose over £1,200 each year if they were to work a few more hours or get a pay rise. To make up for this they would have to increase their annual wages from £7,400 to over £11,000; equivalent to over a day of extra work every week at the expected National Living Wage in 2020 (7.8 additional hours per week).
33. Even with just one child, a similar family would have to work 2.4 additional hours every week to make up for the loss of free school meals. With two children they would have to work 5.1 additional hours per week.
34. This benefits 'cliff edge' doesn't normally occur in the legacy benefits system because Working Tax Credit provides an offsetting income boost at the point free school meals are withdrawn. There is no equivalent mitigation in Universal Credit.
35. Maintaining eligibility to free school meals for everybody on Universal Credit would mean this 'cliff edge' would occur at much higher earnings, which would greatly reduce its significance and give more support to working families with a slightly higher income who are nevertheless living in poverty.
36. Even with an inevitable 'cliff edge' effect remaining at the higher income level, its significance is also greatly softened because the income required to overcome it is substantially lower once a family's earnings are high enough to escape the Universal Credit system. This is because they only have deductions made from their earnings at the rate of 32% (for tax and national insurance) compared to typical deduction rates of at least 63% for a family in receipt of Universal Credit.
37. Furthermore, under our proposal, the earnings level at which free school meals would be withdrawn would better reflect different household circumstances and levels of need (particularly the number of children in the household) than under the Government's proposed fixed earnings limit. This is because a larger family will maintain Universal Credit entitlement until a higher earnings point than a smaller family - reflecting a higher level of need.
38. Finally, from a policy implementation perspective, introducing an earnings threshold for free school meal entitlement also adds complexity arising from having to define a point at which earnings are assessed and then defining how the free school meal provision duration should relate to this. This will present problems particularly for families with fluctuating earnings, who due to the nature of their employment may frequently dip above and below the earnings threshold in any given period.

--- Further calculation details ---

39. Our calculations above showed that free school meals are worth around £405 a year per child to a family.
40. If a family with one child currently earns just under the proposed £7,400 limit but then earns a penny more they will lose £405 worth of free school meals. This means they will need to increase their net income (after deductions for tax, national insurance and benefit withdrawals) by £405 per year to make up for the loss.

41. In that region of earnings, most families will remain below the income tax personal allowance. But earnings will be subject to national insurance deductions at a rate of 12% over £8,164. More importantly, under the Universal Credit taper, for every additional pound earned (net of national insurance) 63 pence will be deducted from a household's benefit entitlement. These steep deductions mean that a family will need to earn an additional £1,140 in gross earnings to recover the £405 loss. At a wage rate of £9 per hour (the projected level of the National Minimum Wage in 2020), this translates to an additional 2.4 hours work per week.
42. The figures for a family with two children or three children are obtained using the same methodology.

Free school meals bring crucial educational and health benefits, and stop children going hungry

43. A third key reason not to introduce the proposed earnings threshold is that guaranteeing a healthy meal for more children brings significant positive educational and health benefits, and stop children going hungry.
44. Free school meals enable children to have an adequate meal when there may be reductions on food spending at home. For some disadvantaged children a free school lunch may often be the only healthy cooked food they get, and for some it can be their only meal of the day.
45. The School Food Plan¹², commissioned by the Department for Education as an evaluation of extending free school meals to all infant children, found evidence that this would lead to positive improvements in attainment and social cohesion. In pilot areas students were on average two months ahead of their peers elsewhere and academic improvements were most marked among children from less affluent families.
46. Research from the School Food Trust¹³ indicates that improved school food standards have a positive effect on pupil concentration and engagement with lessons. Another study¹⁴ demonstrated that improved school meals reduced sickness absences by 15% and led to better Key Stage 2 results in English and Science.
47. In terms of health benefits, high quality food provided in schools can have a significant impact on a child's health and development. This is important as growing up with a poor diet can lead to health problems in childhood and in later life. Healthy and balanced diets are also crucial to limiting or avoiding serious conditions such as child and adult obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer and heart disease. Evidence¹⁵ shows it can also have a negative impact on children's mental well-being.
48. Research by the Children's Food Trust¹⁶ shows that school meals are now consistently more nutritious than packed lunches, giving the children who eat them a better foundation for good health.
49. The School Food Plan¹⁷ highlights that only 1% of packed lunches meet the overall nutritional standards that currently apply to school food. Similar arguments apply to children who go outside of school to buy their lunch, with the majority of these spending their money on poor quality food. In most cases, even a 'mediocre' school meal is more nutritious than the alternatives.
50. The health benefits of free school meals are particularly important for disadvantaged families. Data from the Department of Health¹⁸ shows that poor diets and obesity are more prevalent in areas of greater deprivation.

