

Launch of UFSM to all Secondary School Pupils in Tower Hamlets

Jenny Pittam (Head of Contract Catering Services)

April 2024



Mayor's Universal Free School Meals

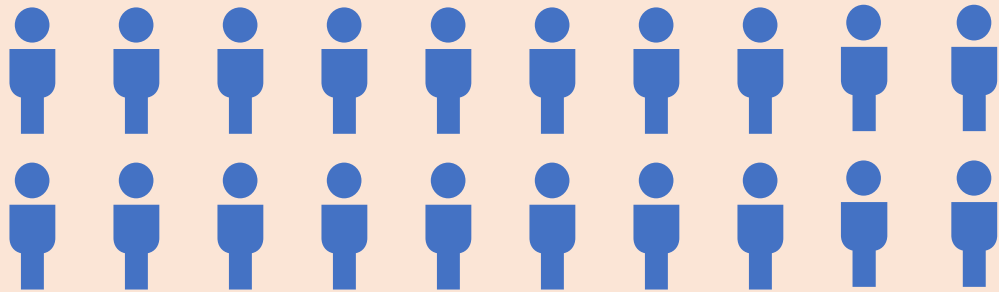


Mayor's Pledge

In May 2022, Tower Hamlets Mayor Lutfur Rahman made a manifesto pledge to provide Universal Free School Meals (UFSM's) to all KS3 & KS4 secondary pupils.



Why was this pledge made?



1st council in the UK to provide UFSM to ALL KS3 & KS4 Pupils (to help realise nutritional and academic benefits)

1st



On average, expected to save families £550 a year (helping with the cost-of-living crisis).

£550



Benefitting approximately 8,700 pupils per day.

8700



The journey of change

The journey of **change** to achieve the mayor's pledge.



Phase 3 (September 2023- onwards)

Activities included: Mobilisation of kitchens, schools go-live (mayor's launch, comms coverage), further monitoring and training/support for mobilisation issues and evaluation (meal take up, impact on students).



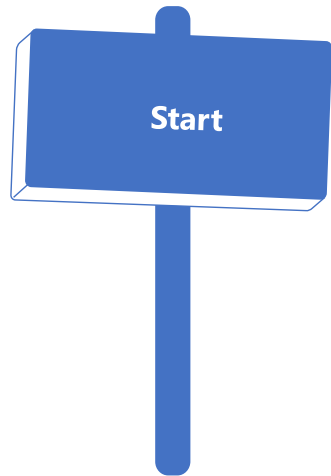
Phase 3



End

Phase 1 (January 2023 – April 2023)

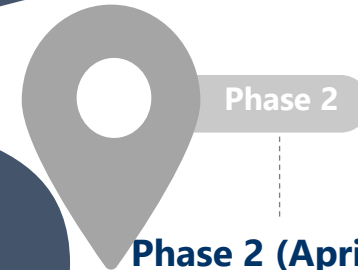
Activities included: setting up a Project Board, undertaking 20 site surveys, compiling a cabinet report and identifying evaluation partners.



Start



Phase 1



Phase 2

Phase 2 (April 2023 – September 2023)

Activities included: commissioning of equipment suppliers, conducting further site surveys, completing installations, developing a comms strategy and creating a toolkit for schools.

There was continual headteacher engagement throughout this process.



FSM Eligibility – The Economic Climate

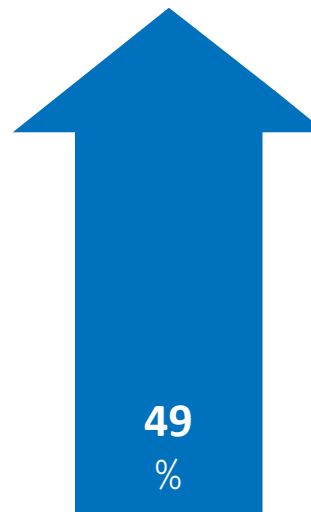


FSM Entitlement

There has been a reduction in student roll from **19,738** in January 2023 to **17,763** in January 2024.

