



**magic
breakfast**
fuel for learning

Scotland

Delivering Breakfast

Magic Breakfast Scotland
Spring Policy Briefing Series
2022

Briefing Two



Delivering Breakfast

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Briefing Series 2022

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Executive Summary

The Scottish Government has a commitment to free universal breakfast provision in primary and special schools. This is based on evidence of the impact of free school breakfasts on the performance and behaviour of pupils at school, and a growing awareness of the inequalities in breakfast provision at home.

Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies found the Magic Breakfast model **increased attainment by two months** in key subjects at primary three level – so school breakfast policy can form part of the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing the attainment gap in Scotland's schools.

This briefing describes the three models that have been developed by Magic Breakfast based on extensive experience:

- The traditional **breakfast club** is the most widely recognised before-school breakfast provision model.
- The **classroom breakfast** is a model often employed as a soft start model that is also useful for schools with limited space.
- The **grab and go model** supports delivering food at high quantities whilst eliminating stigma.

All these models can be supplemented by the three delivery model add-ons:

- A **late provision model** is delivered by all Magic Breakfast partner schools as we know that late pupils are more likely to be at risk of poverty.
- Both the **nurture group** provision and the **targeted reading group** are able to assist schools to target and support vulnerable children and young people.

This policy briefing also explores the **barriers that can affect provision** in primary and special school schools in all circumstances.

Magic Breakfast have identified the need for specialist support staff - **school partners** – who are integral to the success of our provision. We explain how school partners should be included to ensure success for the Scottish Government roll out of breakfast provision.

Using the findings of Pro Bono Economics, Magic Breakfast estimates that **delivering the Magic Breakfast model in all primary and special schools in Scotland would cost around £28m per annum.**

We therefore **recommend** that the Scottish Government adopts the suite of breakfast models, all of which are proving successful in our current delivery in Scotland and England.

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Magic Breakfast In Numbers

21

**Years Experience
Delivering Fuel For
Learning**

760,000

**Breakfast Served In
Scotland Per Year**

36

**Partner Schools In
Scotland**

2

**Months Extra Academic
Progress Delivered By The
Magic Breakfast Model**

£9K

**Per Child Long Term
Economic Benefits
Delivered By The Magic
Breakfast Model**

£28M

**Estimated Annual Cost Of
Delivering The Magic
Breakfast Model**

Introduction

Magic Breakfast has been supporting children and young people at risk of hunger for over two decades. We are an established leader in our field, providing healthy breakfasts with the aim of ensuring that **no child is too hungry to learn**. We directly support 1,066 schools in areas of high disadvantage. On an average school day, we provide over 200,000 breakfasts to children and young people.

Magic Breakfast has been active in Scotland since 2018, working across 10 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. We support 36 schools in Scotland across primary, secondary and special educational needs settings.

'Children are happy, well cared for and ready for the day after the breakfast club. The service is so important we could not function to the same level without it. It's amazing.'

Magic Breakfast Scotland Partner School

Our schools meet eligibility criteria set by Magic Breakfast to ensure that **we support the children and young people who need it the most**. Our partner primary schools have school rolls where either a minimum of 55% of pupils are in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Deciles 1 to 4 or a minimum of 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Our partner secondary schools have rolls where a minimum of 40% of pupils are in SIMD Deciles 1 to 4.

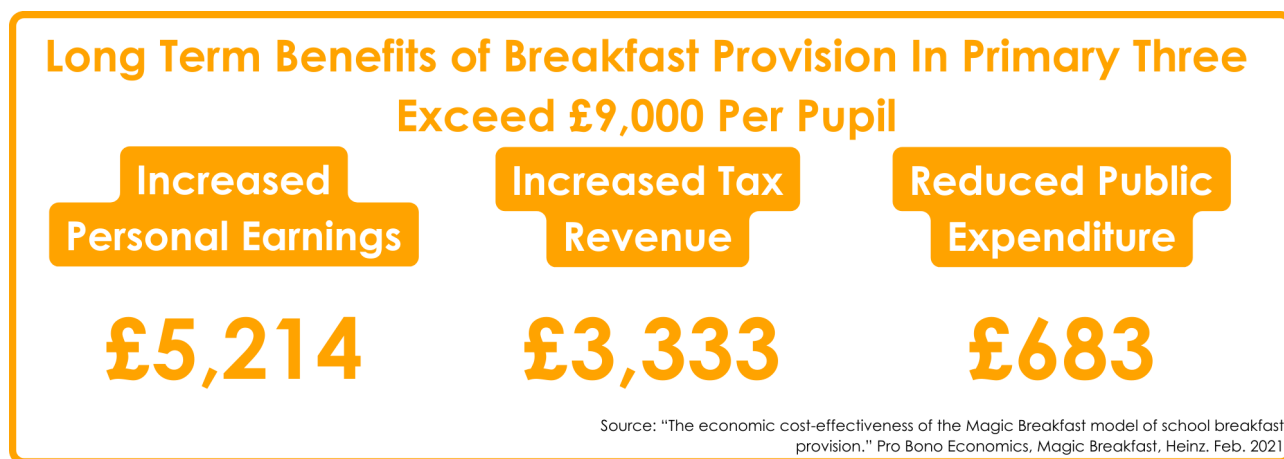
Magic Breakfast is backed in our mission by thousands of supporters nationwide as well as various corporate partners. In Scotland, we are also proud to be members of several well-respected third sector groups. We also have links with leading child poverty and food and nutrition charities across the UK to best support children and young people.

