

04 June 2025

Dear

ATISN 24763 – FOI/REQ/ECWL/Free school meals

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 29 May 2025. You asked for:

- Details of funding for primary school meals in Wales.
- How funding for free school meals in primary schools in Wales is calculated and eligibility criteria.
- If funding for free school meals in primary schools in Wales is ring fenced before being delegated to Local Authorities.

Our response

The information you requested is enclosed.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 1

Freedom of Information Request ATISN 24763 - Free school meals

1. Details of funding for primary school meals in Wales.
2. How funding for free school meals in primary schools in Wales is calculated and eligibility criteria.
3. If funding for free school meals in primary schools in Wales is ring fenced before being delegated to Local Authorities.

Primary school meals in Wales are provided under two separate mechanisms

- Local authorities have a duty to provide school lunches to eligible learners as defined in [512 – 512A of The Education Act 1996](#). The effect of this legislation in Wales is summarised in [Free school meals: information for local authorities and schools](#). Meals provided under this statutory duty are funded through the Local Government Settlement Revenue Support Grant. This funding is *unhypothecated*, meaning it is not ring-fenced for a specific purpose. As a result, local authorities have discretion over how they allocate the funding they receive, enabling them to prioritise spending in line with local needs and priorities. Please see [2025-26 Local Government Final Settlement](#) for more details.
- All remaining learners in primary school can access a free school meal through the Universal Primary Free School Meal (UPFSM) commitment. Meals provided under this commitment are funded through a demand-led grant allocated to local authorities. Due to the demand-led nature of the grant, funding is not delegated in advance but is instead claimed based on the actual number of meals served. This means funding is provided solely for the specific purpose of delivering UPFSM. Details of the funding and eligible pupil details can be found in a previously published [FOI release 24562: Free School Meals](#) and [FOI release 24619: Free School Meals](#).