

**TITLE OF REPORT: Eligibility for Free School Meals and Early Years Pupil Premium under Universal Credit Consultation**

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**Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to bring to Schools Forum attention the Department for Education (DfE) Consultation on Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) under Universal Credit. The consultation was launched 16 November 2017 and closes 11 January 2018.

**Background**

Universal Credit is a national benefit which will replace Income Support, Income related Jobseekers Allowance, Income based Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. People in Gateshead may currently claim Universal Credit, but generally only if they are a single person.

At present, anyone in receipt of Universal Credit is entitled to FSM. This includes people who would formally have only applied for Working Tax Credit, or both Child and Working Tax Credit and who are not presently eligible for FSM. Since 1st April 2017, we have been made aware of 76 new awards of these benefits though numbers could be higher. Therefore there is likely to be an increase in the number of pupils who may be eligible for FSM.

The DfE are proposing an earnings threshold to be introduced from April 2018 for the establishment of eligibility for FSM and EYPP.

The consultation sets out the DfE's rationale and proposals. Below is a link to the consultation documents.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/healthy-pupil-unit/fsm/>

Due to timescales a response from Schools Forum could be difficult, however as there are only 4 questions schools may want to submit an individual response.

**Proposal**

It is proposed that Schools Forum notes the contents of the report and the closing date of the consultation of 11 January 2018.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that School Forum notes the contents of the report so that individual school have an opportunity to submit a response to the DfE consultation.

**For the following reasons:**

- To inform Schools Forum of the Eligibility for Free School Meals and Early Years Pupil Premium under Universal Credit Consultation.

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