Magic Breakfast has experience of delivering a school breakfast programme at a national scale. In England Magic Breakfast partnered with Family Action to deliver the National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) between March 2018 and July 2021. The programme supported 2400 schools in total which would be the equivalent of supporting 97% of all schools in Scotland. Across schools supported by the NSBP:

- 99% of schools who responded to the post programme survey found their assigned school partner beneficial or extremely beneficial.
- 94% of head teachers believe the programme reduced the number of children eating inappropriate breakfasts (high sugar and salt foods).
- 99% of schools who responded to the post programme survey reported improvements in readiness to learn at the start of the school day. ⁱ

Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies found the Magic Breakfast model **increased attainment by two months** in key subjects at primary three level, showing that **breakfast can be key to closing the attainment gap.** ⁱⁱ

Research from Pro Bono Economics found that our model can deliver a long term benefit in excess of £9,000 per child.ⁱⁱⁱ Using the assumptions of the Pro Bono Economics report we believe that **the annual cost of providing free school breakfasts in all primary and special schools would be around £28m.**¹



However, the Magic Breakfast model is about more than just food. We employ expert school partners who support every one of our partner schools to ensure that those **children and young people who are most at risk of hunger are identified, targeted, and supported.** This policy briefing will examine in detail why school partners are necessary for any successful wide scale breakfast intervention.

Every school in the country is a unique learning environment. This is why we have a flexible model, with a number of different forms of breakfast provision. Our suite of provision formats work for all school situations. This policy brief will examine the main forms of provision that we recommend the Scottish Government should offer to schools. This flexible form of provision allows us to ensure our partner schools deliver a provision built around the needs of their children and young people, and their community. This method of policy design is in line with the recommendations of the Christie Commission.^{iv}

We work to ensure that the provision our partner schools offer is always **hunger focused, stigma and barrier free, accessible, inviting and used by the children and young people who might otherwise miss out on essential morning learning.** As well as addressing the barriers that would be faced in each individual provision format,

¹ This costing (£28,331,334.4pa) is based on 2018/19 figures and assumes uptake of the policy from 40% of pupils. This is based on the most recent Magic Breakfast data which shows the model reaches an average of 38% of pupils per school and is based on providing breakfast food to Magic Breakfast partner schools which are in predominantly urban areas.

this briefing will examine the wider barriers faced by schools in providing a fully universal, hunger focused, and barrier and stigma free provision.

This policy briefing draws on over two decades of Magic Breakfast's experience in the school food sector. It is the second substantive briefing on how Magic Breakfast can support the Scottish Government in the delivery of the commitment in the Programme for Government to 'develop plans to deliver free breakfasts to all primary and special school children.'²

The rest of this briefing covers:

- The different models that Magic Breakfast schools employ to deliver breakfast. We believe that it is not possible to design a 'one size fits all' model and we explain why schools need to be offered a suite of models.
- The barriers schools face and the considerations that need to be made when preparing a school for providing breakfast.
- The key role of school partners and their vital position in ensuring breakfast provision reaches the children and young people who need it the most.

Breakfast Models

Magic Breakfast operates a suite of models for our breakfast provision within our partner schools. Our school partners work closely with our schools to find the best model for their circumstances. We do not stick to these in a prescriptive way: all our models can be amended and adapted to fit within a school context.

In this policy briefing, we recommend the full suite of models to the Scottish Government. We believe in empowering schools to make decisions in their communities, communities they understand best. If the Scottish Government limited the number of models that schools were able to employ, it would have a detrimental impact on tackling hunger.

Having a suite of options fits within current Scottish Government policy making. Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) reflects the need for policy making as close to the child or young person as possible. It also fits within the government's commitment to the Local Governance Review and to its commitment to local decision making.

With this in mind, **we recommend that the Scottish Government develops a national approach which draws on the extensive experience of the four main breakfast models with three delivery model add-ons.**

² The first briefing in this series, *Integrating Childcare and Breakfast Provision*, explored the academic endorsements Magic Breakfast has received in detail.

We describe below the key operational details of each model, their advantages, and the barriers they may create. Magic Breakfast school partners work closely with our partner schools to advise on the implementation of each of these models.

