



Angel Eyes NI is a registered charity. We support children and young people with a vision impairment, and their families, across Northern Ireland.  
We are responding to The Department of Education Free School Meals and Uniform Grant Consultation.

### Free Schools Meals and Uniform

**Question 1 - Later questions will ask about potential increases to the income threshold levels for those in receipt of Universal Credit. Leaving this aside, should the other current eligibility criteria remain the same?**

Yes, the eligibility criteria should remain the same

No, the eligibility criteria should be changed (Please specify below)

**NO**

Eligibility criteria should be extended to Families:

- if their child has a statement of special educational needs and not limited to children who are designated to require a special diet.

Option (e) Universal FSM for pupils from nursery to P3 AND raising income thresholds on the qualifying rules for all pupils from £16,000 to £20,000, additional 62,100 to 72,000 pupils either entitled to FSM and UG across all school years.

**Question 2 - If a form of universal FSM provision were to be introduced in Northern Ireland, how strongly do you agree or disagree that this should prioritise younger pupils in a similar way to the rest of the UK? Please see the link in blue text below that has information that may help inform your response.**

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

**Agree**



**Question 3 - In light of the Department's challenging budget position, how strongly do you agree or disagree that it should be a priority for the Department to increase the number of children that are able to access free school meals? Please see the link in blue text below that has information that may help inform your response.**

**Strongly Agree**

**Question 4 - If additional funding is made available to give more children free school meals, please indicate how you would prefer that it should be used? Please see the link in blue text below that has information that may help inform your response.**

**all be used to allow more low-income families to receive free school meals - agree**

all be used to provide a universal free school meal to all pupils in certain younger years at school like the rest of the UK

be split between allowing some more low-income families to receive free school meals and offering a universal free school meal to all pupils in certain year groups at school

**Question 5 - If it were decided that the only change were to rollout a form of universal FSM, which of the following groups of pupils is your preference to receive a universal FSM? Please see the link in blue text below that has information that may help inform your response.**

Universal FSM for full-time pupils from nursery to P3

Universal FSM for full-time pupils from nursery to P7

Universal FSM for full-time pupils in nursery to Yr14

Other (please specify)



If you answered “Other” to this question, please tell us which year groups you think should receive universal FSM. Please DO NOT include any personal information in the text box below.

Other - Children with disability should be an additional group of people considered, including but not limited to those with a special diet requirement.

Families with children with disabilities are disproportionately negatively affected by the Cost-of-living crisis. They have many additional household costs including food, fuel, respite, childcare, therapies.

Question 6 - If it were decided that the Department should rollout a form of universal FSM provision AND it should also enable more low-income pupils from all school years to be entitled to FSM, which of the following is your preferred option for who should be offered a universal FSM?

Please see the link in blue text below that has information that may help inform your response.

Universal FSM for full-time pupils from nursery to P3 agree

Universal FSM for full-time pupils from nursery to P7

Other (please specify)

If you answered “Other” to this question, please tell us which year groups you think should receive universal FSM. Please DO NOT include any personal information in the text box below.

Other - Children with disability should be an additional group of people considered, including but not limited to those with a special diet requirement.

Families with children with disabilities are disproportionately negatively affected by the Cost-of-living crisis. They have many additional household costs including food, fuel, respite, childcare, therapies.

**Return link:**

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/de/review-of-free-school-meals-and-uniform-grant-elig/consultation/return>

**Response ID:**

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**Response key:**





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**Close date:**

14 February 2025

**Keep these details in a safe place.** Anyone who knows your respons

