



School Food Trust

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Dear Ashley

School Lunch Take up 2010-2011 – Keeping Children Healthy

On the 7th July 2011, the results of the 2010-2011 national school lunch take up survey were published. A statistical release and a full survey report, based on take up data and other contextual information provided by Local Authorities as part of the School Food Trust (SFT) and Local Authority Caterers Association (LACA) annual survey, were provided. I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues from within your Local Authority, particularly our 2011 survey contact in Bath and NE Somerset, Ian Crook, for the information provided.

I have included below the school lunch take up data provided by Bath and NE Somerset in response to our annual survey, for this year and for the previous 2 years (where available), in order to help identify trends within your Local Authority. We hope that you will include this information in your Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to inform and guide decision making around children's food. We also hope that your health and wellbeing board members will acknowledge the importance of children's food and make it a priority.

School Lunch Take Up

| | <i>2010/11</i> | <i>2009/10</i> | <i>2008/09</i> |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Primary #</i> | <i>39.00%</i> | <i>36.60%</i> | <i>34.40%</i> |
| <i>Secondary</i> | <i>32.80%</i> | <i>29.90%</i> | <i>31.20%</i> |

Primary and special schools combined

In relation to take up, the Trust's statistical release reports take up data (where available) for all local authorities, see

www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/documents/annualsurvey6/statisticalrelease

My team has also collated a range of additional data relating to school lunch take up in Bath and NE Somerset (see enclosure), broken down at local authority, regional and national level (where appropriate). This includes the latest Childhood Obesity data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

I hope the information will prove helpful and assist the work undertaken by those responsible for school food provision within Bath and NE Somerset.

At a national level, school lunch take up in England continues to increase. On average, 44.1% of primary school pupils and 37.6% of secondary school pupils had a school lunch each day between April 2010 and March 2011, increases of 2.7 and 1.8 percentage points respectively compared with 2009-2010. Since 2008-2009, we have now seen a total rise in take up of 4.8% in the primary sector, and 2.6% in the secondary sector.

This means that since 2008, over a quarter of a million more children are eating a school lunch. We are in no doubt that this increase in school lunch take up is due to the dedication of all those involved in the school workforce who have worked hard to bring about real improvements in the quality of school food provision.

These figures show that the provision of healthy food in schools can be popular with pupils. At the same time, it is important to recognize that many schools and caterers still have an uphill struggle to engage with pupils and parents to increase the take up of healthy meals at lunchtime. On average, take up of school lunches is still below 50%. This means that over half of pupils in schools in England are either taking packed lunches to school (which are known to be less healthy) or eating off school premises (which is likely to be less healthy still). While the increases in take up reported here are encouraging, there is no room for complacency. Much more needs to be done to ensure that the percentage of pupils taking school lunches continues to increase in the years to come.

The School Food Trust can now provide consultancy services to help improve school meal take up in your local authority. We use our years of experience, working with thousands of schools across the country, to deliver low-cost, practical solutions to increase the numbers of pupils eating school food. Our expertise ranges from improving kitchen and dining spaces to increasing free school meal take up and marketing campaigns for the modest budget.

I am pleased to inform you that we are starting to set up a number of regional children and young people's food support networks with a regional lead, and the South West is one of the pathfinder regions. The contact for the SW is Maggie Sims, and she can be contacted on 07771 339221 or at maggie.sims@sft.gsi.gov.uk. Maggie would be pleased to receive any thoughts or suggestions you have regarding the support, information or advice you might need, or to take any queries on the information provided here.

Do give Maggie a call if you would like to discuss how the School Food Trust can help your schools get the most from their catering service and improve school food for pupils in Bath and NE Somerset. The enclosed flyer outlines some of the School Food Trust products and services that are available to support your work.

Yours Sincerely



Dr Michael Nelson
Director of Research and Nutrition
School Food Trust

cc Ian Crook
cc Dr Pamela Akerman