51. Healthy food options can be less accessible and more costly, making it more difficult for financially constrained parents to provide nutritious meals for their children. Research¹⁹ has shown that poor children on average eat half the daily recommended fruit and vegetable intake, exceed recommended daily sugars and saturated fat intakes and often eat inadequate levels of iron, folate and vitamin D.
52. Our evidence²⁰ also shows that the more immediate and basic problem of hunger is still, unfortunately, far too prevalent. One teacher said "I see a significant number of pupils who do not have a mid-day meal because they have no money", whilst another said "I am aware that some pupils do not have food for breakfast or packed lunches, and who survive on their evening meal."
53. 72% of teachers we surveyed had experienced pupils coming into school with no lunch and no means to pay for one and 44% found that children are often or very often hungry during the school day.²¹
54. Furthermore, 66% of teachers surveyed stated that staff provide pupils with food or money if they come into school hungry, with one teacher saying "myself and many teachers in other schools feed children with bread or crackers in the morning from their own budget".²²
55. With children going hungry in many schools, coming in with no lunch money, having had no breakfast or only a small dinner as that is all the family can afford, the importance of making sure all children in poverty can access a free school meal is clear.

Our recommended alternative proposal

Recommendation

56. To deal with the concerns raised above with the Government's proposal to introduce an earnings threshold, we recommend that all Universal Credit claimants should instead continue to be eligible for free school meals.
57. This would help to ensure that over a million children in poverty who currently miss out on free school meals receive them, mostly benefiting lower income working families. It would also help to ensure that 'work always pays' by avoiding creating a serious benefits 'cliff edge'.
58. By extending entitlement beyond those currently working very few hours, it could also help reduce the issues of stigma since a greater proportion of children would be receiving free school meals and there would be less association with worklessness.
59. Finally, in addition to preventing hunger, the educational and health benefits would be available to more children and would contribute to closing the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and others.

Public support for our proposal

60. Keeping entitlement to free school meals for all children in families claiming Universal Credit would be popular with the public. Our nationally representative poll²³ found that over 90% of people believe that free school meals should be available for all children in poverty, including those in working families.

Policy costing

61. We estimate that the additional cost to Government of making all children in families claiming Universal Credit eligible for free school meals is around £500 million per annum.
62. This estimate is based on overall free school meal take-up rates remaining at current rates. As noted above, the total number of free school meals actually received by children is estimated to be around 65% of the total number of children entitled to free school meals under benefit eligibility rules.

--- Further calculation details ---

63. Again, all the following calculations focus only on children in Year 3 and above as children below Year 3 are covered by universal infant free school meal provision.
64. We estimate that approximately 2.8 million children in total will be entitled to free school meals under our proposal, which is the number of children expected to be receiving Universal Credit in the relevant age groups when fully rolled out. This assumes that 48.4% of all children will be in households in receipt of Universal Credit, based on an answer to a recent Parliamentary Question²⁴. This proportion is applied to the total pupil population of 5.8 million in England in Year 3 and above (calculated above).
65. Compared with the number of children entitled to free school meals under the Government's proposal of 1,045,000 (as calculated above), this means an additional 1,762,000 children will be entitled to free school meals under our proposal. Applying the current overall take-up rate of 65.1% to this means an estimated 1,147,000 additional children will receive a free school meal.
66. For those who pay for them, the price of a school lunch is generally subsidised. Based on data from a 2012 Children's Food Trust survey²⁵ the average cost of production of a school meal is approximately 20% more than the price paid by a family. Using our estimate from above that free school meals are worth around £405 a year per child to a family, this means that the annual production cost is approximately £482 per child.
67. Data from the Department for Education's school lunch take-up survey 2013/14²⁶ indicates a school meal take-up rate for pupils not entitled to free school meals of 35.5%. This means that of the 1,762,000 additional children who will become entitled to a free school meal under our proposal, around 626,000 will already be buying school meals. We assume that all of these children will continue to eat their meals but the cost will now be covered by the Government. Meals will already have been produced for these children so the cost to Government of making them free for each child is the £405 annual cost of covering the price of the meal to the family. This means the total cost for this group is £253 million.
68. The remaining 522,000 additional children estimated to receive free school meals under our proposal do not already buy a meal and will require additional meals to be produced. The cost to Government per child for this group will therefore be the annual production cost of £482. This means the total cost for this group is £251 million.
69. The total estimated cost of providing free school meals for all the additional children expected to receive them under our proposal is therefore £504 million.

