



Changes to Free School Meals

The eligibility criteria for free school meals will change from 2nd April 2018. This letter explains the changes and how they might affect pupils within your setting.

The new eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Most families will not be affected by the new criteria.

Families who are currently claiming free school meals, but fail to meet the new criteria, the child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period – even if they continue to appear as no longer eligible on future reports. The rollout period is currently scheduled to end in March 2022.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, pupils will keep their free school meal entitlement until the end of their current phase of education, i.e. primary or secondary.