

**School Meal Debt**  
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**APPG School Meals July 17 2018**

# Wales Overview

- Highest rates of child poverty (30%) in the UK
- No Universal Infant Free School Meals
- No Academies
- Estyn/Ofsted
- WG Breakfast Scheme
- WG School Holiday Enrichment Programme
- WG Healthy Eating in Schools(Nutritional Standards and Requirements) Wales 2013
- Pupil Development Grant/Pupil Premium
- Current consultation on UC and FSM

# Collection of School Meal Payments

- Income collected by school on behalf of LA
- Income collection delegated to school – LA invoice schools for meals served
- Contract caterer collects income directly from parents
- Cashless catering systems, online payments, accurately recording meals taken, income collected

# How debt is managed

Consideration should always be given to pupil needs

- Schools contact parents, immediate payment, provide packed lunch, take child home for lunch
- Zero tolerance, no payment, no meal
- Allow one 'lend'
- Give child a sandwich and water
- Allow child to have full meal

# Current challenges

- Recognition that debt is not the pupils fault, (often school lunch will be their only 'hot meal' of the day)
- Families just about managing
- Responsibility for public money
- Can result in negative publicity for school/LA
- Minority will prioritise other lifestyle choices over school meals
- Schools know pupils individual circumstances
- Education Welfare Officers, Social Services

# Points to consider

- Should we be allowing families to build up debt?
- Parents with more than one child can build up substantial debt over a short period of time
- Parents ignore contact from school
- Local Authorities: Debt Recovery Policy
- Accurate data, cashless catering systems
- Trying to get parents to clear debt affects meal uptake
- Support for those that can't pay?
- Discretion to award FSM to those in need?

# Final thoughts



- Raise awareness of impact on all concerned
- Is there research on this issue available
- It is a UK problem that anecdotally is escalating
- Important that the dignity and education of children is not detrimentally affected

# Thankyou Questions

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