



## UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM BEGAN PAYING FOR ALL STUDENTS IN TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO HAVE FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN JANUARY 2020. THIS IS WHAT WE FOUND.

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WE ASKED STAFF HOW EASY IT IS TO PROVIDE FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR EVERYONE.

Staff said this scheme was **easier to organise** and was a **good use of funds**

Caterers said that some schools have **limited space in which to prepare hot meals** and that additional staff and equipment were needed



SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL IS POSSIBLE, BUT SET-UP COSTS WILL BE NECESSARY

STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS TOLD US THAT PROVIDING ALL STUDENTS WITH FREE SCHOOL MEALS:

Made sure that **all students have access** to a good quality, hot meal every day

**Helps families** who were not previously entitled, but have low household income

Relieves stress for busy parents, **saving them both money and time**

**Eliminates singling out of children** who were entitled to receive to free school meals

Encourages students to eat a **wider variety of healthier food**

**Improves students' behaviour and focus,** as well as **increased social interaction**

THERE ARE A WIDE RANGE OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF GIVING EVERYONE A FREE MEAL

STUDENTS WHO TOOK NOTES ABOUT THEIR LUNCHTIMES TO SHARE WITH US HAD MIXED VIEWS:

About **40% said they enjoyed** their food, and about **50% said it was okay**

Most thought the **queue time was okay**, but a few said queues were too long

They said there were **healthy options available**, but not all students took them

Over half said the **portion sizes were fair**, but a few said they were too small

Comments about improvements included:

- **More condiments needed** to make food tastier
- **Wider variety of foods wanted**, including food from **different cultures**

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE MENU PLANNING COULD IMPROVE THEIR EXPERIENCE