

# **Universal Infant Free School Meals Toolkit**

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This toolkit is just one piece of support the government has commissioned to support the delivery of UIFSM, and the School Food Plan more broadly. Included in the toolkit are details (see pages 4-5) on how to access the government-funded implementation support service, which includes an advice service and a targeted direct-support service provided by school food experts. The service can be reached by email at [info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk) ; by phone at 0800 680 0080 ; and online at [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan).

As part of the School Food Plan, a new website will be launching in April to enable schools to share ‘What Works Well’ and learn from each other (hosted at [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)).

## 1. Foreword

I am delighted that, from September 2014, all pupils in key stage 1 (reception, year 1 and year 2) in state-funded schools in England will be entitled to receive a tasty and nutritious school lunch, through the introduction of the government's universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) policy. The independent School Food Plan, published by the Department for Education in July 2013, recommended this policy, based on the findings of the free school meal pilots held between 2009 and 2011. The pilots showed that universal free school meals can have significant benefits both for individual children and for the broader life of the school. Pupils in the pilot areas were found to eat more healthily and perform better academically and these improvements were most pronounced among the poorest pupils. Schools also reported improved behaviour and atmosphere, as a result of all pupils (and an increasing number of teachers) eating together every day.

As a signal of the government's commitment to universal infant free school meals, we are putting in place legislation to place a legal duty on state-funded primary schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer free meals to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 from this September.

For many of you – schools, caterers, local authorities – this will be an exciting opportunity to invest in your school meals service and increase take-up. I appreciate, however, that you may have concerns about the logistical challenges of feeding more children: everything from managing longer queues to adapting your dining area or kitchen. And while I am confident that you will be able to rise to the challenge, it is understandable that schools will also need help and assistance.

This toolkit has been designed in conjunction with the School Food Plan office to support schools, local authorities, and caterers. It draws on the lessons learnt from the successful free school meal pilots in Durham and Newham, and other areas that have implemented similar policies.

The toolkit provides information, guidance and examples of how schools, local authorities and caterers have overcome specific issues. It is designed to be used flexibly to meet the needs of your individual circumstances. More case studies can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/ne8mx4l>

I strongly recommend that you read the **School Food Plan** ([www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)), an invaluable source of both inspiration and practical advice, which is largely written for head teachers. It lays out the further sixteen actions that the government and others are taking to improve food in schools. This includes mandatory cooking and food education up to the age of 14 in the new curriculum.

**I want to thank you in advance for helping to deliver this major reform, which will have a positive impact on children, schools and families throughout the country.**



**David Laws**

**Minister for Schools**

## 2. Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) – The Policy

### The policy is intended to:

- increase the number of pupils who eat a tasty and nutritious school lunch and develop positive eating habits
- improve pupils’ health, attainment and behaviour, through better nutrition and socialisation
- ease pressure on family budgets
- support the economic viability of school meals.

### A package of funding and support is available to support the implementation of UIFSM:

Funding	Detail	Useful links
Revenue funding	In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, schools will be paid funding at a flat rate of £2.30 per newly eligible pupil per meal taken. Initial provisional allocations will be based on an estimate of national take-up and then adjusted once the Department has details of the actual number of meals taken in individual schools.	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/lszym5t">http://tinyurl.com/lszym5t</a>
Capital funding	£150 million of capital funding is available in 2014-2015 to support schools to develop kitchens and buy essential equipment and dining furniture.	<b>For Local Authorities:</b> <a href="http://tinyurl.com/qh992nu">http://tinyurl.com/qh992nu</a> <b>For Academies:</b> <a href="http://tinyurl.com/pek7wqg">http://tinyurl.com/pek7wqg</a>
Implementation support	£9.6 million to provide targeted advice and guidance to those schools most in need of help.	Website: <a href="http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan">http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan</a> Email: <a href="mailto:info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk">info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk</a> Call: 0800 680 0080
Small schools	£22.5 million in 2014-15 to provide help for small schools	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/lszym5t">http://tinyurl.com/lszym5t</a>

### Implementation support service

The Children’s Food Trust and the Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA) can provide support to schools, local authorities and caterers that are preparing to provide universal infant free school meals.

