

Enhancement of Eligibility for Free School Meals - Potential Costs

Welsh Government has recently carried out indicative modelling for free school meal eligibility based on a number of different scenarios. Where this used data gathered by Data Cymru, we have included details below. However, we stress that this modelling is purely indicative.

Figures collected by Data Cymru at the end of June 2020 indicated, that 91,700 pupils were provided with a free meal, up from 90,200 at 30 May 2020 some costs projections were made with June 2020 as a base value.

| | Number Children | (440£ per child) Cost | Cost m | Increased Cost m |
|------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Jun-20 | 91,700.00 | £40,348,000.00 | £40.35 | |
| % growth | | | | |
| 5% | 96,285.00 | £42,365,400.00 | £42.37 | £2 |
| 10% | 100,870.00 | £44,382,800.00 | £44.38 | £4 |
| 15% | 105,455.00 | £46,400,200.00 | £46.40 | £6 |

Estimated cost of providing FSM for every child on UC

| Aug-20 | % |
|---|----------------------|
| Number of households in Wales in recipient of UC in August 2020 | 190,211 (fig 2) |
| Households in recipient of UC with children: | 0.404 76,845 (fig 3) |

Source: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/metadata/dashboards/uch/index.html>

| | | (440£ per child) Cost | Cost in m |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------|
| 76,845 | | | |
| 1 child | 1 | £33,811,907.4 | £33.8 |
| 2 children average | 2 | £67,623,814.7 | £67.6 |
| 3 children average | 3 | £101,435,722.1 | £101.4 |

To estimate the cost of providing FSM to every child whose parents receive UC, the number of households in recipient of UC with children statistic was used. There is no figure to tell us exactly how many children these households have. So to estimate the costs, we considered three scenarios. It is known that all these 76845 are households with at least one child. So the first scenario considers exactly one child per household. The second and third scenarios consider the average number of children to be 2 or 3. Thus the costs for these two scenarios are more like an average cost estimations rather than an actual value.

Estimated cost of providing FSM to primary school children and all pupils

| | Actual 2020 | Projection 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--|----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Maintained primary (b): | | | | | |
| Aged 5 and over | 210,121 | 208,512 | 205,420 | 202,062 | 198,368 |
| Compulsory school age | 384,660 | 386,398 | 385,961 | 383,931 | 379,506 |
| Cost of providing | | | | | |
| Free School Meals to all (£440 per child) | £169,250,400 | £170,015,214 | £169,822,672 | £168,929,859 | £166,982,562 |
| Cost in millions FSM all | £169.3 | £170.0 | £169.8 | £168.9 | £167.0 |
| Cost of providing | | | | | |
| Free School Meals Primary children (£440 per child) | £92,453,240 | £91,745,079 | £90,384,702 | £88,907,311 | £87,282,050 |
| Cost in millions FSM Primary school | £92.5 | £91.7 | £90.4 | £88.9 | £87.3 |

These estimations were based on Stats wales pupils' projections. These reveal that around 170 million would be the necessary investment to provide every child in wales under compulsory school age with a free school meal. And around 91.7m if FSM would be offered to all primary school children.

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Projections>