

Employee Briefing Note – 16 June 2021

Topic – Perth and Kinross Council report regarding the provision of universal Free School Meals.

What is the Universal Free School Meal Provision?

As you are most likely aware, the Scottish Government have committed to the introduction of universal Free School Meals across primary schools in Scotland. This provision will be phased in, with primary 4 pupils being entitled to free school meals in August 2021, primary 5 being entitled from January 2022 and primary 6 and 7 pupils being entitled to free meals by August 2022.

Free School Breakfasts are also to be introduced across primary schools in Scotland, although the date for this provision is still to be confirmed.

The introduction of Universal Free School Meals is a fantastic initiative, which will provide vital support to thousands of children, ensuring they have access to a free, healthy and nutritious meal every day that they are in school. By making the provision a universal one it will go a long way to removing any remaining stigma surrounding free school meals and ensuring that no child ever has to go hungry while at school.

What is Perth and Kinross Council's report about?

Perth and Kinross Council, along with many other councils in Scotland, will face challenges in delivering the anticipated number of meals required, given the capacity limits in the existing kitchens across the primary school estate.

The report, which has been prepared by the Director of Education and Children's Services, is being presented to elected members at the Council Committee meeting on 23 June 2021 and outlines the options available to the Council to increase school meal production capacity in primary schools.

What will this mean for school kitchens?

At present the primary school estate in Perth and Kinross is made up of 35 production kitchens and 33 dining centres.

Perth and Kinross Council is anticipating a meal uptake of 80%, which would require an additional 500,000 school meals to be produced across the estate once full roll-out of the entitlement is complete.

At present there is simply not enough capacity to produce those meals within the current school estate.

What does this mean for me?

The report presents a number of options for consideration, some of which may have an impact on Tayside Contracts Catering employees based in primary schools.

We don't yet know which of the options will be selected by the Council, so it would be premature to brief in more detail about any potential workforce implications at this point.

What happens next?

The Committee meets on 23 June 2021 and if a decision is made that may have implications for our workforce this will be shared with you – and your Trade Union Officials – as soon as Tayside Contracts is made aware.

Should you have any queries regarding this briefing, feel free to refer these to your line manager in the first instance.

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