The implementation support service will consist of a telephone and online advice service for all organisations requiring support, and a direct-support service for some schools.

Schools that are identified as needing direct support will have a number of options available to them, including collaborating with other schools, further telephone advice and face-to-face visits by specialist professional advisors.

The direct-support service will be available to schools that:

- currently have low levels of school meal take-up
- provide only packed lunches
- have in-house catering and are therefore unlikely to receive support from a ‘parent’ organisation such as a local authority or catering organisation
- are small and therefore struggle to make the school meal service break even;
- are very large, and known to have capacity issues; and / or
- prepare and transport school meals to other schools (known as ‘production kitchens’). Some of these will be secondary schools.

To access this support schools should first check the online resources on the **Children’s Food Trust website** ([www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan)). If they need further advice, they should then contact the advice service on either [info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk) or by calling **0800 680 0080**.

A specialist call handler will discuss the requirements of each school and, if necessary, refer them on to the most appropriate source of direct support.

Schools that meet the criteria for direct support will receive personalised support, tailored to their requirements, from the Children’s Food Trust, Elygra Marketing (acting for LACA) or one of the consortium’s delivery partners; Food For Life Partnership, Craft of Guild Chefs, Foodservice Consultants Society International, and the Small Schools Taskforce.

Schools will not have to pay to access the advice service, the telephone support or the opportunities to collaborate with other schools. There will be a contributory charge for direct face-to-face support.

Advice and guidance is also available at [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com).

### **A few guiding principles to support practical implementation**

- 1. The role of the head teacher is vital in leading the change:** only the head teacher has the power to orchestrate all of the aspects of school life required to implement UIFSM. View the School Food Plan ‘checklist for head teachers’ at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist).
- 2. Concentrate on the things children care about:** ask pupils what they think about their food, dining environment and lunchtime social experiences, and act on their feedback.
- 3. Adopt a whole school approach:** where food is a vital element of school life; the dining area is the hub of the school; children and teachers eat together; lunch is part of the school day; and cooks are important staff members.
- 4. Engage all stakeholders throughout the process:** involve parents, school cooks, midday supervisors, children, head teachers, school staff, local authority officers, caterers, and others from the planning stage through to delivery; ensure clear communications; consider setting up a School Food Working Group (for more details: [www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg)).

### 3. Getting Started – For Schools

#### With your caterer or school cook:

- Set up a school food working group (for more details: [www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg))
- Talk to parents and look at your roll numbers to find out likely take-up of schools meals from September 2014
- Identify any improvements needed to kitchens and/or the need for additional dining facilities. Find out who in your local authority is managing capital funding if you are a maintained school, or consider future bids to the ACMF if you are an academy
- Consider whether you could simplify the lunch menu to cope with the extra demand
- Determine the need for new staff and staff training (including induction training)
- Review your lunchtime arrangements to cope with the extra demand
- Continue registering pupils eligible for free school meals under the existing criteria to safeguard the pupil premium
- Develop a communications plan

#### In addition to the above, schools with transported or ‘regenerated’ meals:

- Confirm whether your existing caterer can continue to provide your meals
- Discuss improvements to meal quality and service with your provider
- Consider whether you might be able to (a) become a production kitchen; if not, then (b) increase the amount of freshly prepared food on site to supplement the delivered meal
- Consider delivery times to avoid food being stored for too long; and work out what extra food storage you will need (e.g. hot boxes)
- Decide what additional crockery, tables, cutlery and storage are required

#### Schools with no meal service:

Launching a new school meal service by September will be possible with the right help.

- Set up a School Food Working Group (for more details: [www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/sfwg)) and consider the following:
- Decide which delivery option works best for your school: re-instating or installing a school kitchen; bringing in hot meals from a local provider; cooking from chilled/frozen
- **Consider how many meals you will be serving each day across the whole school:**
  - **If more than 100 meals**, economies of scale may make on site preparation and cooking a viable option – but you will need to assess capital needs.

- **If less than 100 meals**, talk to your local authority caterer or find a private caterer to establish options. You may still be able to cook vegetables from scratch, provide a salad bar, or freshly prepared puddings. The School Food Plan has established a Small Schools Taskforce to provide specific support for small schools (see section 5).

