

# Funding A Better Start

The case for using Pupil Premium  
and Pupil Equity Funding to  
deliver breakfast in schools



**magic  
breakfast**  
fuel for learning

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# Funding A Better Start

## The case for using Pupil Premium and Pupil Equity Funding to deliver breakfast in schools

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Magic Breakfast is a registered charity that believes no child or young person in the UK should be too hungry to learn. The charity partners with schools in areas of disadvantage, providing healthy breakfasts to their pupils and bespoke expert advice and support to their staff. Magic Breakfast is working with over 1,000 Primary, Secondary, ASL/ Special Educational Needs Schools and Pupil Referral Units in England and Scotland, offering breakfasts to over 200,000 children and young people each day.

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## Introduction

Every day, children in classrooms across England and Scotland have their learning held back by hunger. Hungry students can't learn. Food is a fundamental, basic need. Hunger is pervasive, and pernicious, and it can steal away vital opportunities to learn that can shape the future of children and young people. But hunger can be stopped.

In this paper, Magic Breakfast seeks to outline how schools in Scotland and England can fund breakfast provision to help combat morning hunger amongst children and young people, using existing funding that schools will be familiar with.

The Pupil Premium and Pupil Equity Funding were created by the UK Government (acting in England) and the Scottish Government respectively to help tackle the poverty related attainment gap. The provision of breakfast meets the standards laid out in the frameworks for the use of both funding mechanisms. This report will give a detailed account of how breakfast provision can be financed through PP and PEF.

School leaders know their pupils best, that's why governments have rightly empowered them to make decisions on how to spend funds such as PP and PEF. We've not laid out specific estimated expenditure, as costs will vary dramatically by school. We always recommend that schools deliver breakfast in a universal way and a way that it is designed to minimize both hunger and stigma.

This paper provides schools, local authorities, multi-academy trusts, and other education institutions with the evidence and support needed to use PP and PEF for breakfast provision.

Earlier in 2022, Magic Breakfast released the most comprehensive study of its kind examining the current state of breakfast provision in all four nations of the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>. It showed a patchwork of provision, with too many schools – 20% across the UK – having no provision whatsoever. This paper offers one way to start changing that.

## Pupil Premium

### What is Pupil Premium?

Pupil premium is funding provided by the UK Government to schools in England in order to level the educational playing field and improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Currently the rates are as follows<sup>ii</sup>:

	AMOUNT FOR PRIMARY PUPILS	AMOUNT FOR SECONDARY PUPILS
FSM ELIGIBLE PUPILS	£1385	£985
CARE LEAVERS & LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN	£2410	£2410

With the April 2022 announcement that pupils with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) would be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), it has since been confirmed that additional Pupil Premium can be claimed for these pupils.<sup>iii</sup>

### How can Pupil Premium Be Used?

Current guidance on the use of Pupil Premium grants some discretion on what the money can be used for. The guidance, published by the Government, clearly states that: 'It is for school leaders to decide how to spend the pupil premium, within the requirements of the conditions of grant.'<sup>iv</sup>

The guidance goes on to list three key areas where grant money can be spent for maximum impact<sup>v</sup>:

1. High-quality teaching, such as staff professional development.
2. Targeted academic support, such as tutoring.
3. Wider strategies to address non-academic barriers to success in schools, such as attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support.

As demonstrated by category 3, Pupil Premium can be used to address barriers to success such as attendance and behaviour. Our Partner Schools regularly inform us about the impact that breakfast provision has on attendance, behaviour, and readiness to learn.

