

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FREE BREAKFAST

1) AUTHOR(S) OF ASSESSMENT

Owen Owens and Bethan Griffith

2) ASSESSMENT START DATE

01/09/15

3) VERSION AND/OR DATE OF COMPLETION OF THE ASSESSMENT

12/09/17

4) PURPOSE OF THE UNIT AND DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The Free Breakfast Scheme at Primary Schools was introduced in September 2004 through a specific grant. In April 2013, the finance was transferred to the Government's Revenue Grant. It is a statutory requirement to provide free breakfast if the Authority receives a request from school Governors or if a scheme was already in place at the school before April 2013.

It has been recognised for some time that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and research suggests that children who receive the opportunity to eat a healthy and nutritious breakfast before starting their day at school are more likely to achieve their full educational potential (e.g. Association between breakfast consumption and educational outcomes in 9–11-year-old children, Hannah J Littlecott, Graham F Moore, Laurence Moore, Ronan A Lyons and Simon Murphy).

In addition to ensuring that our youngest children receive a fair start, another main objective of providing free breakfast in primary schools is to attempt to prevent, as early as possible in the child's life, the increasing habit of skipping breakfast.

Gwynedd's Free Breakfast Scheme provides free breakfasts for around 2,500, or 24% of children, at 75 primary schools in the County (out of 95 schools). Of these 2,500, there are 300 pupils who are eligible for free school meals who receive the free breakfasts. They receive toast, cereal with milk and a fruit juice drink as part of the scheme and they can attend school from 8am*.

The current guidelines state that Governors have the right to terminate the existing free breakfast scheme and establish different arrangements. However, the Council has the right to terminate the provision where it deems "unreasonable" to do so.

Following a consultation period with the public, it is recommended not to reduce the time that staff are employed, but to charge parents a fee for the childcare element before school (i.e. for the childcare before 8:25am*). Arrangements would need to be made to collect the fee from parents, mainly through on-line payment methods.

*illustrative times only

5) PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

Gwynedd Challenge

A single parent has said:

I believe that specifically the cuts to school meals and breakfast clubs will have an effect on myself as a single parent I rely on many of these services and to cut them would mean we would need to find some other way of looking for the children.

One of the pupils at Ysgol Botwnnog have said:

"Breakfast for primary school children; it's important to have a good start to the day."

Other

The Council has held an on-line and paper consultation until 1 September on two options and the main findings of the consultation are summarised in the main report of the Cabinet.

6) THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

The Council Cabinet approved an equivalent of £29,000 of savings in the Free Breakfast budget by reducing the number of supervising staff in 2015/16.

Charging a fee is more likely to have a bigger impact on single parent families, and increasingly so on young single parent families. (Source: Households Below Average Income (HBAI), Department for Work and Pensions, United Kingdom (Safle we Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
<<http://www.jrf.org.uk/data/adult-poverty-rate-age-and-family-type>>)

The proposal of charging a fee would also be more likely to impact homes which include a disabled person. (Source: 'Review of the evidence on inequality in Wales, 2014' – "Data from the HBAI survey (2004-2008) indicates that 15.2% of households with a disabled person were in in-work poverty, relative to 12.4% for the rest of the population (WISERD, 2011)."

7) RELEVANCE AND IMPACT

7a)

General Duties of the Equality Act	Relevance	The actual or likely impact
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	Charging for the childcare element would affect everyone, but would especially affect poor families.
Encouraging good relationships	No	

7b)

Characteristics	Relevance	The actual or likely impact
Race	No	
Disability	Yes	Homes which include a disabled person are more likely to be poor and therefore are more likely to be affected.
Gender	No	
Gender reassignment	No	
Sexual orientation	No	
Religion or belief	No	
The Welsh language	No	
Age	Yes	Charging a fee is more likely to have a bigger impact on single parent families, and especially so on single parent families (16-34 years old) - see the comment in section 5. It should also be noted that children who have had breakfast are more likely to achieve their full educational potential and it improves attendance and behaviour. Providing breakfast aims to prevent, as early as possible in the child's life, the increasing habit of skipping breakfast.
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Marriage and civil partnership	No	

8) ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

a)	Note any possible impact in terms of equality Charging for the childcare element would affect everyone, but would especially affect poor families. Mainly, it would affect single parent families and homes which include a disabled person.
b)	What steps can be taken to reduce or improve these impacts? The childcare element could be provided for free to pupils eligible for free school meals and / or a discount offered to families with more than one primary aged child.
c)	Is there a need to reconsider the plan?