



Free School Meals & Child Health?

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FSMs & Child Health:

- School Meal Uptakes
 - 5 Years on?
- FSM Initiatives
 - How Measured and what they've told us
- Cost of Universal schemes
 - Against measurable benefits
- Maximising Take up
 - Towards better child health outcomes



Sch. Meal Uptakes

- Targets set 5 Year ago – circa 10%
- Significant investment in service.
- Regional averages over 1st 4 yrs – fell
- Last year (07 – 08) (08 – 09):
 - All Meals 41.7% 44.3%
 - Free Meals 71.7% 74.8%
 - Paid Meals 36.5% 36.8%



FSM Initiatives

- HULL – Eat Well do Well
- North Tyneside – Fuel4Kids
- Welsh Assembly – Breakfast Initiative
- Scottish Free School Meals Pilot
- Current DCSF Pilot
- Other LA Initiatives
- International Context



What have they told us?

- Health Outcomes

- High School meal take-up can be linked to Health outcomes
- Clearer evidence likely to emerge from longer term initiatives – they have to be maintained (Hull to Finland!)
- Less evidence that ‘price’ the only driver on meal take-up



Other 'Drivers'

- **Social Policy**
 - Affordability for parents
 - Poorest families less likely to eat healthily
 - Changing wider eating habits - education
- **National Policy**
 - FSM for P1 – 3 in Scotland
 - FSM Pilot Scheme - 2 LAs in England
 - Extended Criteria Scheme - England



Cost

- Universal FSM Schemes
 - Loss of paid meal income
 - Cost of additional meals – varies with take up:
 - Scotland: £1.79 to £4.65
 - Capital Costs – Kitchen and Dining Environments
 - School Costs – Lunchtime Supervision and timetabling.



Operational & Capital Budget Projections

%age Take-up	79%	70%	60%
Loss of Paid Income	£2,686,669	£2,686,669	£2,686,669
Cost of Additional Meals	£3,232,499	£2,285,119	£1,197,009
Total Annual Cost (1 ST Yr)	£5,919,168	£4,971,868	£3,883,678
Ave. cost of each additional meal	£3.02	£3.59	£5.35
Capital Cost Projection	Conservative estimate £530,000. (Could be substantially higher.)		

Cost v benefit?

- Other options
 - Free Breakfast – Paid Lunch (Wales)
 - Short ‘Stand Alone’ Scheme?
 - Target Age groups (Scotland)
 - Extended FSM criteria (Wolves)
 - Higher subsidy (reduced price)?
- All have point for and against
 - ‘Evidence’ of outcomes difficult in short term
 - Should be reviewed against other barriers to increased take-up.



Maximising Take up?

(Towards better child health outcomes)

- Who's responsible?
 - England, Wales and Scotland
 - Who's being paid to promote child health?
 - Do we recognise our contribution? (Do others?)
 - What are the 'handles' school caterers can use?
- Who holds the key?
 - To understanding the barriers to take up
 - What could we do with that knowledge?

OVER TO YOU!