An option for partly offsetting the policy cost

70. If necessary, options could be explored for reducing the cost to Government of extending free schools meals to all children in families claiming Universal Credit. For example, partial payments from parents could be obtained by reducing their Universal Credit work allowances. Our calculations suggest that if a work allowance reduction of £23 per month (around £5 per week) were applied for each child claiming free school meals, this would reduce the cost of the extension policy by around half (£250 million).

--- Further calculation details ---

71. As a family's income increases, their Universal Credit entitlement is withdrawn at a rate of 63% of any net earnings over their work allowance. This means that, for a family earning above the work allowance level, cutting their work allowance by a pound results in a family's Universal Credit entitlement reducing by 63 pence. Cutting their work allowance by £23 per month per child (equivalent to £5.31 per week) would therefore reduce their Universal Credit entitlement by £14.50 per month per child, resulting in a cost saving to Government of approximately £174 per annum per child.

72. We estimated above that an additional 1,762,000 children would be entitled to free school meals under our proposal. We also estimated that around 81.5% of children entitled to free school meals actually register for them (to become 'eligible and claiming'), which implies that approximately 1,436,000 children would be claiming free school meals under our proposal. This means that a total of around £250 million would be recovered by the Government through a proposed work allowance reduction of £23 per month for each child registered for free school meals.

Impact on pupil premium and 'disadvantage' accountability measures

73. In addition to allowing a child to receive a free lunch, registering a claim for free school meals currently acts as an indicator for two other important school processes: Allocation of pupil premium funding and measurement of 'disadvantaged' pupils' performance. We consider these here briefly because our proposals for extending free school meal entitlement has implications for each of them.

74. We believe that a key principle to follow here is that there is no inherent reason why the provision of a free lunch, the allocation of pupil premium funding, and measurement of 'disadvantage' need be linked. They each have different policy purposes and the population that each process applies to could be different to reflect those different purposes. Indeed, pupil premium funding and measurement of disadvantage remain restricted to infant children based on benefit eligibility criteria, whilst all infants receive free school lunches under the universal infant offer.

75. We have set out comprehensively the policy rationale for making all Universal Credit claimants eligible for free school meals. If there were consequences for pupil premium or disadvantage measurement resulting from continuing use of free school meal eligibility as an indicator for these processes following eligibility expansion, we do not believe they would constitute valid reasons in themselves for not pursuing the expansion. Instead, the pupil premium and disadvantage measures should be delinked

from free school meal eligibility and indicators more appropriate to those processes used instead.

76. On pupil premium specifically, we recognise that under the current system expanding free school meals eligibility would lead to a rise in the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium. We are not calling here for the total pupil premium funding pot to be expanded beyond its current £2.4 billion.
77. Instead, the indicator used for allocation of pupil premium could be changed so that total pupil premium funding remains at the current level. Similarly, the disadvantage performance measure could be changed to keep the cohort size the same. There are a range of possible options, three of which we describe briefly below.
78. One option might be removal of the 'Ever 6' criterion: Currently pupil premium is allocated to children who have been registered for free school meals in any of the last six years (known as 'Ever 6'). Figures from the Department for Education²⁷ and Education and Skills Funding Agency²⁸ show that the number of children eligible for pupil premium under Ever 6 criteria is around twice the number of children eligible for free school meals in the current year only. Removing the Ever 6 criterion to refocus on the current or more recent years could therefore help limit any additional pupil premium cost. There are reasonable questions in any case around whether Ever 6 is the best way of targeting disadvantaged pupils, as there could be many families attracting pupil premium who temporarily claimed free school meals but are now on a much higher income. Ever 6 is also used currently as an indicator of disadvantage for performance measurement but could similarly be dropped.
79. A second option might be to use an earnings criterion: Pupil premium could be allocated only to pupils in families claiming Universal Credit with earnings under a specified level (such as £7,400). As explained above, there is no reason why an income limit could not be introduced for allocation of pupil premium whilst keeping provision of free school meals for all children on Universal Credit. It would require a little more administrative effort and appropriate engagement with parents, but the ability to do so exists. The same principle applies to measurement of disadvantaged pupils' performance.
80. A third option might be to use an area-level deprivation measure: Indicators such as the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index ('IDACI') or the Index of Multiple Deprivation ('IMD') could be used to allocate pupil premium or measure disadvantage. Each pupil's postcode could be used to determine the small area in which they live and hence their IDACI or IMD score. One advantage of this is that schools have ready access to pupils' address data. In fact, IDACI is already part of the schools national funding formula and was part of the 'contextual value added' performance measure before that was scrapped. Use of the IMD score could also allow a broader view of disadvantage than income alone to be incorporated into these processes.
81. However, using an area-level deprivation score cannot truly determine each pupil's individual level of 'disadvantage' because it unavoidably averages deprivation within each small area. This may not be much of a problem for school-level funding or performance measures as the effects would average out to some extent, but it could for instance be problematic for measuring performance gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others.

