

# Response from Magic Breakfast to the Scottish Government's Consultation on the Resource Spending Review Framework

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## Introduction to Magic Breakfast

- [1] Magic Breakfast is one of the UK's leading school breakfast providers. With 21 years of experience Magic Breakfast supports over 200,000 children and young people across Scotland and England. In Scotland we directly support around 4,000 children and young people across 38 schools in 10 local authorities. Magic Breakfast works with partner schools to deliver hunger focused and barrier free breakfast provision to ensure that no child is too hungry to learn.
- [2] Magic Breakfasts model is academically verified for its impact on educational attainment and long-term life outcomes. Research has also extrapolated the affordability of the Magic Breakfast model at scale. Magic Breakfast has experience of delivering a national provision in England as part of the UK Government's National School Breakfast Programme between 2018 and 2021.
- [3] Magic Breakfast also campaigns for publicly funded hunger focused and barrier free breakfast provision for all children and young people in state funded full-time education.

## Consultation Response

- [4] The questions below are numbered according to the numbering in Annex A of *Investing in Scotland's Future – Resource Spending Review Framework*. Magic Breakfast has decided to not respond to every question.

### **Q1. In Chapter 1 we have identified three priorities to guide the Resource Spending Review process... Do you agree that our resource spending should focus on these?**

- [5] Magic Breakfast supports the three priorities identified by the Scottish Government: to support progress towards meeting our child poverty targets, to address climate change, to secure a stronger, fairer, greener economy.

- [6] The Resource Spending Review needs to enable the Scottish Government to effectively reach its own child poverty targets as well as reaching wider objective like developing a good food nation, and ending the need for foodbanks in Scotland.
- [7] Magic Breakfast believes that the Scottish Government has opportunities to launch policies that meet more than one of their targets simultaneously. This would include universal free breakfast provision.
- [8] Magic Breakfast proposes the use of £28m of underspent Pupil Equity Funding to fund the universal roll out of free school breakfasts in all primary and special schools in Scotland.<sup>i</sup>
- [9] The Joseph Rowntree Foundation found in 2021 that the Scottish Government needs to make significant policy advancements if they are to meet their child poverty targets.<sup>ii</sup> It is therefore welcome that the Scottish Government has identified meeting these targets as a spending priority.
- [10] 26% of Scotland's children live in poverty.<sup>iii</sup> This figure has been slowly rising for the last decade, a dangerous backward step in the fight against poverty. To meet the interim targets child poverty will need to drop by 30% in just four years. This will require significant resource investment in a cross government approach to reducing child poverty.
- [11] Reducing child poverty will also help the government with their third target of securing a stronger, fairer, greener economy. Research conducted by Pro Bono Economics on behalf of Magic Breakfast and Heinz found that delivering the Magic Breakfast model of breakfast provision for one year at primary 3 can secure long term economic benefits of £9,000 per child.<sup>iv</sup> This could be equivalent to a long term economic contribution of £497m to the Scottish economy from each primary 3 year group. This shows the tangible connection between meeting child poverty targets and securing a stronger, fairer, greener economy.
- [12] Overall, Magic Breakfast supports the key priorities of the Scottish Government's Resource Spending Review and encourages it to commit to policies which crosscut its priorities and deliver for Scotland.

**Q3. In Chapter 2 we have identified the growth of the public sector workforce as a key driver of public spending. How can we use policy interventions to maximise the value achieved from the public sector workforce in the effective delivery of public services, whilst ensuring the sector is an attractive, rewarding place to work?**

[13] Magic Breakfast believes the Scottish Government should invest in the public sector to deliver strong policy interventions. To effectively deliver free universal hunger focused and barrier free breakfast provision in Scotland, Magic Breakfast has recommended to the Scottish Government that they invest in school partners.

[14] School partners are key to the Magic Breakfast model and were described as the 'lynchpin' of the school support system in England's National School Breakfast Programme.<sup>v</sup>

[15] School partners are Magic Breakfast's key link between our service delivery and our partner schools. As breakfast provision design specialists, school partners are able to use our network of over one thousand partner schools to help schools devise a breakfast provision that works for their circumstances. School partners can help schools optimize their provision including understanding how to effectively deploy staff and accurately estimate pupil uptake. Under the English National School Breakfast Programme, school partners helped schools increase average uptake by 457%.<sup>vi</sup> This form of optimization can ensure that funding is targeted and efficient whilst still delivering a universal provision. Therefore, investing in an expansion of the public sector workforce the Scottish Government is able to streamline expenditure in policy delivery.