Main Models



Traditional Breakfast Club

- Before school model
- Ability to offer extra activities
- Can aid in socialisation across year groups



Classroom Breakfast

- Soft start model
- Can support punctuality
- Extended reach model
- Limited barriers to access



Grab and Go

- Highly interactive model
- Extended reach model
- Limited barriers to access

Delivery Model Add-ons



Late Provision

- All schools required to provide for late pupils
- Pre-prepared food delivered from single point



Nurture Group

- Small breakfast groups
- Can support vulnerable children more widely
- Can be multi-functional to avoid stigma



Targeted Breakfast Reading Group

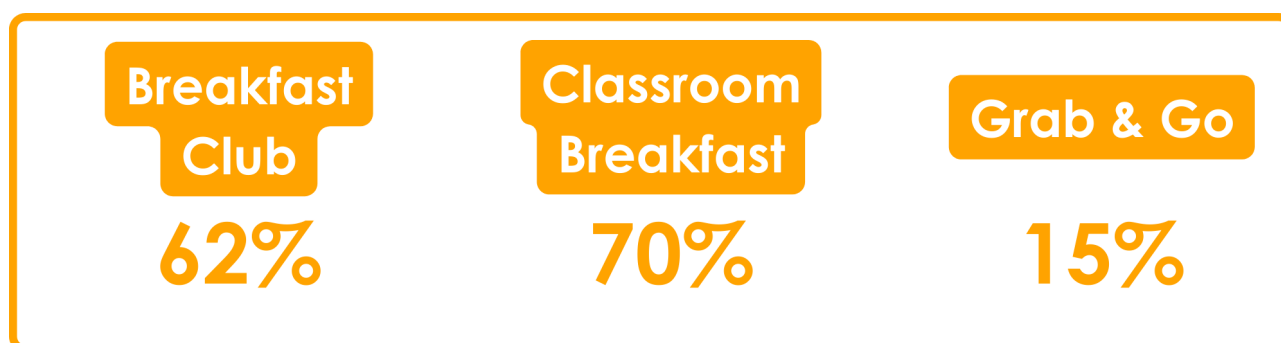
- Can support wider academic development
- Can support vulnerable children more broadly
- Offers significant added value

Main Model Options

The first briefing in this series explored the two track model in detail. **This model delivers before-school wraparound childcare alongside a free breakfast provision.** The system provides a paid for childcare provision which transfers seamlessly into a free-for-all healthy breakfast provision.

Below is a table showing the distribution of the models discussed in this briefing amongst our partner primary schools in the summer term of 2021.³

³ This table does not equal 100% as many schools will operate more than one of our main models. These figures are representative of the effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic and are not necessarily what we would expect without public health measures being in place.



Traditional Breakfast Club

The traditional breakfast club is held before the start of the school day. This model allows the most added value for a school, because they can conduct extra activities alongside the breakfast club.

The traditional breakfast club model offers a range of additional benefits to both schools and pupils. These can include nurture and socialisation, as well as education and attainment possibilities. Improvements in attendance and punctuality flow naturally from a successful breakfast club.

Some partner schools operate a 'family style' breakfast club, where parents and siblings can attend alongside the main pupil. Some schools conduct this daily, while others do so weekly or monthly. This can allow schools to fully support families from high disadvantage backgrounds.

Traditional breakfast clubs provide an opportunity for children and young people to socialise before school across year groups. This can help them form new relationships, which assists in building confidence amongst pupils. This before-school socialisation period has allowed a number of our partner schools to catch issues that children and young people are having before they are able to disrupt learning time.

There are a number of challenges faced by schools who offer the traditional breakfast club. This can include the fact that many traditional breakfast clubs have to stop serving up to 30 minutes before the start of the school day due to the space being needed at the start of the day. Uptake can also be limited by the number of children and young people a school can fit in the space allocated to the breakfast club. This can negatively affect pupils who are unable to attend school early enough but are still at risk of hunger.

Children and young people can often create barriers. They may not feel comfortable in a sit down environment with children and young people they do not know. Young people who bring themselves to school may not be motivated to attend an early provision. Children and young people may also not see the provision as 'cool' or may not want to attend without their established friend groups.

One of the biggest risks of the traditional breakfast club model is that it can lead to complacency. Schools can develop a 'mission accomplished' mindset which can be detrimental to the long term success of the provision. Schools need to continually target those most at risk of hunger for any provision to be successful.

Classroom Breakfasts

For a number of our partner schools, offering a breakfast within the classroom is a solution both to space issues and a desire to feed a large number of children and young people. This model can be delivered as a soft start model, whereby the classroom opens around 15 minutes ahead of the start of the school day. Children and young people are able to come in early and eat breakfast at their classroom tables. There are usually quiet and calming activities for pupils to do once they have finished or for pupils who may have eaten breakfast at home. This model can also be delivered at the official start of the school day. For example, a number of our special school partner schools – taking account of issues surrounding transport addressed later in this briefing – operate their classroom breakfasts after the start of the school day, incorporated into learning time.

There are two main ways of conducting a classroom breakfast:

- Some schools do the entire breakfast contained within the classroom, where each classroom has its own crockery and equipment to provide breakfast.
- In other schools, breakfast is produced externally to the classroom and distributed between classrooms.