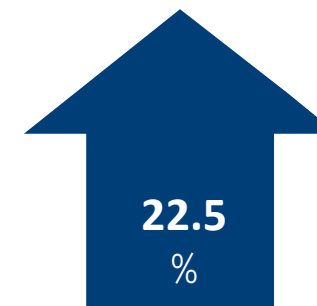
In January 2023 there were **8719** students entitled to FSM in the borough; in January 2024 this has increased to **8768**.

FSM entitlement as a percentage of total roll is therefore increasing each year.



Jan 24 (Tower Hamlets)

FSM Eligible pupils in Tower Hamlets has increased **by 5% to 49%** of the student population (since Jan' 23)



National Average

22.5% is the **national average** of FSM Eligible pupils



Uptake of Meals

22/22

Eligible secondary schools
receiving UFSM

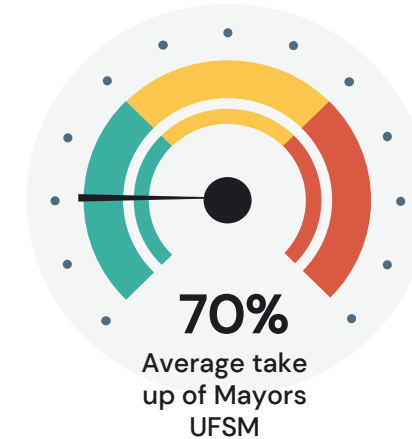
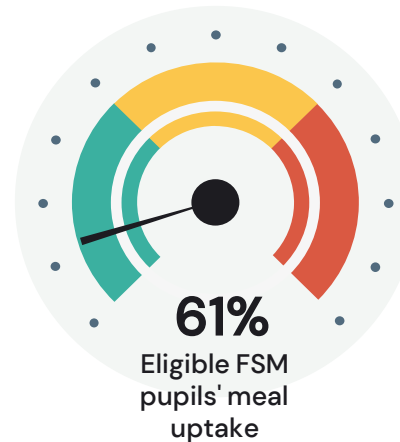
16/16

Secondary schools received
comprehensive equipment
installations



Images show a POD and on-going installation works to a kitchen.

Meal Take Up Performance (across all schools)



Performance Summary

Across all schools there is an average meal take up rate of 70%.

There has been an upturn in eligible FSM pupils having a healthy meal up from 55% to 61% since September 2023.

Please note: Meal uptake across all schools in the borough has seen an uplift. However, this was undermined by data accuracy issues at five schools. Therefore, the abovementioned figures have excluded these schools from the analysis.