**Q4. In Chapter 3 we have identified a number of ways in which we will be exploring how to get best value out of Scotland's public spending, including... We welcome your views on these, and other ways to maximise the positive impact of public spending.**

[16] Magic Breakfast has decided not to comment on all the ways in which the Scottish Government will explore value for money. Instead, this response will focus on "improving cross-government collaboration" and "better targeting." This response will also address a seventh area that Magic Breakfast would encourage the Scottish Government to explore, efficient reallocation of funds.

[17] Magic Breakfast supports the government in exploring "improving cross-government collaboration" as it is only through a whole of government approach that child

poverty will be effectively targeted. Magic Breakfast supports the Scottish Government in developing free universal breakfast provision and whilst this is being led within the Early Learning and Childcare Directorate it is important to consider the impact of this poverty cutting measure on other directorates such as the Children and Families Directorate, the Housing and Social Justice Directorate, the Learning Directorate, the Health Performance and Delivery Directorate, the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate, and the Social Security Directorate.

- [18] Magic Breakfast would encourage the Scottish Government to consider that where there may be shared interest there should be potential for shared budget. The Scottish Government could consider pooling resources between directorates to ensure efficiency in policy delivery.
- [19] Magic Breakfast would also encourage the Government to consider improving collaboration with local authorities and other bodies within Scotland's multi-level governance frameworks. Local authorities will be key to delivering policies which will help reduce rates of child poverty and the resources they already have on the ground in communities should be considered when developing policy. In terms of breakfast delivery there is already a number of different approaches being taken by Scotland's local authorities. This diversity and lack of collaboration risks creating a postcode lottery for Scotland's children and young people.
- [20] Magic Breakfast would support better targeting of policies in certain cases. Magic Breakfast and the Scottish Government support universal provision of free breakfasts at primary and special school level. Magic Breakfast believe that the universal nature of this policy is fundamental to its success. Children and young people are some of the most vulnerable in our society, any financial targeting would most likely be based on factors outside of their control. Magic Breakfast believe this to be fundamentally unfair and believe that limiting the provision of free breakfast would be a missed opportunity for the Scottish Government to tackle child poverty.
- [21] Magic Breakfast would also support the government if it were to explore the efficient reallocation of funds. Through the work of Pro Bono Economics and internal studies of Magic Breakfast partner schools, Magic Breakfast estimates the annual cost of delivering the Magic Breakfast model in all primary and special schools in Scotland to be £28,331,334. This estimates a 40% take up of the policy in line with the average take-up of provision within Magic Breakfast's partner schools in Scotland. This figure is

around £20m less than the 2017/18 underspend of Pupil Equity Funding and around £10m less than the 2018/19 underspend.<sup>vii</sup> <sup>viii</sup> <sup>ix</sup> In cases like this Magic Breakfast would encourage the Scottish Government to examine where it may use existing funding to support new policy delivery.

## End Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> A fuller understanding of this policy financing proposal is included with *Delivering Breakfast*, a policy briefing delivered to the Scottish Government in March 2022.
- <sup>ii</sup> "Poverty in Scotland 2021." *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. 4 Oct. 2021, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-01](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-01)
- <sup>iii</sup> "Child poverty summary." *Scottish Government*. 25 Mar. 2021, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-02](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-02)
- <sup>iv</sup> "ROI Report 2021." *Magic Breakfast*. Feb. 2021, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-03](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-03)
- <sup>v</sup> "Impact Report." *Magic Breakfast and Family Action*. Sept. 2021, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-04](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-04)
- <sup>vi</sup> Bogiatzis-Gibbons, Daniel et al. "The National School Breakfast Programme, Scale-up Evaluation Report." *Education Endowment Foundation*. Sept. 2021, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-07](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-07)
- <sup>vii</sup> "Pupil Equity Funding: school level spend 2017 to 2018." *Scottish Government*. 15 Oct. 2018, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-05](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-05)
- <sup>viii</sup> "Pupil Equity Funding: school level spend 2018 to 2019." *Scottish Government*. 31 Oct. 2019, [tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-06](https://tinyurl.com/mbrsrc-06)
- <sup>ix</sup> A fuller understanding of this policy financing proposal is included with *Delivering Breakfast*, a policy briefing delivered to the Scottish Government in March 2022.