The DfE clearly states that there is 'no expectation that schools should spend the grant only on eligible pupils.'<sup>vi</sup> This means that schools can use Pupil Premium funds on universal provision of breakfast, which benefits all pupils by guaranteeing them a nutritious start to the day. This 'whole school strategy' is further acknowledged in the DfE guidance, which says that whole school strategies 'have the potential to impact positively on all pupils.' Breakfast provision is the only whole school strategy named in the Education Endowment Foundation's 'Guide to Pupil Premium'.<sup>vii</sup>

**Breakfast provision is the only whole school strategy named in the EEF's 'Guide to Pupil Premium'**

This is because breakfast – though it is a high-impact intervention where certain issues exist – also benefits middle and high attainers, by improving overall classroom behaviour and readiness to learn. This allows for a better classroom environment for all pupils.

## How is Pupil Premium used?

At Magic Breakfast, we encourage schools, where possible, to consider using Pupil Premium to fund breakfast provision. We are, as referenced earlier in this report, aware of the profound financial difficulties facing schools at the moment, both in terms of the impact of COVID-19, supply chain and energy issues, and longer term, more chronic issues, like the funding squeeze since 2010, but we feel that breakfast is a high ROI intervention and encourage schools who have not considered using Pupil Premium to fund it to do so.<sup>viii</sup>

Some of our partner schools are already using Pupil Premium to support their Magic Breakfast provision and find that this provides a high return on investment.

### School's Story

A primary school in Birmingham is using Pupil Premium funding to support their breakfast club. The school has a high level of disadvantage and has noticed an increase in demand due to the cost of living crisis.

The breakfast club is free and open to all and offers Magic Breakfast food as well as a variety of activities to encourage children to attend and have the best possible start to the day. The school has invested in the breakfast club and feels that, along with other interventions, it has really helped to close the attainment gap.

Children who arrive later than the breakfast club are offered something to eat on the way into school and the school has noticed huge increases in concentration and readiness to learn as all children are fed before school starts. The school supports parents in lots of ways to ease the current financial pressures and a universal breakfast provision helps to take away some of the stress from parents as they know the children will be fed in school.

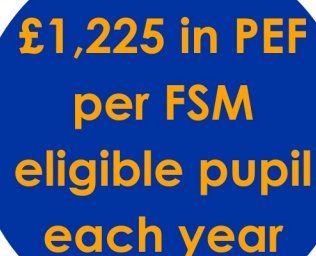


## Pupil Equity Funding

### What is PEF

First announced in February 2017, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, Pupil Equity Funding is designed to help close the poverty related attainment gap. The funding is allocated to publicly funded primary, secondary, and special schools. From 2022/23, £1,225 per pupil will be allocated to schools in P1-S3 who are registered for free school meals.<sup>ix</sup>

Whilst headteachers are given the final say on how their school's is spent, the Scottish Government offers guidance on how it should be used. This guidance advocates for deployment of the funding in consultation with local authorities, third sector partners, and children and young people.



**£1,225 in PEF  
per FSM  
eligible pupil  
each year**

### How can PEF be used

School leaders are empowered to decide the best return on investment to support their pupils. We already know that many schools see breakfast provision as a significant return on investment for their school community.

#### PEF INTERVENTION INDICATORS

**ATTAINMENT**

**ATTENDANCE**

**INCLUSION**

**ENGAGEMENT**

**PARTICIPATION**

Based on our experience and research Magic Breakfast knows that breakfast provision can meet all five of the key indicators that need to be considered when managing PEF. <sup>x</sup>

Magic Breakfast always encourages universal breakfast provision. Universalism is endorsed by national guidance, as it contributes towards situations where it will create a stigma free intervention. School staff can be funded by PEF as long as their functions are beyond standard school requirements. Schools currently have no statutory requirement to deliver breakfast, so staffing costs incurred to deliver it can be funded through PEF. PEF spending on breakfast can also be augmented by volunteers, our experience has demonstrated this can support parents looking to reenter the workforce.

Schools can use PEF to work with charity partners, such as Magic Breakfast, to deliver interventions. This should be done in conjunction with local authority procurement guidance.

Working with charity partners can also reduce the overall cost burden on schools. Schools could use PEF to part finance interventions, especially those – such-as breakfast – which offer long term positive outcomes for children and young people.