By fully opening the classroom ahead of the school day the soft start delivery method for classroom breakfasts is effective at breaking down stigma and barriers. The soft start method also supports punctuality as pupils need to be in school 15 minutes early. These 15 minutes help pupils settle into the learning environment, reducing disruption at the start of the school day.

This model supports an extended reach and makes it easy to provide a healthy breakfast to a very large number of children and young people. It is also a cost effective model as staff are often in their classroom at this time anyway. This model is especially beneficial for younger children who may find multiyear group breakfast clubs intimidating.

Grab and Go

The grab and go model is one of the more interactive models of breakfast provision. Appropriate food is prepared in advance of the school day and offered to pupils, either in the playground or within the school building on their way to the classroom. This model requires minimal staffing to both prepare and serve the food.

This model makes it easier to support the entire school without barriers or stigma. Magic Breakfast's experience also shows that this model can have an impact on punctuality as children and young people make an effort to arrive at school early for their playground breakfast.

If schools utilise the playground as a location for grab and go, they may consider a wider provision. A number of schools will produce enough playground bagels to support families dropping off children and young people. Child morning hunger is often linked to wider family food insecurity and where possible schools try to support the wider family unit. The grab and go offering can also support children and young people who may have had an inadequate snack type breakfast that wouldn't have provided them with fuel until lunch.

The grab and go model is capable of being a standalone model but can also support traditional breakfast clubs. In a number of schools, due to special or logistical barriers, traditional breakfast clubs may have to end half an hour before the start of the school day. Providing a subsequent grab and go offering allows schools to support those pupils who are unable to attend school early and tackle another barrier to accessing provision.

Delivery Model Add-ons

There are three add-ons available to our partner schools to augment their main delivery model: **late provision**, **nurture breakfast** and **targeted breakfast reading group**.

Late provision

We require all our partner schools to consider provision for pupils who arrive late at school. Academic research and government data shows a link between pupils living in poverty and those most likely to arrive late to school.^{vi vii} We work with schools to understand how late provision can work for them, but an example model is through office bagels.

The school office, or pastoral or guidance team, will keep a small supply of prepared bagels for pupils arriving late. In some schools this is also accessed by pupils with social anxiety who feel unable to access the main provision. This provision is an ideal top up for any of the main breakfast models and one which Magic Breakfast would recommend all schools implement.

Nurture breakfast

The nurture breakfast provision is ideal for schools who identify a specific group of children and young people who are at risk of hunger, as well as having other issues

affecting their education. Schools running the nurture group model will typically run it in a classroom parallel to their other provision.

The nurture group addresses far more than hunger and allows schools to offer support to their most vulnerable pupils. This model can either operate fully before school, or as a soft start model allowing pupils to ease into the school day.

The main risk of a nurture group is that by separating one group of pupils, it can create additional stigma. We work closely with schools to manage their individual situations to avoid stigma. We find that giving the nurture group an additional function can help avoid stigma. One additional function that can be used is a targeted breakfast reading club.

Targeted breakfast reading group

A targeted breakfast reading group can either be incorporated into a nurture group or can be a separate add-on intervention to another breakfast provision model. Schools can have multiple criteria for inviting children and young people to the provision in order to avoid stigma. Alongside children and young people at risk of hunger, schools can use the group to help children and young people falling behind in their reading skill as well as those who would benefit from peer-to-peer reading.

Schools welcome the educational boost they can integrate into breakfast provision to ensure significant added value. Giving the breakfast provision an academic focus can also tackle barriers from parents who may be unwilling to send their children and young people to a solely food based provision.

All these delivery model add-ons can be embedded into any of the main models. They should all come second to the establishment of a universal, hunger focused, and barrier free main breakfast provision.

School Story

One of our special school partner schools has a school role of approximately 110 pupils with 82% living in SIMD Deciles 1-4. Breakfast is run mainly out of the classroom and provides a soft start for all pupils. This typically runs from 0930 every morning, which allows for any latecomers arriving at school to be included.

Each classroom holds their own supply of breakfast cereals. Pupils are selected to monitor their class's breakfast cereal stock and take note of Best Before dates are noted and weekly orders are generated electronically to ensure breakfast cereals are available in every classroom the following week.

Every day a pupil is selected to take orders and serve breakfast. Sometimes symbols are used, or other methods of Alternative Augmentative Communication, to help with the ordering process. If a pupil would like a toasted bagel, then where possible, pupils are allowed to prepare their own bagels.

During breakfast the young people are encouraged to relax at their table and enjoy the social experience of eating together. Using cutlery correctly and thinking about table manners is an important part of the breakfast experience. All those involved in breakfast are expected to tidy up after themselves. This provides invaluable life skills to the whole class and a settling in time with a 'family style' breakfast experience in the classroom.

Barriers Faced by Schools

All of our partner schools are unique learning environments, and as such there are a number of barriers they face in introducing breakfast provision.

Some barriers and challenges are related to specific breakfast models, but a number apply to all these models.

