

Council 30th January 2024

Administration motion in the name Councillor Anne Clarke

Welcoming extension of Universal Free School Meals Scheme and Requesting Government Support for Special Dietary Requirements

Council Notes that:

- The positive impact of Universal Free School Meals in state-funded schools has been accepted by all major political parties for almost a decade.
- It was for this reason that Universal Free School Meals in state-funded schools were introduced for Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Universal Free School Meals:
 - Reduce the impact of poverty
 - Help families during the cost-of-living crisis
 - Help reduce the impact that the withdrawal of benefits makes to parents who move into employment from unemployment, ensuring that work truly pays.
 - Help educational outcomes.
- That there is currently no additional support for those schools with particular dietary needs, such as Jewish schools, who need to supply kosher food.
- That the current Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, rolled out Universal Free School Meals in state funded schools in the capital for Years 3-6.
- That the Mayor of London is providing those schools which do require extra support due to dietary requirements, such as Jewish Schools, to supply free school meals to Years 3-6 with additional financial support.
- That the Mayor of London has extended the Universal Free School Meals initiative for Years 3-6 and has extended the additional support to those schools which require it.

Council Resolves:

- To request that Cabinet take on the following actions:
 - To thank all those who worked with the Mayor of London to ensure the original scheme provided extra support for those schools who faced additional financial pressures due to dietary requirements such as Jewish schools, which included the leadership of our local Jewish Schools and councillors from both parties in Barnet.
 - To thank the Mayor of London for extending the scheme for Years 3-6 which will help thousands of Barnet families.
 - To thank the Mayor of London for extending his additional funding for those schools that face an additional financial burden in delivering the initiative for Years 3-6 so that pupils at schools such as Jewish schools can similarly benefit.
- To write to the Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, on a cross-party basis calling on the Government to match the Mayor's funding offer for Reception to Year 2, including an uplift for those schools facing an increased financial burden in delivering its Universal Free School Meals such as Jewish schools to ensure that this universal scheme is truly universal.

Under Council Procedure Rule 15.5 this motion is to stand referred to the Executive as it refers to matters within the powers of the executive