



Free School Meals

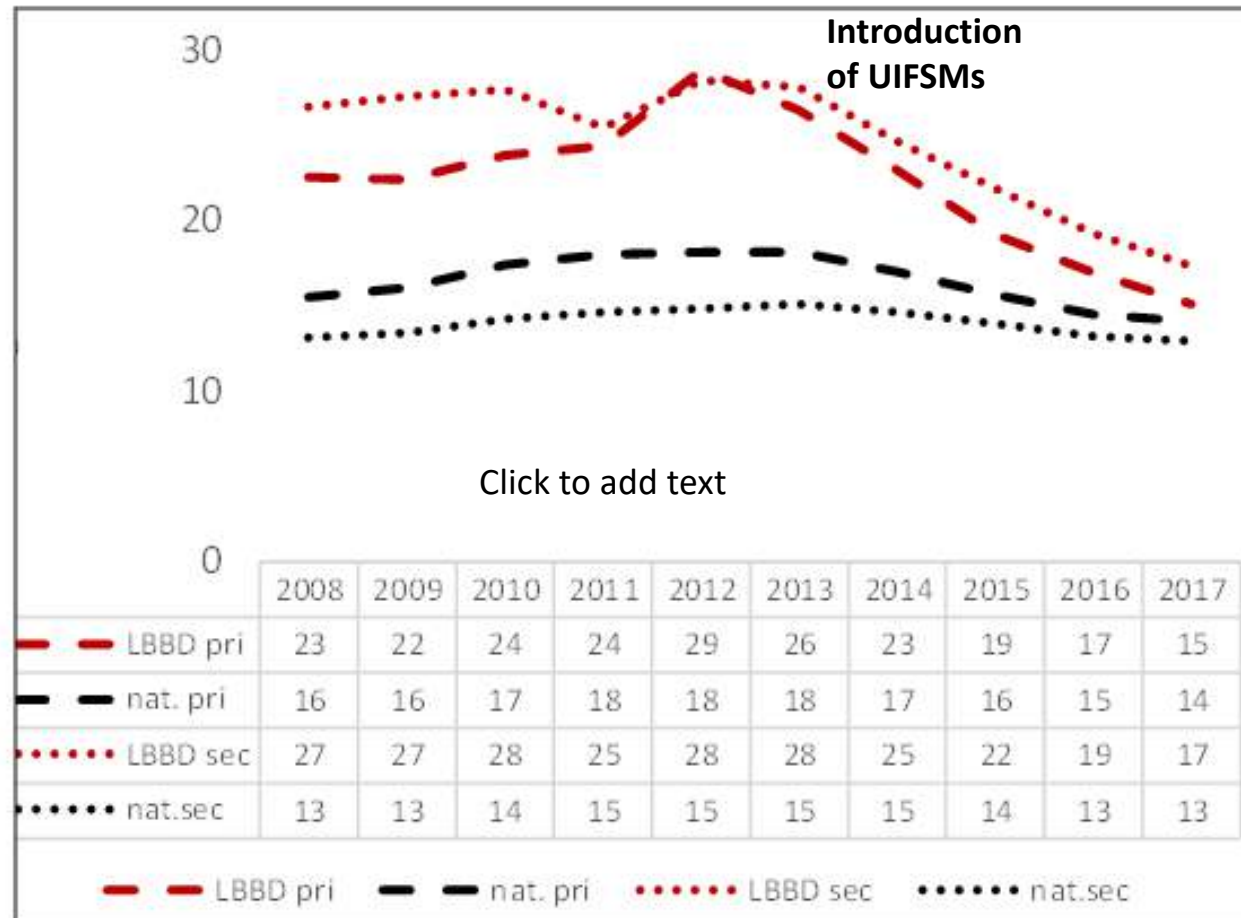


Figure 1: % Applying for and receiving FSM.

Challenges

Decreasing FSM
take up



- Loss of funding for schools
- Risk of poorer outcomes for disadvantaged children
- Greater expense to low income or struggling families
- Challenges may increase after end of Universal Credit transition period?

