

**Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment**

<b>Subject of assessment:</b>	Auto Enrolment Free School Meals			
<b>Coverage:</b>				
<b>This is a decision relating to:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Function
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)		
<b>It is a:</b>	<b>New approach:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Revision of an existing approach:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>It is driven by:</b>	<b>Legislation:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Local or corporate requirements:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Description:</b></p>	<p><b>Key aims, objectives and activities</b> To assess the impact of proceeding with an auto enrolment process relating to Free School Meals (FSM) applications.</p> <p><b>Statutory drivers</b> Under Sections 512 and 512ZB of the Education Act 1996 the Council is required to provide free school meals if a child is eligible and a request for free school meals has been made by or on behalf of that person to the authority. The local authority has the “general power of competence” under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which may include automatically enrolling children eligible for Free School Meals. In addition, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 states a local authority shall have the power to do anything (subject to any contrary provisions in the Education Act) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.</p> <p>The Government recognises the benefits of providing a healthy school meal to the most disadvantaged pupils. The Education Act 1996 requires maintained schools and academies (including free schools) to provide free school meals to disadvantaged pupils who are aged between 5 and 16 years old. The legislation the guidance refers to is: The Education Act 1996; The Welfare Reform Act 2012; Children and Families Act 2014. The DfE has provided non-statutory advice.</p> <p><b>Differences from any previous approach</b> Previous application processes will remain i.e., families applying themselves directly with schools, however, the aim is that auto-enrolment will reduce some of the barriers associated with applying for FSM. The Exec report highlights these barriers as low-level reading ages, navigating the benefits system, stigma etc which may prevent applications coming forward.</p> <p>Following a review of the process, the approach will transition from application based submissions for free school meals to auto enrolment. There will be an option for families to opt out. By transferring to an auto enrolment this will ensure that eligible children are captured more effectively, increase pupil premiums for schools and in turn increase funding available for schools for educational improvements. The changes to the process will improve services and support for vulnerable households and low income families.</p> <p><b>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate)</b> Key stakeholders: the Council; Service Users; Schools</p> <p><b>Intended outcomes.</b> To seek approvals of an auto enrolment process</p>
<p><b>Live date:</b></p>	<p>21 June 2024</p>
<p><b>Lifespan:</b></p>	<p>Until further notice</p>
<p><b>Date of next review:</b></p>	<p>Review after year one, then 3 yearly</p>

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<b>Human Rights</b> Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	No evidence to suggest that the policy will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of human rights.
<b>Equality</b> Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	☒	☐	☐	No evidence to suggest that the policy will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of equality.
<b>Community cohesion</b> Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	☒	☐	☐	No evidence to suggest that the policy will have an adverse impact on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town.
<b>Next steps:</b> ➡ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➡ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.				

<b>Assessment completed by:</b>	Debbie Ingoldsby/Anne Rose	<b>Head of Service:</b>	Janette Savage
<b>Date:</b>	30.5.24	<b>Date:</b>	30.5.24

\* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.