This section seeks to break these barriers down into six main categories and explain how Magic Breakfast, through our frontline school partners, addresses them. These barriers are:

- Staffing and staff attitudes
- Space and facilities
- School stage
- School challenge
- Regional barriers and challenges
- School funding
- Parental barriers

It is important that appropriate responses to these barriers are considered at the initial planning stage of a national provision.

Staffing and Staff Attitudes

The single biggest concern raised by schools at the set up phase is the funding and/or availability of suitable staff. Magic Breakfast provides an initial startup grant of £500, and ongoing free food, but we do not cover staffing costs. This means that **staffing is the biggest financial commitment our partner schools have to make to their breakfast provision**. Our school partners work with schools to address these in a number of ways.

The hidden cost of hunger is often more substantial than schools realise. Reframing the conversation so that breakfast provision can be seen as a smart investment is crucial:

- Breakfast provision can save staff time dealing with hunger related issues later in the school day: our research shows that **over 90% of our partner schools believe their breakfast provision has a positive impact on concentration, energy levels, and readiness to learn amongst pupils**.
- Evidence suggests that breakfast provision can lead to higher performance and, if it is targeted at school in SIMD Deciles 1 to 4, **it can contribute to closing the attainment gap.**^{viii}

Schools face a number of issues to consider in tackling the staffing questions involved in breakfast provision:

- **Some of our models have a lower staffing burden** than others. We work with schools to understand whether a model with a lower staff burden would be appropriate to their situation. It is often in areas where disadvantage is higher, and therefore uptake will be increased, that lower staff burden models such as classroom breakfast would be appropriate. Magic Breakfast only suggests models that fit the school situation and ensure that universal provision remains at the heart of our work in every school.
- School partners can help schools **estimate the likely uptake of provision**. An accurate estimation is vital to planning necessary staffing levels, but schools with no experience of breakfast delivery can often struggle to estimate take

up. Not all children and young people will arrive simultaneously, so not all staff will be required at the same time.

- Schools can also **consider their entire staff roster** when planning staffing. Many of our schools use kitchen staff and janitorial staff as well as pastoral staff and pupil support assistants.
- We also encourage our partner schools to **plan for breakfast in the long term**. This can include making future staff appointments with an earlier start time to accommodate operating breakfast provision as part of core hours.
- For a number of our partner schools, **parent volunteers** are a bonus to their provision, and Magic Breakfast provides guidance on how to best recruit and utilise volunteers. As addressed in the first policy briefing, volunteering can also be used to support parents who are out of work and are looking to re-enter the labour market.

Staff attitude is also key to the success of a breakfast provision. Whole school support is crucial to embedding breakfast as part of the school day. Magic Breakfast and our school partners are experienced in dealing with hesitation from school staff to delivering a universal breakfast provision. This can be related to: an unsupportive headteacher (or one unaware of the significant benefits), a school with an existing breakfast provision where the staff lead is unresponsive to a universal expansion, lack of staff willing to work during breakfast hours, or previous unsuccessful attempts at establishing breakfast provision.

A **strong pastoral team** is often key to the successful establishment of a provision. This can be led by both teaching staff and non-teaching staff, such as family support workers and pupil support advisors. Just one impassioned breakfast lead in a school can make a real difference to the overall attitude of a school in delivering breakfast.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The main way the Scottish Government would be able to alleviate staffing issues is to **include staffing within the budget for breakfast provision nationwide**. Whilst the flexibility of the Magic Breakfast model can allow for lower staff burden provisions, all schools incur a staffing cost. Alongside this, it will be important to **educate and inform staff on the need for universal breakfast provision, and the benefits it will bring to their school and their pupils**.

Space and Facilities

A minority of schools are **concerned by the space in their buildings** to deliver breakfast. For example, a school may have a small hall (commonly used by one class at a time) with a large number of attendees expected. Some schools also object to using their halls for breakfast provision due to them being needed at the start of the school day. Magic Breakfast seeks to reassure schools that breakfast is possible even where space is limited. We have experience in managing breakfast

provision where swift clean up is needed. We are also able to work with schools to find a suitable model for them if space is limited, such as in classroom provision.

The **availability of kitchen facilities varies** widely between schools. Many school kitchens are directly managed by local authorities with either centrally managed or externally contracted catering teams. One major barrier to breakfast provision is where schools do not have access to kitchen facilities and have to find other areas in the school to prepare and serve food hygienically.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The Scottish Government can address these barriers in a few ways:

- **Investing in school partners** will allow these expert teams to work with schools to establish a breakfast provision that utilises space efficiently
- Working with COSLA and Local Authorities to assess and, if necessary, renegotiate contracts with catering companies to ensure hunger focused breakfast provision is available in every school.

School Story

Prior to our intervention, one of our primary school partner schools ran a breakfast club in a classroom. The school limited places to 30 children per day and there was a waiting list for places.