Menu Compliance

15%

Improvement in menu compliance rates



87%

Menu compliance for morning break and lunch services

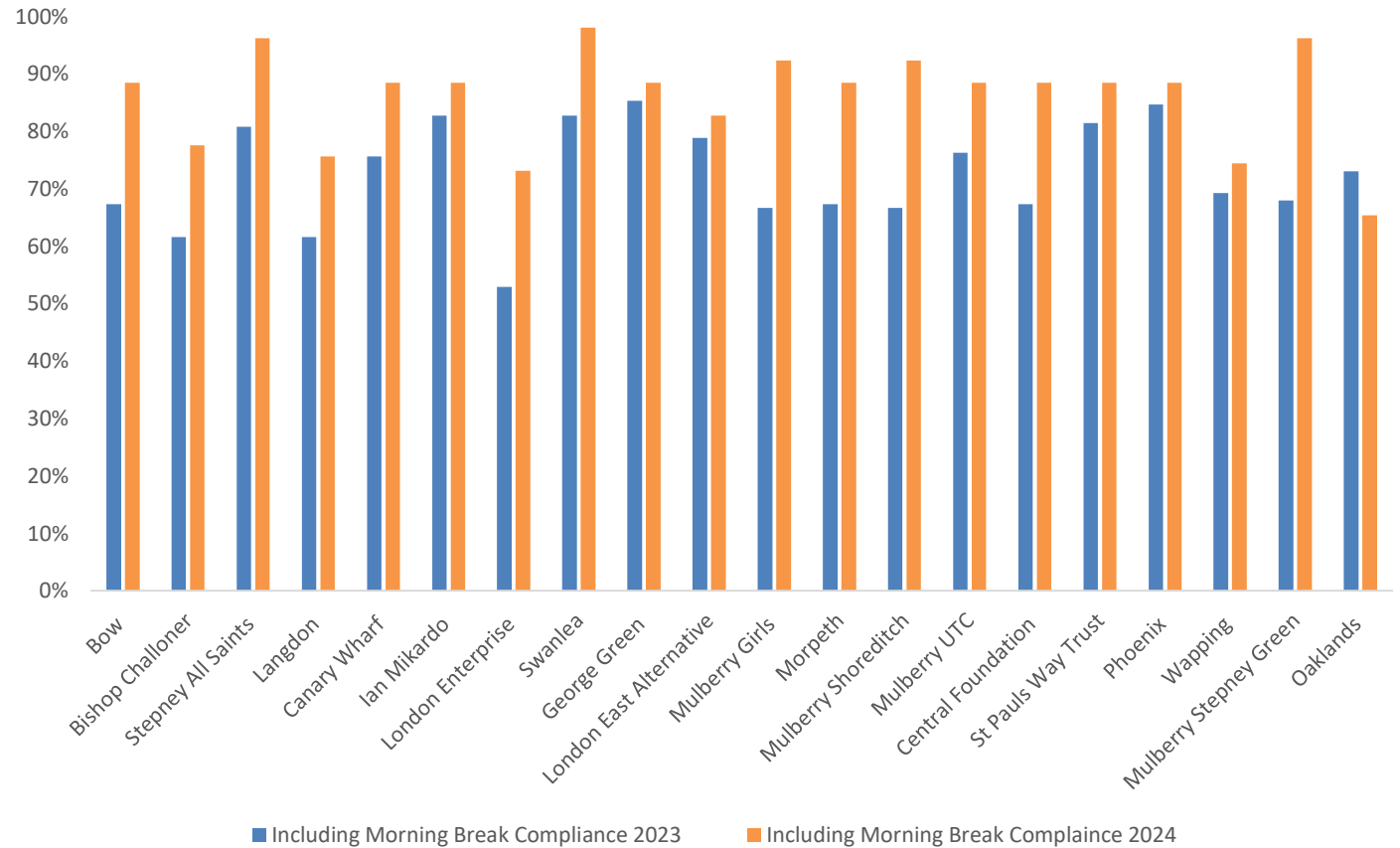


88%

Menu compliance for lunch services



Menu Compliance - Including Morning Break



Sales Mix



When

More students are choosing to use their allowance at lunchtime rather than morning break.



What

Students are purchasing fewer unhealthy products.



How

Less snack items and more meal deal options (including hot meals) are being purchased.