Question 2 – Do you agree with our intention to protect those pupils who would otherwise lose their entitlement to free school meals, and those children who would otherwise lose their entitlement to the early years pupil premium, under the new eligibility criteria?

No.

All children in receipt of Universal Credit should continue to receive free school meals, making complex transitional arrangements unnecessary.

Question 3 – Do you feel that the proposals in this consultation may adversely affect any children who share one or more of the relevant protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010?

N/A.

Question 4 – Do you have any views on the proposed management of the changes to the disadvantage measures or on the metrics we publish for the measurement of disadvantaged pupils' performance?

Yes.

Please refer to the final part of our answer to question 1 of this consultation (paragraphs 73 to 81) for comments on the metrics used for measuring disadvantaged pupils' performance.

For more information contact Iain Porter in the policy team:

iain.porter@childrenssociety.org.uk

¹ Department for Work and Pensions (2017) - Households below average income: 1994/95 to 2015/16 - Table 4.3db <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201516>

² Department for Education (2015) - School lunch take-up survey 2013 to 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-lunch-take-up-survey-2013-to-2014>

³ Office for National Statistics (2017) - Consumer price inflation reference tables - Table 20a

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceinflation>

⁴ Department for Education (2017) - Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2017 - National tables, Table 1d <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017>

⁵ Department for Education (2017) - Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2017 - Local authority and regional tables, Tables 8a, 8b and 8c <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017>

⁶ HM Revenue and Customs (2017) - Child and working tax credits statistics: finalised annual awards - 2015 to 2016 - Table 2.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2015-to-2016>

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- ⁷ Department for Work and Pensions (2017) - Households below average income: 1994/95 to 2015/16 - Table 4.6db <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201516>
- ⁸ The Children's Society (2012) – Fair and square: A policy report on the future of free school meals <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/publications-library/fair-and-square-policy-report-future-free>
- ⁹ Department for Work and Pensions (2017) - Households below average income: 1994/95 to 2015/16 - Table 4.6db <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201516>
- ¹⁰ The Children's Society (2016) - Making life impossible <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/making-life-impossible.pdf>
- ¹¹ Department for Work and Pensions (2010) - Universal Credit: welfare that works <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-welfare-that-works>
- ¹² Dimbleby and Vincent (2013) for Department for Education - The school food plan <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-school-lunch-for-every-child-in-infant-school>
- ¹³ School Food Trust (2009) - School lunch and learning behaviour in primary schools: an intervention study; School Food Trust (2009) - School lunch and learning behaviour in secondary schools: an intervention study http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/2015/06/sft_slab1_behavioural_findings.pdf
- ¹⁴ Belot and James (2011) - Healthy school meals and educational outcomes, Journal of Health Economics 30(3), 489-504 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21458872>
- ¹⁵ Bradshaw (2002) - The well-being of children in the UK <https://policypress.co.uk/the-well-being-of-children-in-the-uk>
- ¹⁶ Children's Food Trust (2013) - School lunches v. packed lunches: a comparison of secondary schools in England following the introduction of compulsory school food standards <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/public-health-nutrition/article/school-lunches-v-packed-lunches-a-comparison-of-secondary-schools-in-england-following-the-introduction-of-compulsory-school-food-standards/D338B2BCDCAF9426285AC9C080F1D948>
- ¹⁷ Dimbleby and Vincent (2013) for Department for Education - The school food plan <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-school-lunch-for-every-child-in-infant-school>
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- ²⁰ The Children's Society (2012) – Food for thought: A survey of teachers' views on school meals <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/publications-library/food-thought-survey-teachers-views-scho-0>
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ The Children's Society (2012) – Fair and square: A policy report on the future of free school meals <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/publications-library/fair-and-square-policy-report-future-free>
- ²⁴ Parliament (2016) - Written question 30466 on Universal Credit: Children, asked by Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) on 9 March 2016, answered by Priti Patel on 14 March 2016 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-09/30466>
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- ²⁶ Department for Education (2015) - School lunch take-up survey 2013 to 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-lunch-take-up-survey-2013-to-2014>
- ²⁷ Department for Education (2017) - Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2017 - National tables, Table 3b <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2017>
- ²⁸ Education and Skills Funding Agency (2017) - Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2017 to 2018 - Pupil premium 2017 to 2018: allocations (local authority and parliamentary constituency level) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018>