When we discussed the need at the school, with a school roll of over 300 and 95% of pupils living in SIMD Deciles 1-4, it became obvious that we needed to take a more universal approach to addressing morning hunger. Firstly, we considered where the current provision was located. To make it more accessible to the children and provide a larger space to accommodate them, we had to move the provision. With the support of the headteacher, we were able to change the breakfast club's location to the main dining hall.

Once we had this established we started a grab and go provision during morning registration where all children were allowed to go to the dining room for a bagel if they were hungry. This would run alongside the breakfast club. This change saw the average daily reach figures move from 30% to 85%.

Whilst available to all, this model meant that children had to get up in front of their peers and walk from their classroom to the dining hall to access their breakfast.

We wanted to create a much more nurturing experience and so the grab and go provision was moved and became a classroom breakfast. This meant that during registration time all pupils could access breakfast in their classroom. When Covid-19 restrictions were in place the school was able to retain breakfast provision within classroom bubbles. In partnership with Magic Breakfast, our partner school now regularly provides over 100 breakfasts every morning to support their pupils' learning.

School Stage

Magic Breakfast is committed to supporting the Scottish Government in delivering breakfast across all stages of Scottish education, but there are different delivery issues at different stages. This policy briefing is limited to primary and special schools, in alignment with current Scottish Government plans.

The main school age barrier to universal breakfast provision at primary school is staffing. Children in younger year groups need higher staffing levels than other year groups. This means that provision for lower primary school year groups can often be more costly than for older year groups.

Special schools often face increased barriers. Due to the nature of the school, catchment areas are wide and pupil mobility is often limited. Therefore, the majority of pupils arrive via transport. This creates a situation whereby before school provision is either impracticable or impossible due to pupils arriving close to the bell. Pupils in special schools and also pupils in Additional Support Needs departments in mainstream schools may also need a different provision of food due to a range of conditions they may face.

In Scotland, special schools make up around 30% of our partner schools. We are experienced in understanding how to best manage breakfast provision in these environments in Scotland. The solution most often found for these schools is to **embed breakfast within the main school day**, a mode of provision which brings additional benefits. In special schools, this method of provision allows a class by class approach to breakfast. Our schools enjoy this flexibility as teachers can often be supporting pupils with complex medical conditions, and fitting breakfast around medication timing can help with classroom cohesiveness.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The Scottish Government should consider the differential needs of school stages in the design process for free school breakfast provision. School stage is paramount to understanding how breakfast can be delivered in a hunger focused and stigma free way which embeds into the school day

Region

Schools vary in size, community, diversity, rural/urban setting, and level of disadvantage – there are very different issues surrounding setting up a suitable hunger focused breakfast provision in a large city centre school, with an extremely mixed demographic and a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional

language, compared to a small, almost all White British semi-rural or coastal school with endemic high deprivation.

Schools in regions with higher levels of disadvantage are often more hesitant to offer a fully universal provision. They worry that high uptake will be unsustainable for the long term security of the provision.

City centre schools often have a roll which includes children and young people from affluent professionals as well as from parents experiencing high levels of poverty. Schools like this often benefit from joint childcare and breakfast provision.⁴ In situations like this, Magic Breakfast is clear in its mission to offer stigma and barrier free provision which focuses on reaching children and young people most at risk of hunger.

Scotland has a much higher proportion of rural areas than other parts of the UK. Magic Breakfast knows that every ownership and set up conversation with schools is unique, and we have experience taking into account geography and community when designing provision for partner schools.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The diverse nature of Scottish geography is a factor in designing a national breakfast provision. Local decision makers should be empowered to introduce models which work in their communities. The suite of models described in this briefing should work in all school contexts, but the Scottish Government should introduce school partners to work with schools to understand how best to reach their children and young people.

Challenge

Our experience is that schools facing a challenging time are often best placed to launch a new breakfast provision. Once schools have tackled the root issue of their challenges, and are turning toward improvement, **breakfast provision can provide a powerful way of relaunching a school's commitment to its pupils.**

Hunger focused breakfast provision can be an opportunity for schools to address core challenges. It can help children and young people reach their full potential, increase attendance, and reduce the time needed for pastoral care interventions.

Our school partners carry out significant research on schools before meeting with them, and thus can explore how breakfast provision can support schools through challenge.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The Scottish Government should put in place a way of supporting all schools when establishing free school breakfast

⁴ The first briefing in this series, *Integrating Childcare and Breakfast Provision*, explored this in detail.

provision. The most efficient way of doing this is through the school partner system. Using this system would mean experts would be able to guide schools facing challenge through establishing provision and explaining how it can support them.

School Funding

When our partner schools join our programme, they are provided with a £500 grant to aid startup costs to the schools. Schools also receive an unlimited amount of breakfast food along with regular support from our school partners.

After two years of delivering the Magic Breakfast model, we invite our partner schools to sign up to our membership model. The membership model, designed to ensure the longevity of our support to children and young people, involves schools paying a nominal annual fee to Magic Breakfast. The fee is linked to the school roll and not to the level of breakfast food they receive. All schools paying the membership fee continue to receive unlimited breakfast food and regular support from our school partners.