**View films:** (1) Children's Food Trust guide to getting started: <http://tinyurl.com/o3z9qft> (2) Deaf Hill Primary School in county Durham share their experience implementing UFSM: <http://tinyurl.com/ne7nuo3>

### LOOKING AHEAD

How can you use capital investment now to 'future proof' anticipated longer term increases in school meal take-up?

When might you be able to renegotiate your catering contract as you start achieving better economies of scale? View Children's Food Trust guidance on contracts and school food procurement: <http://tinyurl.com/mpuwlwq>

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## 3. Getting Started – For Local Authorities and Academy Trusts

- Set up a project working group (including head teachers, finance, communications, catering providers, unit managers, public health and estates)
- Undertake a kitchen and equipment audit to help prioritise capital funding
- Get proposals from your catering provider on their delivery plans. What investment will they be making - for example: food quality, labour, management, environment, equipment. Consider if the contract needs to be re-negotiated
- Develop an open and on-going communications plan; engage all primary head teachers
- Understand the likely increase in take-up by engaging schools and parents
- Consider mechanisms to distribute and prioritise capital funding for ALL the local authority's maintained schools (not just those within a centralised catering contract). Schools considering academy conversion, or going through the process, remain maintained schools until conversion, and local authorities are expected to treat these schools fairly in their considerations.
- Review kitchen staff capacity and training needs
- Work with schools to review dining room capacity
- Review your menus, make them appealing for children; check them against the revised food based standards. Expect an increase in requests for special diets
- Consider how schools are going to continue to register children for free school meals and collect take-up data to protect their pupil premium and other funding
- Consider how to ensure quality in what is likely to be a rapidly expanding service.

**For lessons learnt from a caterer involved in UFSM:** [www.schoolfoodplan.com/caterer](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/caterer)

**For more case studies:** [www.schoolfoodplan.com/what-works](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/what-works)

**Case Study: UFSM is an opportunity to achieve economies of scale:**

When Islington introduced primary UFSM, it re-tendered its school catering contract on the basis of increased meal numbers. It also worked with Camden on a joint procurement for a longer contract, leading to savings of £1 million per year in the contract cost for Islington alone.

**Case study: Introducing UFSM needs close collaboration and careful planning**

Durham only had 12 weeks to plan before primary UFSM were introduced. To get everyone working together quickly, Durham County Council set up a project group including: caterers, head teachers, finance officers, communications staff, public health teams. The group developed and oversaw the delivery of a detailed UFSM project and communications plan that identified problems and solutions, raised the profile of free school meals and kept everyone up to date.

**Case study: Local authority support can be invaluable to schools, even where there is no central catering contract.**

A third of Southwark's 75 primary schools provide an in-house service, the remainder use external contractors. To support the introduction of primary UFSM, Southwark created a project team based in the Children's and Adult's Services department, which:

- commissioned an audit of all school kitchens to determine their capacity to deliver increased meal provision
- provided a **toolkit** (<http://tinyurl.com/n2foycf>) for head teachers and governors focusing on supporting schools to 'manage' the contract or in-house team
- developed a simple application form (<http://tinyurl.com/mgegve>) for those already entitled to free school meals, encouraging completion and safeguarding pupil premium funding.

**Case study: An authority-wide communications strategy can ensure high take-up**

During the pilot, Durham implemented a wide ranging communications strategy in collaboration with caterers. Activities included: posters on buses and in GP surgeries, sure start centres, schools, local shops; features in local press and the county council newsletter; distribution of template letters for school communications direct to parents; celebrity support from athlete Steve Cram; and information cascaded through the governor support service.



## 4a. Food: Getting Menus Right

**Serving nutritious, flavourful, fresh food that children want to eat and catering staff can cook in large quantities depends on getting menus right.** Menus also need to meet food standards by law and have the right balance of familiar food and new food for children to try.

