

MOTION – FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council –

Whilst we welcome the move by Welsh Government to extend the provision of free schools meals to those currently eligible until Easter 2022 including school holidays this unfortunately means that not all those children living in households on benefits, whether universal credit, working tax credits or legacy benefits, due to the Threshold being set at £7,400 or monthly earnings are less than £610, actually meaning more in poverty go-without than get.

The Council therefore:

1. Recognises the distressing fact that 30% of children in Wales live in poverty and yet just 13% are entitled to free school meals This is mainly because the remaining 17% of children live in low paid households that takes them just over the present eligibility criteria.
2. Notes that England and Scotland have universal infant FSMs with all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils eligible, which is not the case in Wales.
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to cost, budget and provide as a matter of urgency, the extension of FSMs to all children who live in poverty in Wales but are excluded from entitlement under the present eligibility criteria.
4. Agrees that no child should go hungry and that this should be a step towards the aim of rolling out universal FSMs to all children in Wales as called for by various groups in Wales, including Child Poverty Action Group and the People's Assembly Wales