Barriers
to claiming



- No true data on those who are eligible but not in receipt of FSM
- In work poverty
- Welfare reform
- English not first language
- Asylum and immigration status
- Cultural barriers
- Bullying
- Receipt of Universal Infant Free School Meals



Employment has risen, but so has underemployment and insecure employment.

In-work poverty is on the rise and the cost-of-living crisis continues to worsen.

This might be leading to some families losing out on FSM eligibility despite feeling the pressure of day-to-day budgeting.

Benefits

For Schools:

11 extra Primary students a year
(combined effect of FSM and Pupil
Premium) = Up to **£21,200** extra funding

This could fund a range of educational
resources or Teaching Assistant hours



For Families:

For each child on FSM, up to **£450** every year

For a family with three children, over the
course of Primary and Secondary school, this is
a saving of **£12,150**

This could contribute to a mortgage deposit,
pay off a loan shark or fix the boiler when it
breaks; a big difference!



The Process

Cross-sector
Working Group



Current situation



Data investigation



Engagement with partners



Joined-Up Proposals

Council

Our Community Solutions Universal Service will signpost and support in making FSM applications for those identified as eligible

Communications

Design user-friendly paper materials promoting FSM for use by schools, the JCP, the Council and ELHP

Job Centre Plus

Will incorporate FSM into conversations with relevant benefit claimants. Will link FSM application to Universal Credit work journals, and will supply paper material for those on legacy benefits

Schools

Engagement with some schools has highlighted that identifying those families eligible for but not claiming FSM is a priority. We have collaboratively designed a tool that makes the process of targeting engagement with those families more efficient

The tool is based on school engagement with parents that allows families to identify themselves as ineligible

East London Housing Partnership (ELHP)

Will incorporate FSM in their case handling process for the first time

We will first report on our progress at the end of Q4 2018/19





What we've
done already

The Council

- Training is being scoped out for the Council's Community Solutions Universal Service
- FSM has become a part of the initial assessment process for the 'Homes and Money Hub', which supports those in or heading towards financial crisis
- Our Communications Team have designed a simple, user-friendly leaflet for use by the Council, the JCP, the ELHP and schools



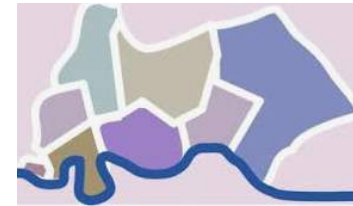
The Job Centre Plus

- The JCP have agreed to incorporate FSM into their conversations with all relevant people who claim benefits and have school-aged children
- They will link the FSM application to the Universal Credit work journal, used by people receiving benefits to manage their claims
- They will supply paper material to people claiming legacy benefits
- They will host information regarding FSM on their Community Boards



The East London Housing Partnership

- ELHP carry out homelessness prevention services with residents across the 8 East London boroughs
- They will incorporate FSM into their case-handling system for the first time





What we can do
together

The Priority

- Identifying those children who are not receiving FSM but are eligible
- Tracking families who are ineligible



The Tool

Our conversations with some schools led us to design a prototype tool that, along with schools' engagement with parents, can make it easier to identify those children who are potentially eligible for FSM.

This is achieved by tracking those in receipt as well as those who self-identify as not eligible.

The Tool (to be presented at Schools Forum)

Evaluation

We want all partners to track their data so that we can measure progress

Including how many more pupils receive FSM and how many families have been supported to make applications



Next Steps

- Tell us if you are interested in participating in the pilot
- We will help you embed the tool in your school
- Apply a stepped-up approach to parental engagement, tracking eligibility and ineligibility
- We will provide additional support so we can jointly manage the tool consistently



Recommendations

We are looking for as many schools as possible to participate.

This entails:

- Making available some staff resource to embed and manage the eligibility tool.
- Maximising the use of stepped up parental engagement.
- Monitoring and evaluating impact.