### Possible approach:

- Develop menus that appeal and are familiar to key stage 1 children. Keeping it simple makes it easier for children to choose their meal and results in smaller queues
- Where a large increase in demand is expected, consider reducing (or removing) options to make producing food manageable
- Think about the diversity of the school's population when designing menus, including provision for special diets (see next section)
- Consult children, parents and catering staff on menu changes.
- Consider the language used to describe food: engaging for children, while also clear to parents what their children are eating
- Relate menus to lessons and other activities across the school to help get children excited about the food on offer
- **Ensure meals meet legal requirements on food standards** (<http://tinyurl.com/kzlf837>); revised food based standards are being introduced from January 2015. You can access them at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards-consultation](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards-consultation)

### Further information and support:

- View the **existing school food standards** (<http://tinyurl.com/kzlf837>) and consultation on revised standards ([www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards-consultation](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards-consultation)).
- Examples of **compliant menus** and recipes for primary, secondary and special schools (<http://tinyurl.com/ly3lymn>)
- The **Recipes for Success** series provides tried and tested recipes to help schools offer a popular menu and overcome common challenges in meeting the school food standards (<http://tinyurl.com/l6dnasn>)
- British **seasonal food chart** (<http://tinyurl.com/maelzkj>)
- **Top tips** from award-winning dinner lady Jeanette Orrey on providing tasty school meals (<http://tinyurl.com/lur6l9a>)
- Tasty **menus** from Food for Life Partnership's cooks network (<http://tinyurl.com/m8ydfhg>) and Children's Food Trust (<http://tinyurl.com/msz8bv6>)

Find out more on the **Soil Association's Food for Life Catering mark** (<http://tinyurl.com/l6qlywh>) and the **Children's Food Trust Schools Award** (<http://tinyurl.com/kdugv68>)

## 4a. Food: Catering for Special Diets

**Increased take-up may mean catering for a broader range of special diets.** In the pilots, as take-up increased, so did provision for special diets on medical and religious grounds. This may feel challenging, but many caterers are experienced at ensuring their menus reflect the cultural and religious make-up of schools, and providing for those with allergies.

### Possible approach

- Talk to parents and caterers early on to identify special dietary needs in your school and assess feasibility of providing for special diets. Ensure requests are backed up with medical notes.
- Work with parents and caterers to develop menus for children with allergies; you may need dietetic support (either from your local authority or one of the expert organisations listed below)
- Ensure your catering team are aware of the legal requirements and wider guidance for allergies and food labelling. A great place to start is <http://tinyurl.com/ko67pmk>
- Arrange additional training for staff (catering, supervisory and teaching) on how to meet the needs of children with special dietary requirements (see organisations below)
- Ensure provision for special dietary requirements is written into catering contracts
- Ensure that the school cook or other staff member takes responsibility for checking food labelling (for example gravy powders) and is aware of recipe changes and substitutions.

### Case study: Responding to special dietary needs during the pilots

Durham acted on all special diet requests that were supported by a medical note (from a GP, or medical professional). The caterer's nutritionist, following consultation with parents, designed a significant number of revised menus as some requests were fairly unusual e.g. allergies to fruit. However, most requests were for vegetarian; gluten, dairy, egg and nut free menus; and high calorie menus for children with special needs. In more complex cases, the nutritionist met with the parents and school cook to plan meals together.

“ Thanks to Karen's (the school cook) care, professionalism and dedication to her job, Daisy can enjoy the school dinners she loves, whilst giving us, her parents, the peace of mind to allow her to carry on with her routine.” **Nina Bowers, mother of Daisy who has a serious allergy.**

### Further information and support

- **Anaphylaxis Campaign: Help for schools** - <http://tinyurl.com/pynjzhl>
- **Anaphylaxis Campaign: Support for school cooks** - <http://tinyurl.com/pres6g8>
- **Allergy UK:** [www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)
- **Coeliac support:** [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)
- **The Vegetarian Society:** [www.vegsoc.org/teacherstudentresources](http://www.vegsoc.org/teacherstudentresources)
- **Food Standards Agency** <http://food.gov.uk/policy-advice/allergyintol/>
- **The Health Education Trust:** [www.healthedtrust.com/pages/vending\\_in\\_schools-2.htm](http://www.healthedtrust.com/pages/vending_in_schools-2.htm)

## 4b. Getting People Involved: Involving Parents

**Involving parents will help you estimate UIFSM take-up.** Parents and carers ultimately decide whether their child has a school meal, so gaining and maintaining confidence is important.

