

Free School Food Support Package – Lead the change in your school’s meal service

The DfE has announced a free package of support for secondary, junior, SEN schools and PRUs to support an increase in school meal numbers. National school food experts the Food for Life Partnership has been commissioned to deliver this programme of support to schools in Dudley, and as school Governor you are invited to take the lead in transforming school meal take up in your school.

The idea of turning round your school meal service – or merely nudging it from good to great – may seem daunting. The Increase Your School Meal Take Up programme brings together the school community from school leaders, cooks and students to develop fresh ideas around school meals. It includes free training, action plans and expert regional support to develop a support package that meets your school’s needs - and the good news is it can also help you with Ofsted inspections.

Where has it come from?

- The independent [School Food Plan](#) report highlighted that the key to a viable school meals service is not reducing food costs but increasing overall take up so that money goes further. The DfE responded to this action with £4.8m of funding nationally.
- This support package is fully funded by the DfE, and is worth up to £2000 to your school. The programme funding is time limited and will run up to the end of March 2016.

Why does my school need this?

- **Ofsted** will be including healthy eating and evidence of a positive food culture as part of its inspection framework from September 2015 – this programme will equip your school with ideas, clear actions and evidence needed for Ofsted.
- We will work with your school to develop a support package that meets your school’s needs whether you feel your school just needs some fresh ideas or is just starting out on its journey to Michelin standard school meals!
- The support is designed to kick start an increase in school meal numbers and ensure more children benefit from a healthy lunch. The programme will also support schools to ensure pupils who qualify for free school meals take them.

What does the support consist of?

- Expert advice and guidance on actions to increase your school meal take up. Regional support and training for school food leads, cooks and caterers - including compliance with new school food standards and support to meet the new Ofsted inspection framework around healthy eating and school food culture.
- One to one support to help with action planning.
- Access to a range of specially designed resources to help ‘kick start’ the changes in your school through your school’s own online portal.
- Incentives and events, such as the Cooking Bus and Chefs Adopt a School.
- Find out more and register your school at www.foodforlife.org.uk/takeup

The benefits to your school

- Ensuring pupils get a healthy well balanced meal has the potential to kickstart a process of improving behaviour, attainment and attendance at the same time.
- Schools have shown success through a 'whole school approach' led by the head teacher and senior management team to engage staff, caterers and pupils.
- Children and teenagers know best how to 'pitch' your school's marketing to their school friends. Pupil engagement and pupil voice is key in the creation of a joint action plan and making improvements to the dining environment.

How can I get involved and does my school qualify for this support?

All junior, secondary, SEN schools and PRUs – including academies and free schools – in Dudley can register on the programme at www.foodforlife.org/takeup and will be able to access free training, advice and resources. As school Governor you have a key opportunity to support changes to food in your school. You may also have responsibilities for implementing changes to school food and policies that this programme can support you with.

My school has infant pupils, can we get this support?

This DfE-funded programme is only able to schools that cater for KS2 age pupils. If your school caters for key stage 1 pupils (primary, infant and some SEN schools) there is support available as part of the implementation of Universal Infant Free School meals. This includes the following:

- What Works Well - UIFSM resources, including case studies and tips around school meals (including encouraging registration for FSM entitlement)
<http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/>
- What Works Well Visits - information on how to book a visit or host a visit to share good practice and support, coordinated by the Food for Life Partnership
<http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/school-food-plan/what-works-well>
- UIFSM advice line - run by the Children's Food Trust. 0880 680 0080 and more info available [here](#)

What's happening in the West Midlands?

The programme of support events in the region has started and you or a member of your school staff is invited to attend the following free workshop:

"Increase your school meal take-up"

This workshop aimed at staff with the responsibility for implementing a change to school food. The areas covered will include:

- Practical support and guidance on how to 'kick start' an increase in school meal take up;
- The benefits of increasing take up and how these can be communicated to the wider school population;
- How to make best use of the online action plan and associated resources;
- Examples of what schools have achieved through their work around food to share and inspire change.

Available dates:

Wed 25th March 2-5pm Woodside Community Centre, Dudley, DY2 0SN;

Tue 21st April 2-5pm Silkmore Children's Centre, Stafford, ST17 4EG;

Thu 23rd April 2-5pm Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG

To book your place: Please contact Catrina Fenton, confirming your name, school and the date you would like to attend: cfenton@gardenorganic.org.uk or 02476 217729.

What to do next

- Registration is now open – if your school has not already registered get started at www.foodforlife.org.uk/takeup.
- More information about the programme is available from the Food for Life Partnership at www.foodforlife.org.uk/takeup or call 0117 314 5180.
- You can also contact the Regional Manager for the West Midlands, Catrina Fenton, for more information at cfenton@gardenorganic.org.uk or 02476 217729.
- Book a place on the event above - please contact Catrina Fenton with name and workshop attending cfenton@gardenorganic.org.uk or 02476 217729.