Student Voice

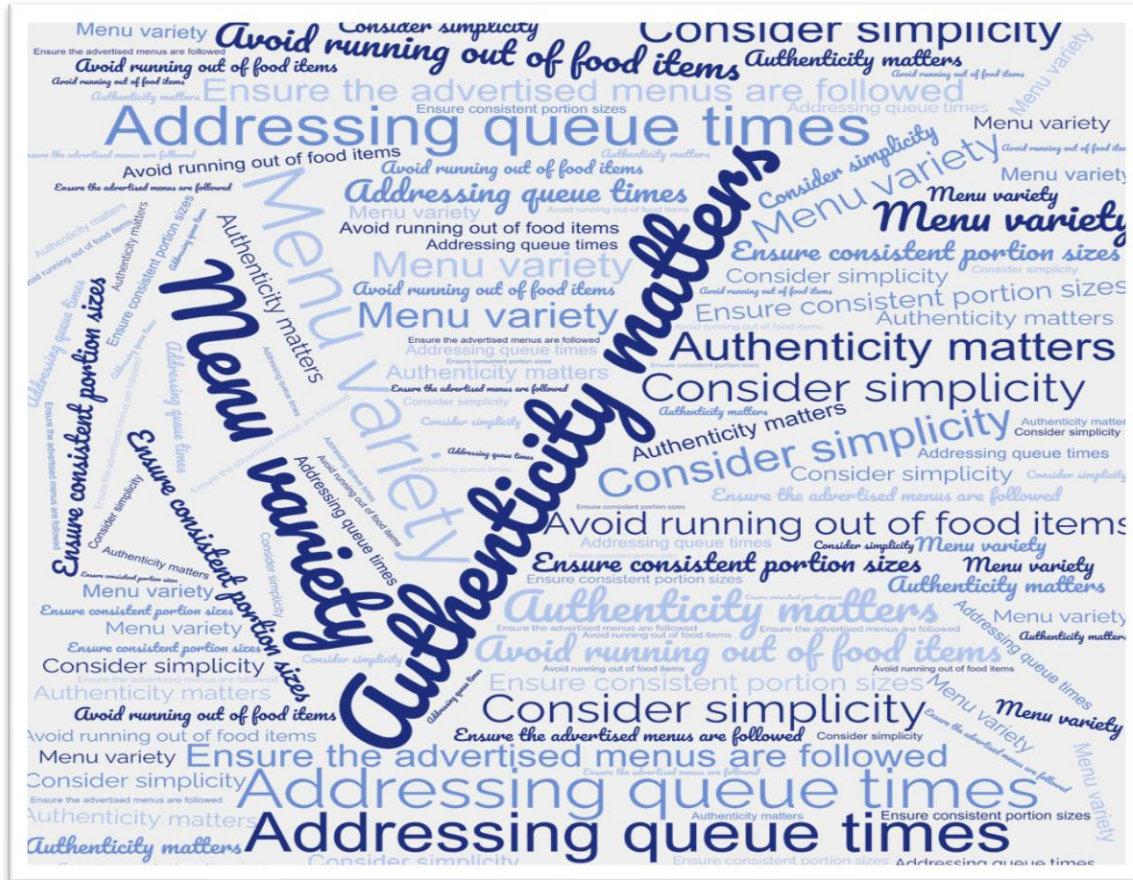


Over 500 students were engaged in feedback across 20 secondary schools.

The best of London
in one borough



How do Students think we can improve uptake



Students identified 7 key areas to improve meal uptake:

1. Authenticity matters
2. Consider simplicity
3. Ensure the advertised menus are followed
4. Avoid running out of food items
5. Ensure consistent portion sizes
6. Menu variety
7. Addressing queue times



Ongoing Evaluation



Ongoing evaluation

A large-scale evaluation is underway to assess the educational and nutritional benefits of UFSM



Continual Improvements

The UFSM team are continuing to engage with students and schools to understand areas of improvement.

Initial Observations

Some early Health and educational benefits have emerged. Some lunchtime teachers and supervisors have noticed that behaviour has drastically improved.



Comparator

An anonymous comparator borough has been selected to test the effectiveness of UFSM among pupils.



Accolades



“



A key challenge for the Project Team was to ensure all schools/kitchens had the capacity to meet increased production of school meals in the short timescale. By actively working in partnership with many stakeholders throughout every stage of the project, the Project Team successfully together delivered on time this innovative and complex project.

The innovative strategy was recognised by high-profile media, achieving coverage in BBC London News TV, BBC Radio, ITV Regional News TV, ITV National News online, Big Issue, Mirror and Evening Standard.

UFSM Tower Hamlets Council won the Group Award at the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Excellence in School Food Awards. The award was judged by a group of MPs from across the country, who recognised how the project team worked together to achieve positive outcomes for pupils & local communities.

The UFSM Team were finalists in the Public Sector “Catering Team of the Year Award”.