School partners work with schools to explain the significant benefits that our model delivers and the high value for money which it offers. Two years into delivering our model, schools can see the change in their pupils and the benefits breakfast brings to their school community.

We work closely with our partner schools to help them understand how they can pay the membership fees. In Scotland, the majority of our schools use funds derived from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support their membership costs.

The Magic Breakfast model fits well within the guidance for PEF which highlights the need for interventions that are stigma free. Our research and experience also shows that providing free school breakfasts will lead to improvements in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, the three key areas for PEF.

Implications for the Scottish Government: The Scottish Government have the power to fully fund free school breakfast provision. We estimate **the annual cost of this for all primary and special schools to be around £28m.**

Current government commitments to the Scottish Attainment Challenge (including PEF) total £1bn up until 2026. To fund free school breakfasts would require an investment of 14% of the total fund. In the last two years of available data **PEF has been underspent by**

more than £28m (£48m in 2017/18 and £38m in 2018/19).^{ixx} The Scottish Government could therefore ringfence national PEF funding to **deliver free school breakfasts without having to find new money in the Scottish Budget.**



£28m



TO DELIVER FREE SCHOOL
BREAKFASTS IN ALL PRIMARY
AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Parental Barriers

One of the main barriers reported by almost every partner school is **parents who are unwilling or unable to bring their child to the breakfast provision**. This is often significantly detrimental to the targeting process. Schools which report issues with attendance often struggle to motivate families to attend before school provision.

Our school partners are able to share strategies used by other partner schools to encourage attendance. We also work with schools to assist them in providing healthy options to pupils who arrive late. Offering food for late pupils is vital, as our experience, and that of our partner schools, shows that pupils who are late are often those most at risk of hunger.

We find that for many of our schools, persistence is key. School staff regularly raise the breakfast provision with parents either generally or personally. Our experience is that, if schools provide individual reasons to families – such as explaining the direct benefits of breakfasts – they are more likely to be responsive.

Some of our schools face **cultural parental barriers**. Partner schools also often deal with general parental pride and reluctance to seek support. Our school partners work with our partner schools to create a school culture which promotes breakfast for all pupils whether it be at home or in school. We encourage schools to work directly with parents to address their concerns.

Some of our schools offer 'look and try' sessions for parents to invite them into the provision. Schools work with parents throughout the school year in the best interests of their pupils, and our school partners work to extend and build upon these relationships. **Universality is key** to ensuring that no child or parent feels stigma when utilising the provision.

'Magic Breakfast funding has enabled us to continually have a healthy Breakfast in school for the children. There is no stigma to using the service. Every child has access to a grab and go bagel every day, free of charge. They can start the day with full tummies, ready to learn, with energy. This might seem like a small thing, but for children, who may not have had dinner the night before, the provision of a readily available breakfast for all pupils in our school is essential.'

Magic Breakfast Scotland Partner School

Implications for the Scottish Government: We recommended all schools undertake both targeted and general advertising for their provision to ensure parents understand the offer is truly universal and don't feel stigmatized by accessing this. A

national rollout will be an opportunity for the Scottish Government to deliver a national marketing campaign on the benefits of free school breakfasts for all.

School Partners

School partners are highly skilled, experienced individuals who are trained to deliver a high quality service to schools. **School partners are the core of the service** that we deliver to over 1,000 schools. We directly employ them, and they are involved in the entire school journey and are our point of contact with schools.

Magic Breakfast's mission is achieved by working collaboratively with our schools in the long term. Through the work of school partners, **we guide, support, and – where necessary – challenge schools to develop a hunger focused breakfast provision.**

In the scale up report of England's NSBP, the Education Endowment Foundation described school partners as the 'lynchpin' of the school support system.^{xi} The current phase of the NSBP, which is not delivered by Magic Breakfast, does not use the school partner role. As of January, there is some evidence that the NSBP is struggling to recruit enough schools without sufficient support from expert school partners.

School partners are responsible for the initial approach to, and recruitment of, schools. In this phase school partners conduct structured meetings with schools to establish the challenges the school currently faces and collaboratively design a breakfast provision which can work for the individual school. School partners consider the full suite of breakfast provision models when designing the type of provision a school will deliver. Many of our schools utilise more than one of the main models in their provision.

Working in collaboration with schools, our school partners consider a number of factors while designing a school's provision. These include how to identify pupils at risk of being hungry at school, targeting in an unstigmatised way, attracting difficult to reach pupils and promoting breakfast provision, meeting food standards and making breakfast provision efficient.

'Every day the bagel uptake is increasing - this is good to see as we are reaching more young people, but also concerning as it suggests more young people are coming to school hungry each day.'

Magic Breakfast Scotland Partner School

This personalised approach reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Children and young people are best

supported in a provision which takes account of their school situation. Our school partners help schools explore what hunger means in their community before working with them to address it.