### Possible approach

- Survey parents about their intentions for children currently in key stage 1 and estimate roll numbers for 2014/15
- Consider how you are going to encourage take-up. For example: parents' tasting sessions, multiple letters home, communication from front line staff
- Continue to register children for free school meals (those eligible under existing criteria) in order to protect pupil premium funding (see next section)

### Learning from the UIFSM Pilots:

Parents' concern	Solution
Confidence in menus and that children will eat meals	Talk to parents about menus and how supervisory staff support children to eat meals
The quality of food available	Invite parents to tasting sessions, and to join their child for school lunches. Tell parents if your caterer has a quality assurance mark (e.g. Food for Life Catering Mark)
Flexibility of school meal offer	Consider options to increase flexibility – for example, children can opt in or out of school meals on a daily or weekly basis
The dining experience and attitudes and behaviours of children's friendship groups	Review the dining and general lunchtime experience from a child's perspective, including seating plans. (see section 4c)

### Case study: Taster sessions can enthuse and reassure parents about quality and choice

Newham Council supports schools to run taster sessions, which were scaled up when introducing UIFSM. Parents are invited to eat a replica 'school lunch' with the same menu, choices, and dining set-up as their children experience at lunchtime. This helped turn around perceptions of the meals and increase take-up.

### Case study: Parents want to feel confident their child is eating and enjoying their lunch

At Surrey Square Primary School in Southwark, lunchtime is part of the curriculum for reception. Eight children are joined at the table by two adults (teaching and support staff), who help them use cutlery, talk to them about the food they are eating, and encourage them to try new fruit and vegetables.

### Further case studies on parental involvement:

- [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/case-studies/great-missenden-church-of-england-school](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/case-studies/great-missenden-church-of-england-school)
- [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/case-studies/oldfield-park-infants-school](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/case-studies/oldfield-park-infants-school)

#### **4c. Nuts and Bolts: Maintaining Pupil Premium Registration**

**Continuing to register those children entitled to a free school meal under the current criteria and recording actual free meals taken is important for school funding.** In the local authority schools that have already introduced UFSM, schools have seen an increase in pupil premium registration. This is because they planned and put in place appropriate measures – including the introduction of compulsory school meal registration schemes.

For the financial year 2015-16, the same criteria currently used to assess FSM eligibility (i.e. receipt of qualifying benefits) will continue to be used to assess whether a pupil qualifies for the pupil premium (£1300 per child at present). Data on FSM-eligible pupils will continue to be collected by the Department for Education annually, through the School Census (for mainstream settings) and the Alternative Provision Census (for non-mainstream settings).

##### **Possible approach:**

- It is important that you speak with your local authority as soon as possible for additional guidance and support
- Check children's entitlement to free school meals using the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking Service, which local authorities have access to
- Consider introducing a compulsory registration system for all school meals as part of school enrolment
- Consider simplifying forms and data collection approaches – see [www.schoolfoodplan.com/uifsm-forms](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/uifsm-forms) for sample forms from UFSM local authorities.

##### **Case Study: Innovative approaches to capturing data on existing FSM pupil eligibility**

Southwark developed a simple new form (<http://tinyurl.com/mgegve>) which schools present to parents as part of the enrolment. Anyone earning over £16,190 is not entitled to free school meals under any of the current criteria. The form is checked using the DfE eligibility checking system, to which local authorities have access.

Islington instituted a compulsory registration system for all school meals – a free meal was only provided if parents registered for one. Forms were distributed by schools to all parents of children over 3, and parents were asked to complete the form as part of school enrolment. To manage this process additional administrative work undertaken by the borough included:

- sending out registration forms – view form at <http://tinyurl.com/nwhamd7>
- logging and collating information and analysing data on returned forms,
- checking FSM eligibility of each returned form on the DfE's Eligibility Checking Service
- chasing schools / parents for non-returned forms or additional information,
- liaising with head teachers/administrative staff in each school,
- providing assistance in implementing the Eligibility Checking Service.

#### 4c. Nuts and Bolts: Getting the Right Kitchen and Dining Environment

**Meeting increased demand and delivering a great lunchtime experience is likely to require improvements to kitchens and dining spaces.** School kitchens need to be equipped to produce more meals and many may require some refurbishment.