All schools deploying PEF interventions are asked to prove in their PEF plans that they are effective. Magic Breakfast is confident that breakfast is a high reward intervention that would meet any effectiveness test in all school contexts.

### **How is Pupil Equity Funding used?**

All our partner schools deliver an almost unique model of support and challenge alongside food aid. All our partner schools across the UK are supported by a named engagement partner who helps schools tailor breakfast provision and reach those who need it. Our engagement partners also help schools understand how PEF spending on breakfast can support their school community.

## **Schools' Stories**

Working with schools in Scotland for over 4 years we have found that the majority move through their initial engagement period to joining our membership programme. This involves an annual payment to Magic Breakfast, which for most schools running a successful breakfast provision is a heavily subsidised figure. In return they receive a continued supply of healthy breakfast food, along with the support of an engagement partner and much, much more.

Since the membership scheme started at Magic Breakfast it has remained subsidised, and this is determined according to the school's number of pupils on role that year. In most cases the schools we work with pay for the breakfast provision out of their Pupil Equity Funding budget and they see this cost as minimum outlay for maximum return. A universal breakfast provision is one initiative which supports an equitable start to the educational day for every child. Our annual surveys tell us that breakfast has a positive impact on punctuality, attendance, wellbeing and educational attainment and the spend to Pupil Equity Funding to support this is easily justified by schools.

In contrast, the cost of hunger, if disadvantaged children or young people are left unfed in the morning is significant. The amount of learning time lost by a hungry child and the staff time spent addressing the issue over the course of a year can equate to employing another member of staff.

## Deploying Breakfast

This section seeks to identify key areas that PP and PEF can directly fund that are linked to breakfast. These suggestions come from our experience of delivering high quality food aid and optimising breakfast provision for thousands of partner schools.

Magic Breakfast recommends a school by school approach to breakfast provision design. Whilst all breakfast provision should be universal, hunger-focused, and barrier and stigma free, we strongly believe it needs to be designed within the community it serves to have the best chance of taking root and flourishing.

These suggestions will fit with most school environments in both England and Scotland.

### Reading



Breakfast is best when enjoyed together. A number of our schools operate reading groups with their provision which target students at risk of lower literacy levels. This would create multiple outcomes in one intervention, maximising reward.

### Staffing



Consider the entire staff roster when developing provision. Some styles of provision, like grab and go and classroom breakfast, could minimise staffing costs whilst increasing reach. Not all provision staff need to be support staff and catering staff.

### Added Value



Breakfast can be a catalyst for before school added value activity such as constructive play. Our partners also use their breakfast provision to teach life skills such as budgeting and planning. This allows breakfast to be an integral part of the educational journey.

### Late Provision



All our partner schools offer provision for late pupils. Pupils who are late are often more at risk of hunger. Breakfast can also increase attendance. Late provision can be stocked by excess from the main provision, allowing a fuller realisation of a school's investment.



## Classroom



Breakfast doesn't just mean breakfast clubs. Many of our schools have built breakfast into their day starting their classroom time with food. A chance to share with friends and settle in to a day of learning. We know from teachers that this supports readiness to learn.

## Working With Partners



Working with charity partners shares the burdens of delivering breakfast. Partners, like Magic Breakfast, can support both resourcing and/or delivery of provision. Working with partners also shows a commitment to a collaborative approach to deploying PP and PEF.

## Food Provision



Our partner schools are offered a diverse range of healthy breakfast food. Different sorts of food are most suited to different models of provision. Magic Breakfast also supports working with local producers in an environmentally conscious way where possible.

## Design Collaboratively



Whilst every school context is unique, many are similar. Working with other schools who've successfully deployed breakfast can alleviate the burden of creating a breakfast provision from scratch. Reading PP and PEF reports from similar schools will also help.

