

School Breakfast Provision and Scotland's Economy

Magic Breakfast is the UK's leading school breakfast charity, making a difference to over 350,000 children and young people by partnering with schools to provide breakfasts and expert advice across Scotland and England. Currently, over 7% of young Scots can access a "magic" breakfast every school morning supporting educational equity, reducing barriers to learning, and delivering for busy families. Our mission is to ensure that every child and young person in Scotland is nourished, empowered, and able to thrive.

Across the next session of Parliament, **securing a firm foundation for Scotland's economy will be vital to delivering a brighter future for Scots**. Whilst [the Scottish economy has grown marginally faster than the rest of the UK](#) in the last few years, it has still remained persistently low, in line with the wider continent including comparator nations like Norway.



The Scottish Government does face significant economic challenges. [The Scottish Fiscal Commission](#) estimates a £2.6 billion gap by 2029-30 without action taken. Financial management is important and Magic Breakfast supports the [Scottish Government's efforts to rationalise and reform the public sector](#). This cannot just mean cuts though.



As the [Christie Commission](#) called for, preventative policy making is vital to building a better state. **School breakfast can be part of this, supporting economic growth and reducing child poverty**. With [IPPR Scotland](#), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Save the Children finding that **the effects of poverty cost the nation a quarter of a billion per year**, this is more vital than ever.

Thriving Classrooms: School breakfast's support for economic development

Breakfast provision is not just a bystander in Scotland's economic growth but a proven contributor. Independent research from the leading economic think tank, [Pro Bono Economics](#), shows that **school breakfast provision contributes significantly to economic development**.

By studying the Magic Breakfast model of provision, **Pro Bono Economics found that in Scotland, there could be a £9,000 long term economic benefit per pupil in Primary 3 by delivering school breakfasts**. Their evidence shows that for every £1 invested in breakfast, the Scottish economy could see £50 in returns. Based on [current pupils rolls](#) this could deliver **a long-term benefit of £459 million for Scotland's public services**.

This £9,000 economic boost per pupil is shown to create £4,000 in increase Government revenue and decreased expenditure. Using further academic evidence, Pro Bono Economics were able to show that £3,333 of this would be recovered by the Government through increased tax revenue due to higher earning potential.

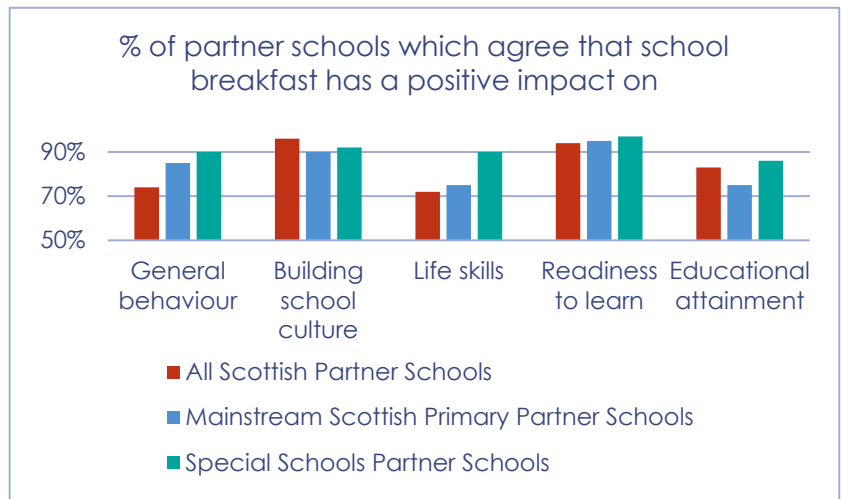
These calculations were taken before the Scottish Government introduced the 'Advance Rate' of income tax so are likely to be even higher now. Taking the £3,333 figure, [Scottish Government calculations](#) suggest that **this could result in an additional spend of £1,103 on health and £240 on education per pupil**.

The research also shows a recoup of £683 per pupil on average through reduced expenditure on ASN, truancy, and behaviour as shown later in this brief.

Classrooms of prosperity: Scotland's economic engine room

The economic benefits of school breakfast provision, as shown by Pro Bono Economics, are because of the effect it has on classrooms. Scotland's classrooms need to be the economic engine room of society, producing the creators and innovators of the future, **and school breakfast provision is shown to create positive environments where children and young people are nourished, empowered, and able to thrive.**

As the chart shows, Magic Breakfast's [Annual Breakfast Survey](#) shows the transformational impact school breakfast provision has on the learning environment. By creating calmer classrooms where young Scots can fully engage with lessons, school breakfast provision is an enabler to positive educational outcomes.



Supporting families: breakfast, childcare, and the economy

As the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture, and Gaelic [noted in Parliament](#) in June, **delivering universal breakfast clubs in all primary and special schools could offer parents up to an hour of publicly funded childcare every morning.**

Magic Breakfast understands how powerful this is, with [71% of our mainstream partner primary schools seeing a strong link between breakfast provision and parental work opportunities.](#)

This is vital for boosting the Scottish economy with [around 30% of those who are already economically inactive but seeking employment being parents](#). Across Scotland however, this figure is not static. In the North East, of those who are seeking work, 44% are also parents whilst in South Scotland this figure is 19%.

This shows how important it is to develop school breakfast provision aligned with the needs of communities across Scotland.

Delivering school breakfast in Scotland

The Scottish Government has committed to universal breakfast provision in all primary and special schools from August 2027. Delivering this commitment will support the future economy of Scotland by supporting families into work today and developing the workforce of the future.

MSPs across the Scottish Parliament can support delivering breakfast. Between now and August 2027 we're calling on MSPs to support school breakfasts by:

- **Ensuring the Scottish Government delivers its commitment to provide universal school breakfast provision for all primary and special schools from August 2027.**
- **Scrutinising the delivery of the Scottish Government's commitment by drawing on the experiences of children and young people, schools and local communities to deliver effective and workable national guidance for all communities.**
- **Working with the Scottish Government to ensure national school breakfast provision is fully aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).**

If you would like to get in touch or learn more about our work, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Scotland team:

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