##### **Possible approach:**

- **Commission a kitchen and dining facilities audit.** Many caterers and local authorities have done / are doing this already. Schools can also commission their own audits. You can find out more about audits at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-kitchens](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-kitchens)
- **You can then use the audit findings to allocate capital based on need.**

*Schools with a kitchen:* consider opportunities to become a hub production kitchen or prepare more fresh food on site.

*Schools without a kitchen:* consider options to develop a kitchen internally or externally; re-establishing a new school kitchen is a specialist job (see below for advice). The new capital funding can support schools to fund a new kitchen, but some schools may find they are asked to invest more on top of this. Hiring a kitchen is another option.

- Make plans to improve your dining experience. Refer to the School Food Plan ‘checklist for head teachers’ at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist)

##### **Case Study – Durham invested in all their school kitchens for the UFSM pilot**

Durham identified facilities and equipment upgrades for all 239 of their schools. This ranged from new crockery and plates right through to new kitchens. 60 schools needed their electricity supply and circuit boards upgraded to avoid fire hazards, as they used more equipment to prepare and store their food..

##### **Case study: Production kitchens can be created in the smallest of places.**

St Helena’s CE Primary School is a small rural primary in Lincolnshire with 112 pupils. In 10 weeks in 2013 they installed a kitchen from scratch in the space of 3 cupboards. Work was carried out during term time, with no loss of the school hall. The small kitchen can produce approximately 100-120 meals per day and is currently running at an average daily take-up of 65% – the break-even point being 45%. The cook is employed for 30 hours per week and there are 2 Midday Supervisors who help to serve and wash up.

**Case Study:** Watch this film ([www.healthyschoolslondon.org.uk/node/190](http://www.healthyschoolslondon.org.uk/node/190)) from Healthy Schools London on how St. Peter’s Docks Primary in Tower Hamlets transformed their Dining Room experience.

##### **Further information**

- Your local authority may have a framework contract in place for kitchen equipment
- The Catering Equipment Distributors Association ([www.ceda.co.uk](http://www.ceda.co.uk)) lists catering providers
- Further options for improving your kitchen: [www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-kitchens](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/school-kitchens)

#### **4c. Nuts and Bolts: Investing in and Motivating Staff**

**Achieving success will rely on investing in and motivating staff.** Increased meal provision will need more and better trained staff. Involve and engage catering staff at all stages to help them meet the challenge and opportunity of implementation.

##### **Possible approach**

- Plan in advance how best to provide additional staffing and training.
- Consider how to integrate new catering staff (including any agency and temporary staff) into the school, so they stay positive, and feel part of the team
- Ensure shared ethos and teamwork between the catering team and lunch supervisors
- Work out if your catering staff would benefit from new or refreshed skills - for example, coping with new kitchen equipment
- Consider developing staff pools where personnel can be deployed where they are most needed until staffing levels are finalised.

##### **Case study: Solihull MBC Catering Service open days to recruit staff**

Two recruitment days were held to recruit catering staff for schools. Schools helped market the event. The advert was also placed on SMBC's website and in the local paper. (view at: <http://tinyurl.com/me7hnuh>). New staff will start induction training after Easter with phased start dates to ensure support for new starters. All staff will be in post and fully trained in the summer term ready for September.

##### **Case study: Midday supervisors can help dramatically improve lunchtimes**

Newham offered training to all midday assistants to improve the lunchtime experience for children. The workshop looked at how to promote positive lunchtime behaviour and encourage healthy eating, and developed a dining environment action plan with the head teacher, catering team and midday supervisors.

##### **Training providers**

- Children's Food Trust (<http://tinyurl.com/ks3bjet>)
- Local Authority Caterers Association (<http://laca.co.uk/links>)
- Food for Life Partnership (<http://tinyurl.com/kpwk5ac>)
- Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (<http://tinyurl.com/lbzbkvc>)
- APSE (<http://tinyurl.com/n4gqjjh>)
- Unison (<http://tinyurl.com/n72twp6>)

##### **Other on-line providers available include:**

- The Safer Food Group (<http://tinyurl.com/m8zwqsm>)
- Safer Food Better Business (<http://tinyurl.com/kkc9c7c>)

#### 4d. The lunch time experience: Managing lunch breaks and using dining space

**There will be additional pressure on dining facilities and the lunchtime experience.** Pilot schools found they could get it right after a few weeks by being flexible when managing lunch hours.

