

Eat for Free: Benefits and Impact

In Newham, over 90% of KS2 pupils have a school meal, significantly higher than in boroughs without universal meal schemes.

Despite 52% of Newham children living in poverty, only 33% qualify for benefits related free school meals. Eat for Free (EFF) helps more children to access nutritious meals daily, with schools working towards meeting grant conditions to maximise the impact and benefits.

What are the benefits of EFF to our community?

1. HEALTH AND WELLBEING	2. EDUCATION	3. COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING	4. SUSTAINABILITY
<p> On the curriculum Universal meals normalise healthy eating as a core part of the school day</p> <p> Less packed lunches Only 1.6% of packed lunches meet the government's school meals nutritional standards</p> <p> Higher quality meals All caterers who serve food as part of EFF, should also hold the Food For Life Served Here award</p> <p> Whole school approach All schools should be on a journey to take a whole school approach to food</p>	<p> Disadvantaged pupils EFF captures pupils who are living in low income households, who would otherwise miss out on a free school meal</p> <p> Concentration Pupils who eat a nutritious and filling daily meal have better levels of concentration</p> <p> Performance & attainment Hungry children can't learn. Recent data shows that the primary attainment score for disadvantaged pupils in boroughs with universal meals, is higher (65.5) compared to boroughs without a scheme (61)</p> <p> More time Time spent preparing packed lunches can be better spent with children (e.g. homework)</p>	<p> Local jobs 86% of employees working to deliver school meals, are Newham residents</p> <p> Benefits to Newham workers Eat for Free schools are required to pay London Living Wage and local government pension. Having higher meal standards mean better working conditions and more working hours</p> <p> Benefits to the Newham economy Without the scheme, providers can pay lower wages to generate corporate profits, less money for residents and money leaving the borough. Juniper Ventures is the school caterer that is 100% owned by the council. When EFF schools go out to tender, grant conditions level the playing field with a focus on quality offers. Any surplus made is reinvested into school food, or returned to the council</p>	<p> Climate Now As part of Newham's Just Transition Plan, a key element of this work is to 'Eat more sustainably'. Through EFF, we encourage more plant based options on the menu</p> <p> Food for Life Served Here accreditation The aims of this scheme are to: serve fresh food, source environmentally sustainable and ethical food, make healthy eating easy, and champion local food producers</p> <p> London Circular Purchasing Commitment Newham has signed a commitment to reduce the environmental impact of the food they buy and serve against net zero and consumption-based emissions targets. This includes food served through the EFF grant, two key targets will be to reduce food waste as well as per plate carbon emissions by 2030.</p>

Anchored spend

We invest around £6m as a council, but this enables us to anchor the money spent on school meals in the borough.

What's next?

There are 66 schools who participate in the Eat for Free programme, by continuing to evolve the conditions of grant and support on offer we are able to increase outputs that advance our position on children's health, education, climate and community wealth building.

