

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 5 October 2023

Subject: Provision of free school meals for looked after children

Report by: Strategic Director, People

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to extend entitlement to free school meals to children who are looked after at home and by kinship carers.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council agrees to provide free school meals to children who attend school in Clackmannanshire and are looked after at home or looked after by kinship carers.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. The eligibility criteria for free school meals is set by Scottish Government and parents are eligible to apply if they are eligible for the following benefits:
- Income Support
 - Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
 - Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
 - Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of less than £18,725
 - Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of up to £8,717
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £726
- 3.2 1,700 pupils in Clackmannanshire are entitled to free meals under the criteria this represents 25% of Clackmannanshire pupils.
- 3.3 Parents of children who are looked after at home, or by Kinship carers do not automatically qualify unless they meet this criteria.

- 3.4 Parents who qualify for these benefits also receive financial support from the Council during the school holidays with a payment of £2.30 per day which is linked to the price that parents not eligible for free meals pay for a school lunch.
- 3.5 In addition all children who are in Primary 1-5, and attend our Additional Support Needs schools at Lochies and Primary and Secondary Support Service are also entitled to free meals. The eligibility for this is determined by Scottish Government direction. Officers in Place and People services are working with officers in Scottish Government to assess the implications of extending the criteria to pupils in primary 6 and 7. Parents of these children do not receive any financial support during the school holidays unless they are eligible under the financial criteria set out above.
- 3.6 As part of the Council's commitments under The Promise it is proposed that the Council extends the eligibility beyond Primary 1-5 pupils to all pupils who are looked after at home or looked after by kinship carers. It is estimated that there are 134 pupils who attend Clackmannanshire schools and are not currently entitled to free meals and who would be eligible should this be extended.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 Financial Details

- 5.2 The estimated costs for 2023/24 of this increase are £30,200 these would be funded from the balance of Covid recovery funds that the Council holds. As this funding is temporary funding, if the Council wishes to maintain this policy for future years the cost of £58,558 would need to be considered as part of the 2024/25 budget considerations.
- 5.3 This level of support goes beyond the current support provided by Scottish Government for school meals where the Council receives £2.048 million in funding and spent £2.236million in 2022/23

Exempt Reports

- 5.4 Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life

- Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential
- Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

- 8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
 Yes No

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes No

10.0 Appendices

None.

11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)
 Yes (please list the documents below) No

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Approved by

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