



## Changes to Free School Meals as from 1 April 2018

As from the 1 April 2018 a free school meal wage threshold for people in receipt of Universal Credit is being introduced, any new applicants from 1 April 2018 who are working and have a net income of less than £7400.00 per annum will be eligible for free school meals.

Those families who applied up to 31 March 2018 will have their claim to free school meals protected up till the end of the Universal Credit rollout which is due to be complete by 31 March 2022, and then up till the end of their phased education. Therefore no one who earns above the threshold or whose circumstances have changed will be taken off free school meals. The same protection also applies to any applications made after 1 April 2018.

Protection applies to the individual child so if a child moves area/schools they will still be eligible for free school meals. This also means that as a result of the changes there will no longer be sibling entitlement. Any siblings who apply after the 1 April 2018 will now need to be assessed in their own right and a new application made for each child; we may find that in some circumstances the new sibling will not be entitled.

For any new claims from 1 April 2018 the criteria for free school meal eligibility will be one of the following –

- Income Support
- Income related Jobseekers Allowance
- Income based Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
  - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
  - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - **Universal Credit with a net household income of £7400 per annum (£616.66 net per month)**

Eventually all the benefits highlighted in yellow will be replaced by Universal Credit by March 2022.

PLEASE NOTE THESE CHANGES TO DO NOT AFFECT UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this further you can contact the free school meals team on 0151 934 3456 or alternatively e-mail [education.benefits@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:education.benefits@sefton.gov.uk)