## Recommendations for Government

Magic Breakfast acknowledges that the use of pupil premium and Pupil Equity Funding from established budgets to cover the entire cost of a universal breakfast provision is not a sustainable proposition. Magic Breakfast is committed to campaigning to see governmental change to properly fund the ending of child morning hunger. This section examines our different recommendations for the Scottish Government, the UK Government acting in England, and English local and regional authorities.

### The Scottish Government

To introduce the Magic Breakfast model of school breakfast provision in all primary and special schools would cost around £28m per annum. This is not an unattainable sum. With this level of investment, Scotland could become a leader in supporting children and young people.

Whilst PEF is assigned to school leaders to make decisions on, we believe the Scottish Government should make it easier for this vital funding to reach children and young people. The Scottish Government should design new, ringfenced, pathways to allow fast tracked PEF spending for key areas to help close the attainment gap. If new funding is not forthcoming, then one of these should be directly linked to breakfast provision. Secure pathways for accelerating funding wouldn't be designed to disempower teachers they would be designed to empower children and young people to succeed.

The Scottish Government should aim to fund breakfast provision through new streams of expenditure. These could be linked to the budget for tackling child poverty. Breakfast should form its own unique policy priority and not be a minor part of any new wraparound childcare provision.

### The UK Government (Acting in England)

1. The UK Government should properly fund breakfast provision in England, with a long-term funding arrangement that is both:
  - a. Sufficient – guaranteeing food and staff costs
  - b. Sustainable – clearly set out over a longer period, with an understanding that schools and the third sector cannot be expected to deliver provisions without continued government support.
  - c. Separate – this funding should be a separate funding stream to Pupil Premium. It should be ring-fenced for breakfast.





2. The UK Government should, as a matter of urgency, inject £75 million of funding into the current breakfast provision in England. Just 1 in 4 children who need it are being reached with the current model, and as the cost of living crisis continues to hit families, breakfast provision should be treated as a priority to ensure children are eating in the morning.

### **English Local and Regional Authorities**

Magic Breakfast campaigns at a national level to ensure a fair deal for children at breakfast time. However,

we believe there is urgent and important work that can be undertaken on a local and regional level by local and combined authorities to assist with child morning hunger right now.

At a regional and local level, we believe that local and combined authorities should:

- 1) Work to map areas of low food security and understand food provision, including school food and emergency food, across their area.
- 2) Commit to sharing best practice on work around food insecurity generally, and breakfast provision specifically, across schools in their area.
- 3) Work with the third sector and schools to ensure that schools are fully aware of how Pupil Premium can be spent on food-based interventions in the context of the current cost-of living crisis, and the impact of these interventions on key educational metrics such as attendance and attainment.
- 4) Work with the third sector, local businesses, and schools, to develop localized solutions to child morning hunger and child food insecurity.

## Conclusion

This paper has been designed to support schools to unlock funding mechanisms to deliver breakfast. Exploring both Pupil Premium and Pupil Equity Funding, Magic Breakfast hopes to show that across the majority of the UK there are currently funding streams available designed to close the poverty related attainment gap which can be spent delivering breakfast provision.

Whilst this is not the ideal situation and Magic Breakfast believes significant long term government intervention is necessary, children and young people need support today. This paper doesn't have all the answers but proves that breakfast can be funded through Pupil Premium in England and Pupil Equity Funding in Scotland.

Magic Breakfast stands ready to support schools to deliver for their children and young people and for governments to support the next generation across the country.

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> The full report is available at [Hidden Hunger – The State of UK Breakfast Provision 2022 | Magic Breakfast](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>iv</sup> [Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>v</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vi</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> [Pupil Premium Guidance iPDF.pdf \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>viii</sup> [School spending per pupil set to remain below 2009 levels - Institute For Fiscal Studies - IFS](#)

<sup>ix</sup> [Pupil Equity Funding Allocation - Pupil Equity Fund: national operational guidance 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid*

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