On average, school partners support 40-50 schools allowing them to draw on a wide variety of experiences when supporting a school. As well as their experiences across schools, our school partners can also draw on the support of their regional and national teams. This creates a large network of experience, able to support any school context.

School partners work with partner schools through the four part Magic Breakfast school journey.

- Recruitment
- Launch/Relaunch
- Early Evaluation
- Optimisation

Once breakfast provision is established, school partners remain vital to its longevity. School partners provide ongoing support to schools and are able to horizon scan for potential issues such as food order changes, staff changes, or external issues affecting schools. School partners also offer schools support to monitor the impact and benefits of their breakfast provision. This means that provision can be amended as required to ensure a regular process of augmentation and development.

It is **important for a school to feel a strong sense of ownership of their breakfast provision**, both for its early success and to ensure long term sustainability. Strong ownership and pride in the breakfast provision, along with clear understanding of its impact, results in the school seeing breakfast as 'part of what we do and who we are' and improves the likelihood of a long-term commitment to both reach and quality

Many schools are time poor, and they welcome a regular chance to focus on their breakfast provision and reflect on its reach. School partners foster positive relationships with school staff, relationships which are vital to the success of breakfast provisions in our partner schools. These relationships hold schools accountable and can ensure that schools are achieving expected outcomes.

Magic Breakfast would be less successful without our school partners. When designing a national system of breakfast provision, **we recommend** that the Scottish Government considers not just how initial targeting is conducted, but also ongoing monitoring. It is important to have specific staff dedicated to ensuring that targets and inclusion criteria are reached. Putting proper quality assurance support in place enhances the likelihood of meeting attainment goals and ensuring school food standards. If provision was to be conducted through private contracting, **we recommend** that the role of a school partner should be included in any tender - with

an equivalent role to school partner created in local authorities delivering the provision.

Conclusion

This policy briefing has described the range of models – and their add-ons – that we recommend on the basis of widescale practical success in schools across the UK.

All these models are best supported by the deployment of expert school partners - the front line of the service we deliver to schools in Scotland. School partners work with schools to understand their communities and the barriers that they face. This ensures any provision delivered in schools is hunger focused and barrier and stigma free.

Every school situation is unique, but schools face a range of barriers to successful implementation across different schooling environments:

- **Staffing** can produce barriers both through financial difficulties in funding necessary roles and also through objections to the concept of universal breakfast provision. School facilities can also create logistical barriers affecting the deliverability of a universal provision.
- A **school's stage** can impact upon its ability to effectively deploy certain models of provision.
- The **region and geographical nature** of a school can also affect both how they would deliver breakfast and also how they would target children and young people at risk of hunger.
- The **challenges faced by a school** can often create a positive opportunity to introduce breakfast provision but can also create barriers to its deployment.
- Finally, **parental barriers** can be created which can jeopardize effective targeting of those most at risk of hunger.

This range of models provides an opportunity for schools to choose the approach that suits their needs and situation - all these models can be adjusted to an individual school's environment and can be added to.

- The **traditional breakfast club** is a sit down model that takes place in one space before the start of the school day. This is the most publicly recognised model.
- The **classroom breakfast** model is a model where pupils take breakfast within their own classroom. This model is often used by special schools and can support attendance and behavioral outcomes.
- The **grab and go** model supports widespread delivery of food to children and young people, meeting them where they are before the school day begins.

This model is able to be deployed as a standalone model or can sit alongside other models.

We have also described how schools can support those children and young people who are late at the start of the school day. **Nurture groups** and **targeted reading groups** are also able to be deployed alongside any of the four main models to additionally support children and young people at risk of hunger.

The four main delivery models explored across these two policy briefings are scalable to a national level. With support from school partners, any school in Scotland would be able to deploy one or more of these models in their educational context.

Notes

- i "Impact Report." Magic Breakfast and Family Action. Sept. 2021, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-1
- ii "Revised EEF Evaluation." Magic Breakfast. 13 Dec. 2019, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-2
- iii "The economic cost-effectiveness of the Magic Breakfast model of school breakfast provision." Pro Bono Economics, Magic Breakfast, Heinz. Feb. 2021, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-3
- iv "Commission on the future delivery of public services." Dr Campbell Christie. Jun. 2011, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-4
- v "A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22." Scottish Government. 7 Sept. 2021, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-5
- vi "Mapping inequalities in school attendance: The relationship between dimensions of socioeconomic status and forms of school absence." Klein et al. Nov. 2020, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-6
- vii "Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn term." Her Majesty's Government. 27 May. 2021, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-7
- viii "Revised EEF Evaluation." Magic Breakfast. 13 Dec. 2019, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-2
- ix "Pupil Equity Funding: school level spend 2017 to 2018." Scottish Government. 15 Oct. 2018, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-8
- x "Pupil Equity Funding: school level spend 2018 to 2019." Scottish Government. 31 Oct. 2019, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-9
- xi "Impact Report." Magic Breakfast and Family Action. Sept. 2021, tinyurl.com/mb-springseries-2-1



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