##### Possible approach

- Sit down with catering and supervisor teams to plan your approach
- Identify bottlenecks by looking at how children and staff circulate around the room
- Consider how you can fund any dining room improvements or additional serving points needed; consider if you will need more tables, chairs, crockery and cutlery
- Do a dummy run (or two) of your chosen approach during the summer term to identify issues

##### Learning from the UFSM Pilots:

Lunch break challenge	Solution
<b>Too many children to feed in an hour</b>	Lengthen or stagger lunch breaks for different age groups. Reduce queues with additional serving points; reduce menu choices; introduce a pre-ordering system.
<b>Noise levels</b>	Play music; reward quiet pupils; increase supervision levels.
<b>Helping reception children</b>	“Buddy” reception children with older pupils; set aside extra time to help children learn how to use cutlery as part of their curriculum (see page 12).
<b>Supervision levels</b>	Encourage teachers and senior management teams to spend more time supervising (and eating with) children; consider supervisory assistant training; increase the responsibility of older children at lunch times.
<b>Dining room space</b>	Possible improvements to the dining area range from simple steps like brightly coloured posters and rearranging the seating to new dining rooms

##### Case study: Staggering lunch breaks can help feed large numbers

The dining room at St George’s Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Southwark, is also their main hall. They operate staggered breaks to ensure all 300+ pupils have 30 minutes to eat before playtime. Lunch spans 11:30-13:30; catering and supervisory staff have 15 minutes at 12.15 to prepare for the next sitting.

“In our school children order their school meal in the morning and they receive a coloured band. We found this helped the children’s language skills as children talked about their food choices to their class teachers” **Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary School, Leeds**

##### Further information and support:

Children’s Food Trust Learning Network (<http://tinyurl.com/lb96jl5>)

For more ideas from Southwark on how to manage lunchtime: <http://tinyurl.com/ktqvmaz>

## 5. Small schools

Delivering UIFSM in small schools may be particularly challenging. Small schools that serve less than a hundred meals a day seldom break even. We know that means many small schools will rely on regenerated or transported meals.

### Additional support

- The government has made a further £22.5 million available for small schools in 2014-15. Details of the funding arrangements can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/lszym5t>
- The School Food Plan's Small Schools taskforce is compiling solutions from small schools across the country as well as piloting some new solutions. Results are expected this summer. You can follow progress through the School Food Plan website at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/small-schools](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/small-schools)

### Possible approach

- To access UIFSM implementation support, schools should first check the online at [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/schoolfoodplan). For further advice, they should then access the advice service by emailing [info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk) or calling **0800 680 0080**.
- Consider working with other schools to achieve economies of scale through bulk-buying.
- If you have over 100 pupils and have some internal or external space, consider developing a production kitchen
- If you will be using transported meals, consider how you might supplement transported or regenerated meals with fresh vegetables cooked on site.

### Case studies: Small school success stories

Mickley First School (64 pupils), Northumberland: A talented and dedicated school cook takes ownership of the meal service, they have teamed up with six other local schools to bulk-buy, and reduce food costs. Read full case study at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/mickley-first-school](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/mickley-first-school)

Crich Junior School (50 pupils), Derbyshire: Making transported meals from a neighbouring school work for everyone. Read full case study at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/crich-junior-school](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/crich-junior-school)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who has generously given their time, support and experiences in developing this toolkit. They include: Sally Shadrack, London Borough of Newham; Tracy Williams, London Borough of Islington; Colin Gale, London Borough of Southwark; Brad Pearce, Plymouth City Council; Lynda Walker and Carole Reid, Taylor Shaw; Alison Young, Durham County Council; Lee Vines and Sam Christie, PKL Group; Jeanette Orrey; Carrieanne Bishop, Solihull MBC; Lynda Mitchell, North Somerset Council; Jeremy Boardman, Children's Food Trust; Patricia Fellows; Mandy Snaith, Leeds Council Catering; Stephanie Wood, School Food Matters; Rebecca Leigh, Food for Life Partnership; and James Tindal, Children's Food Trust, and many others.